

26 October 2015

Key Issues

- In Ethiopia, El Niño causes flooding in riverine areas in the south and south eastern parts of the country; and severe drought in the north, central and eastern highlands.
- The Government urged donor partners to ensure a healthy food pipeline for the coming months to address the expected further increase in relief food beneficiary.
- During the 2002 El Niño year, much of the required food aid was not delivered until late February 2003, leading to a doubling of global and severe acute malnutrition rates and a costlier intervention.

Donors are urgently requested to:

- Provide additional funding to address current (2015) needs
- Bring forward 2016 funds now
- Review options to re-programme existing development funding for priority humanitarian response
- Seek additional resources
- Support country-level pooled funds (OCHA's Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) and the emergency funds managed by USAID and ECHO)

Ethiopia is experiencing its worst drought in decades: The impact of the failed spring *belg* rains was compounded by the arrival of the El Niño weather conditions that weakened summer *kiremt* rains that feed 80 to 85 per cent of the country. This greatly expanded food insecurity, malnutrition and devastated livelihoods across six affected regions of the country. The level of acute need across virtually all humanitarian sectors has already exceeded levels seen in the Horn of Africa drought of 2011 and is projected to be far more severe throughout an 8-month period in 2016.

Planning and prioritization

Shabelle river level rises, flooding reported in East Imy *woreda*

The water level of Wabishabelle River, Somali region has been rising since the past week following El Niño-caused heavy rains in the surrounding highlands, and in East and West Imy *woredas* of Shabelle zone. On 22 October, the river broke its banks in East Imy *woreda*, and communities along the river bank were engulfed by water. According to the Somali region Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau, 700 households from Diray *kebele*, East Imy *woreda* are taking refuge in East Imy town. The Government and partners are monitoring the situation to identify intervention needs. Meanwhile, local authorities in Mustahil and Kelafo *woredas* of Shabelle zone - two *woredas* affected by recurrent drought - were alerted about the rising river level. Mass community awareness will be conducted ahead of the floods in order to mitigate the impact of the floods.

The National Flood Taskforce is currently preparing flood contingency plans for all at-risk areas in the country. It is to be recalled that, on 8 October, DRMFS¹ issued an Unseasonal Rains and Flood Alert following the National Meteorological Agency's weather forecast for the *bega* season (October 2015 – January 2016). The Alert warns of El Niño-caused heavy rains in south and south eastern Ethiopia enhancing the risk of flooding in the Wabishabelle, Genale/Dawa and Omo river basins.

International partners respond to Government's call for support

Donor pledges are coming in, but huge gap remains

The Government and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team have held a series of briefings with donor partners – separately and together – to raise the alarm on the on-going El Niño-caused drought emergency and of what is coming ahead. The active and consistent communication with donors is bearing fruit in terms of triggering donor interest and few pledges, although still insignificant in relation to the need. Sweden, Norway, Canada, Switzerland, Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States have or will step-in with contributions in response to the emergency. Others are looking to re-program development budgets for emergency response or activate a crisis modifier.

Given the expected increase in relief food needs following the *meher* assessment (results expected in early December), the Government urged donor support to ensure a healthy food pipeline for the coming months. During the 2002 El Niño year, much of the required food aid was not delivered until late February 2003, leading to a doubling of moderate and severe acute malnutrition rates, which is three times more expensive than prevention. For more information, contact ocha-eth@un.org

2015 Food and Non Food Gap in USD

	Food, 270,000,000	Non-Food, 106,000,000
October		
November		
December		

*Funding gap as of 14 October 2015

¹ The Government's Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector