



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Situation Report: Drought/Food Crisis in Ethiopia

4th August 2008

Highlights:

- **No non-cereal commodities available for August food distributions**
- **Admission rates continue to rise in SNNPR and Oromiya**
- **Preliminary findings from the *belg* assessment indicate increased number of people require urgent food assistance in the coming six months.**

Humanitarian Overview

Current Context

The government and humanitarian partners continue to face serious challenges frustrating efforts to fully respond to the humanitarian crisis generated by drought and food insecurity. A critical shortage of resources and commodities essential for the humanitarian relief operation is forcing the humanitarian community to make hard decisions about the allocation of limited resources. The decision to cut food rations is but one example of the extreme measures that government and humanitarian partners have had to resort to in light of the shortfalls in resources and commodities. Government and humanitarian partners are rapidly locating resources and supplies to intervene in emerging hotspot areas however the reality of the situation is that there is not enough food, medical supplies and human resource capacity to respond to the extent of the humanitarian needs arising across the affected regions of the country.

The geographic focus of the response has thus far been concentrated in SNNP and Oromiya Regions. As the food security crisis deepens in other regions of the country it will place a serious strain upon the capacity of actors to respond to the rising number of people requiring nutrition and food assistance. Preliminary findings from the *belg* assessment process indicate that the drought, failure of seasonal crops, large loss of livestock and hikes in market prices have inflicted a devastating impact upon livelihoods. The combination of this set of causal factors for communities has been reduced access to food and exposure of vulnerable groups to risk of malnutrition. Reports from Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP and Somali Regions indicate that

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rates of moderate and severe malnutrition continue to rise however without an immediate scale-up of the coverage of targeted supplementary feeding programmes communities are increasingly exposed to the risk of further deterioration of nutrition status.

The multi-stakeholder *belg/gu* assessment teams have briefed government and humanitarian partners on the food security situation in Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP, Somali and Tigray Regions. Preliminary findings indicate a significant increase in drought-related needs as well as number of beneficiaries requiring emergency food assistance in the coming six months. Humanitarian partners are urging government to release a revised Humanitarian Requirements document in line with the expected increase in number of beneficiaries in order to mobilise necessary resources.

Sectoral Updates

Health and Nutrition

Key Issues

The number of children requiring treatment for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) continues to increase in Oromiya and SNNPR. Reports from the field indicate that a number of adolescents and adults require urgent nutrition support to safeguard their health. Partners continue to report increased admission rates in all CTC (OTP/SC) in SNNPR and Oromiya. The Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) is urging partners with capacity to conduct full nutrition surveys and expand area of operations to respond to needs in hotspot woredas in Afar and Amhara regions.

WHO reports cases of Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) in Amhara, Oromiya, SNNPR with unconfirmed reports of suspected cases in Somali Region.

Afar: According to the ENCU, extremely worrying reports on the situation continue to emerge from several woredas in Afar region. Reports indicate that Teru, Aura and Yallo woredas in Zone 4 are particularly affected by the drought with indicators pointing towards nutrition insecurity as a result of reduced access to food, late delivery of the general ration, poor condition and death of livestock and soaring food prices.

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Amhara: The Regional Health Bureau/ DPPB/Regional ENCU have carried out an assessment of situation and have identified 21 hotspot woredas in North Wollo, South Wollo, North Gonder, South Gonder, North Shewa and Oromiya Zone.

Oromiya: A mass nutrition screening has taken place in 47 woredas. ENCU is awaiting release of data so that it can conduct a quality check of the results. Initial findings indicate some discrepancies in the findings as some woredas where the nutrition situation is deemed critical on the basis of rapid assessments are not regarded as food insecure woredas requiring priority interventions.

SNNPR: High rates of admission for SAM and low coverage of targeted supplementary feeding interventions continue to be of real concern to ENCU and partners.

Tigray: The hotspot list is being compiled this week and report is expected next week.

Response

New responses by NGO partners to the nutrition crisis include joint MSF-Greece and MSF-Holland intervention and assessment in Teru, Afar Region and immediate intervention by SCUUK in Dore Bafena, Sidama Zone.

WHO has provided US\$10,000 to the Regional Health Bureau in Oromiya RHB to support training of trainers for health extension workers. WHO has provided financial support amounting to some US\$31,000 to Oromiya RHB for the procurement of essential drugs and medical support for the treatment of SAM cases.

UNICEF report that a shipment of BP-100 arrived in-country on the 31st July 2008. Customs officers have granted clearance for shipment of 378 mt of Plumpy'nut to leave the airport for immediate dispatch to affected regions.

Gaps and Requirements

Targeted supplementary feeding programmes remain the core gap in the sector. The decision, based on critical shortages of supplies, to reduce food rations by 33% and lack of oil and pulses for food distributions scheduled to take place in August will have major implications for the capacity of nutrition partners to manage the caseloads of SAM and cap the rate of moderate malnourishment. Reduced access to food and insufficient supply of food relief will directly translate into increased admission rates to CTC (OTP/SC) and will contribute to re-admission rates, sharing of food and reduce the recovery rate of those already suffering from SAM. Full

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nutrition surveys are required as a matter of urgency to establish scale and severity of the crisis and identify areas requiring immediate nutrition interventions in Afar and Amhara regions.

