

RESPONSES TO DROUGHT RELATED PROBLEMS IN THE SOUTHERN AREAS OF ETHIOPIA (A SUMMARY UPDATE, 21 April 1997)

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Introduction

Following the failure of the short dry season at the end of 1996 in the southern and southeastern parts of Ethiopia, particularly in Somali Region and Borena (Oromiya Region), the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee (DPPC) issued at the end of February a "Special Appeal" to alert the donor community and concerned agencies to the need for food and water assistance. Water tankering was undertaken in certain areas by various agencies to address the immediate drought impact (water shortage) and a number of field assessment missions reported further needs (e.g. for relief food).¹ At regional, zonal and - in some cases - wereda levels food distribution has started. Some areas, like Dolo and Moyale Weredas of Liban Zone in Somali Region and Moyale Wereda of Borena Zone in Oromiya Region, require special attention: Dolo Odo town, for instance, and nearby Suftu both have new destitute migrant populations living in makeshift camps.

In Addis Ababa, the DPPC is coordinating an inter-agency, cross-mandate "Technical Committee" to address the problems of migrant influxes and repercussions of the drought in Dolo, Borena, Afder and Moyale (in Oromiya and Somali Regions). Moreover, under the leadership of the Ministry of Water Resources an "Emergency Water Rehabilitation Work Task Force" was formed to address mid- and long-term water needs of drought prone areas. While the immediate drought impact in the southern areas of the country was alleviated by widespread and good rainfalls, UNDP/EUE and UNHCR, with emergency funds from UNDP, is planning with other concerned agencies a water point survey in Somali Region and Borena Zone of Oromiya Region.

¹ For details refer to recent UNDP/EUE reports.

Recent actions taken

Dolo Wereda

World Food Programme: Responding to the emergency situation in Dolo Odo, WFP is contributing a one-time donation of 360 MT of maize to assist both the destitute migrants in camps and local populations of Dolo and Suftu. The relief food was transported by road in 12 trucks (30 MT each) to Dolo. Food distribution started on 20-21 April. A WFP officer on location is prepared to monitor the commencement of the distribution which is likely to last about ten days.

The intended ratio of this one-off distribution reads as follows:

Migrant population in Dolo Town:	180.0 MT
Local population of Dolo Town:	65.3 MT
Migrant population in Suftu:	84.0 MT
Local population of Suftu:	30.7 MT

Details for the allocation to the migrant populations are as follow:

Number of migrants in Dolo:	15,000 people
Daily ration scale:	400 grams per day
Number of days of assistance:	30 days
Total allocation:	180 MT

Number of migrants in Suftu:	7,000 people
Daily Ration scale:	400 grams per day
Number of days of assistance:	30 days
Total allocation:	84 MT

The numbers of local beneficiaries in Dolo and Suftu are to be established by the Wereda's Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee, giving priority to the most needy people.

In addition to the ongoing donation of 360 MT for Dolo and Suftu, WFP Ethiopia has launched an Emergency Proposal for over 25,902 MT (which includes 702 MT of supplementary food). That amount, which includes also 5000 MT for the recent influx of 125,000 migrants, is to be allocated to Somali Region and Borena Zone (Oromiya). As of 21 April this proposal was still under consideration at WFP's headquarters in Rome.

Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee: The central DPPC has allocated an additional amount of 18.9 MT of supplementary food to Dolo and Suftu, to be distributed to children in need both among migrant and local populations. That supplementary food is expected to arrive in Dolo around 23 April and distribution, conducted by the local DPP Committee, should start shortly thereafter.

International Committee of the Red Cross: The ICRC conducted a field trip in early April to Dolo to assess the health situation. In the migrant camp, malnourished

children were reportedly dying at the rate of two to three per day (out of an estimated total population of 7500) at the time of the visit. Currently the ICRC is assisting the Regional Bureau of Health in Jijiga with transporting 7 MT of drugs provided by the Somali Regional Bureau of Health and Central Ministry of Health (Rural Hospital Health Kits and Emergency Kits in 120 cartons) to Dolo. These drugs are to be sold to members of the local population on a cost-recovery basis. Furthermore, the ICRC will assign a nurse to assist the operations of the Dolo Health Center and to take part in the distribution of the expected supplementary food.

Moyale Area

UNICEF: The United Nations Children’s Fund carried out a field visit to Moyale Wereda in Liban Zone of Somali region. The mission reported that there is a large group of Kenyan migrants (estimates vary between 327 and 1,200 households) camped at the outskirts of town with very little food and no assistance. Selling firewood and begging seem to be their only sources of income. In the Somali part of the Moyale area an influx from Kenya of some estimated 120,000 people, the majority of them having lost their animals, are believed to be in need of assistance. Movements of these people in the areas of El Gof and El Ley were observed, but no back-migration across the border into Kenya has so far been confirmed. The nutritional and health status of that influx appears to be above the official critical mark, but still gives cause for concern. Food distribution by the DPPC (two trucks) to the local population in need is facing logistic constraints due to poor road conditions. Furthermore, UNICEF reported increasing cases of serious malnutrition in Yabelo (Borena).²

Other areas / general activities

In January the DPPC allocated 17,000 MT of relief food for Oromiya Region, most of which was earmarked for Borena, with a smaller part going to Bale. At the same time 18,030 MT was allocated to the Southern Region (mainly North and South Omo). While most of the relief food was transported and delivered, the DPPC is expecting to receive details from the regions about actual distributions soon.

European Union: The EU is currently studying several project proposals for water source (borehole, well, pond) rehabilitation in Borena and parts of Somali Region which as mid- and long-term measures can improve the general situation of the drought prone areas in the south. Agencies involved in those project proposals include UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, SCF/UK, CISP (Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli) and COOPI (Cooperazione Internazionale).

² UNICEF will summarise its mission soon in a field report.

CARE: CARE, which donated 157 MT of maize to the Oromiya DPPB, has also been involved in water tankering operations around Yabelo (Borena) is now financing the drilling of a new borehole (with a submersible pump) for Yabelo town.

Lutheran World Federation/Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus: LWF/EECMY has delivered 150 MT of maize, 450 MT of lentils, 303 MT of oil and 120 MT BP5 high energy biscuits to four storehouses in Borena (Moyale, Mega Yabelo, and Hagere Mariam). Distribution is expected to take place next week, and is likely to be handled by the South Ethiopian Synod.

Conclusion

While the emergency responses as well as mid- and long-term rehabilitation and development activities summarised above are encouraging, it should be noted that the relief donations mobilised so far might not be sufficient to meet the requirements of all people in need. The situation in Dolo appears for the time to be under control. Moyale certainly needs more support. The full extent of needs in other areas such as Afder Zone of Somali Region, is not yet known. Further monitoring and information gathering are appropriate, although, unlike the authorities of Moyale, the zonal authorities of Afder have not yet officially reported on relief support needs.

The DPPC emphasises at this point that its stocks are limited, particularly since increased numbers in other Regions require additional assistance. Therefore, the DPPC reiterates its appeal to the donor community.

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