Food Aid

Key Issues

Discussions on the August food allocations are ongoing in view of limited resources and potential increased beneficiary number following the results of the *belg* assessment. Non-cereal commodities, with the exception of limited quantities of blended food, are not available for August allocation. For July, the food basket included all commodities but at reduced ration.

Response

Relief Response: To date during January to July 2008, an amount of 43,029 mt has been allocated to 1,025,030 beneficiaries in Somali Region. Some 30,007 mt have been dispatched from this allocation. To date, during January to July 2008: In SNNPR, a total of 74,261 mt has been allocated to 1,332,010 beneficiaries. Some 57,433 mt have been dispatched from the warehouse. In Oromiya, a total of 35,034 mt has been allocated to 1,088,537 beneficiaries and some 18,612 mt have been dispatched. To date, during January to July 2008, a total of 27,359 mt has been allocated to some 970,021 beneficiaries in the regions of Afar, Amhara, Benshangul Gumuz, Gambella and Tigray, and a total of 12,313 mt has been dispatched to these areas.

Productive Safety Nets Programme: Dispatch of the July 2008 allocation of mixed food commodities will start soon for Afar, Amhara, Oromiya and SNNPR.

Targeted Supplementary Feeding: During 16-28 July 2008, an amount of 1,358 mt of blended food and oil has been dispatched to 48,761 beneficiaries under the TSF programme in Amhara, Oromiya and SNNPR.

Gaps and Requirements

WFP total 2008 shortfall for relief, PSNP and TSF programmes amounts to 232,000 mt (valued at US\$190 million) as follows:

Relief: Total annual requirements for 4.6 million beneficiaries amount to 591,333 mt of mixed commodities. Considering available resources, the current WFP shortfall against the national relief pipeline amounts to 147,000 mt (valued at US\$119 million).

Productive Safety Net Programme: WFP shortfalls for the PSNP amount to 68,000 mt of cereals (valued at US\$54 million).

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Targeted Supplementary Feeding: current shortfall amounts to 17,000 mt (valued at US\$17 million).

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Key Issues

WHO report confirmed cases of AWD in the following locations: Takusa, Chilga, Dembia in Amhara Region and Akaki woreda in Oromiya with unconfirmed reports of suspected AWD cases in Somali Region.

Response

UNICEF teams are currently undertaking assessment missions to identify CTC (OTP/SC) sites that require immediate WASH interventions including; water purification and construction of basic hygiene facilities.

WHO has provided US\$29,000 to the Amhara Regional Health Bureau to resource training of health officials and procurement of drugs and medical supplies to enhance the capacity of regional authorities to counter the AWD threat.

Gaps and Requirements

The core gaps hampering response to AWD include; shortage of drugs and medical supplies at health facility levels, low coverage of sanitation services and limited supply of safe water as well as poor hygiene practices in affected kebeles. The limited availability of water purification chemicals continues to frustrate efforts to implement measures to prevent further spread of the outbreak.

Agriculture and Livestock

Key Issues

Belg crop production has completely failed in most of the *belg* producing regions of the country and this will have significant impact upon food security prospects for the coming months. WFP field monitors report a rapid deterioration of pasture in Somali Region and have observed migration of livestock to areas where some rainfall has been received.

Response

FAO convened two workshops for partners on pastoralist field schools and slaughter destocking and cash for work. SCUS, GAA, HCS, Islamic Relief, LVIA, OWDA, COOPI and ACF were

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among the participants and are working on proposals on slaughter destocking. FAO has deployed one staff member to Borena to provide training to development agents on fodder production and preservation of local feed resources. FAO is fielding an assessment mission to the drought-affected areas in Afar Region on the 4th August 2008. FAO will undertake the assessment in conjunction with officials from the Afar Agricultural Bureau.

FAO and partners have developed action plans for agriculture and livestock interventions in line with request from the Special Committee on the Somali Region. The Ministry of Agriculture is preparing to deploy a trade mission to Somali Regional state. FAO has identified suppliers for the procurement of seeds for Amhara and Oromiya Regions.

Gaps and Requirements

FAO continue to advocate for commercial and slaughter destocking to safeguard available pasture and rangeland resources for core breeding stock. FAO and partners are urging humanitarian partners to plan for supporting early recovery interventions to safeguard livelihoods and future food security prospects.

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Humanitarian Meeting Schedule

Date	Meeting	Location and Time
Monday 4 th August 2008	Special Committee on the Somali Region	DPPA, 15.00 (Invitation Only).
Tuesday 5 th August 2008	WASH Task-Force Meeting	Ministry of Water Resources, 10.00.
Wednesday 6 th August 2008	Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU)/ MANTF Meeting Emergency Seed Working Group Meeting	DPPA Board Room, 14.00. FAO, 16.00.
Thursday 7 th August 2008	Humanitarian Coordination Meeting	UNDP Conference Hall, E.C.A. 10.00.
Friday 8 th August 2008	Safety and Security Meeting Emergency Agriculture Task Force Meeting	UNDSS Office, 09.30. FAO, 10.00.

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Editorial Note: The information in this document is based on reports and field information from a variety of sources including UN agencies, NGOs and government partners as well as the different coordination forums.