

May 2005



Regional Update ►

UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM ETHIOPIA

Improving Child Survival



Photo: UNICEF

Food aid is critically important in a chronically food-insecure country. Yet as malnutrition continues to be the underlying cause of 57 percent of infant deaths in Ethiopia, despite generous emergency food aid contributions of about US \$185 million per year, the road to improved child survival is evidently more complicated than we might have thought. Unique in its fusion of food, health and education initiatives, the Enhanced Outreach Strategy–Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme for Child Survival (EOS)¹ acknowledges the multiplicity of variants contributing to malnutrition, and is working to significantly reduce morbidity and mortality amongst children. The progress it has made in this respect since being launched a year ago is admirable, especially given all non-food activity this year has been carried out on only 20 percent of the required funding.

The EOS is concentrating on 325 of Ethiopia's most food-insecure woredas. Within these, the programme specifically targets 6.8 million children under five, along with pregnant and lactating mothers, to increase their access to a set of key child survival interventions. Over the next three years, the valuable nutritional information gathered through the screening activity is also gradually building a database which will considerably enhance Ethiopia's comprehensive early warning system on humanitarian needs. The EOS interventions should thus ultimately address child survival in a much more consistent manner.

Highly targeted programmes undertaken by NGOs in the health and nutrition sector have had an impact on specific communities in the past, but this is the first large scale national scheme to take account of the multi-sectoral factors influencing nutrition. Until now, early warning

¹ EOS is a joint initiative between FMOH, DPPB, UNICEF and WFP

NEWS ►

Report on Child Survival during the 2002-03

Drought in Ethiopia

The Ethiopia Child Survival Survey (ECSS), sponsored by UNICEF investigated child survival rates among the general population of rural Ethiopia during the 2002-03 drought. ►

Emergency Food Contributions Reach 81% of Requirements

The coverage of emergency food requirements as of 31 May is 81 percent, with confirmed contributions of 378,000 tons, and an unresourced amount of 87,000 tons (valued at around US\$37 million). ►

Recent Assessments in Somali Region

Hope for the Horn (HFH) conducted an assessment from 13-21 May to update the impacts of the recent torrential rains in Harshin, Aware, Gashamo, Danot, Galaadi and Bokh Districts of Somali region.

Glossary of important Meteorological and Seasonal Terms Used for Ethiopia ►

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has been dictated by agricultural assessments of crop coverage, production and market prices. Whilst these may have been effective in identifying food security on the macro-level, they fail to detect the needs of the most vulnerable in a holistic manner. In spite of a food surplus at woreda level, the exchange entitlement of some households may be so limited that they cannot afford to purchase even minimal provisions. Such methodologies also fail to reflect critical variations in diet which mean that again despite crop availability, a person's health may suffer because he is not eating the right quantities of the right kinds of food. By working at community and household level, and extending its interventions beyond food aid into education and health care practices, the EOS deals with such individual variations in the nutritional status of women and children.

A balance between the various elements of the project is maintained through interagency cooperation. FMOH² and UNICEF trained health workers are responsible for vitamin A supplementation on a six monthly basis, de-worming, measles vaccinations and the distribution of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs). The EOS therefore directly tackles the health problems most threatening to Ethiopia's children (damage to the eyes, growth retardation and increased susceptibility to infections as a result of vitamin A deficiency, malnutrition and anaemia from intestinal worm infections, and death and long-lasting morbidity caused by measles and malaria). UNICEF also supports health workers to assess the nutritional status for mothers and children. Those found to be malnourished are subsequently referred to a supplementary feeding programme administered by the DPPB³/ Regional DPPC⁴ and supported by WFP. Besides offering immediate life-saving response to the most needy, this detailed and methodically gathered nutritional information provides the Government with a distinctly more accurate knowledge of the number and location of children requiring supplementary food. Finally, as mothers and caretakers are educated on improved childcare, feeding and hygiene practices, the EOS will contribute to the improvement of public health in the country. The respected medical journal *The Lancet* maintains that 13 percent of under-five deaths may be prevented through optimum breast feeding promotion, thus indicating that this information/educational component of the project is not to be underestimated in its impact.

A year after the first EOS pilot project in SNNPR, screening figures still sometimes produce abnormal GAM to SAM ratios. The Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) of the DPPC has the ultimate responsibility of re-examining questionable data, and if necessary coordinating validation. However, UNICEF acknowledges the challenges faced by EOS health workers who are new to a screening technique which detects malnutrition through weight for height calculations and the presence of bilateral oedema (kwashiorkor). It will take both time and practice until they become fully proficient in this new function. That said, as long as the EOS lacks the resources to provide its health practitioners with much needed training and refresher courses, their skills and experience will continue to remain limited.

The interlinked nature of health, nutrition and education makes it logical that they should be dealt with simultaneously. However the logistics of getting agencies such as UNICEF, WFP, FMOH, DPPC, DPPB and RHBs to work together at so many different levels, are challenging. Some adjustments for example have had to be made to ensure that the time between the screening by the FMOH /Regional Health Bureau and the actual targeted distribution of supplementary

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² Federal Ministry of Health

³ Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Bureau

⁴ Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Commission

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food by DPPB /Regional DPPC is no greater than three weeks. A lesson which has been quickly learnt in the case of a two month delay in SNNPR, is that the process of communicating the screening results from the health structures to the DPPC should henceforth be worked out at the lowest possible level.

In spite of these issues, the EOS must be commended on what it has achieved during the last year. In the eight regions covered so far, five million children have been screened and supplied with vitamin A supplementation, and four million have been de-wormed. The EOS is thus providing a much needed service while the Government rolls out its Health Extension Service Programme (HESP) over the next three years. The programme has also so far trained a total of 2,200 of health professionals in child survival interventions. It might be noted that in terms of the food component, the EOS guarantees that women control the entire distribution process: 6,000 women from village level will be trained by the end of 2005, to receive, store, educate beneficiaries on nutrition, and finally distribute the food. Effectively contributing to the MDG of enhanced gender equality, this should bring about significant changes to the role of women in Ethiopian society. By also devolving the programme's budget directly to the region, DPPB is provided with increased financial flexibility and responsibility. Empowering affected communities, EOS is therefore building up local capacity, which will complement the long term HESP objectives of a strengthened regional health system.

The EOS was born out of the need to address the complexity of nutrition in a more sophisticated manner. Multi-faceted in approach, it has every chance of achieving this objective. Teething problems associated with capacity should not be denied, but learning from these experiences the EOS should only continue to improve. Its screening data therefore provides an increasingly comprehensive and accurate picture of the nutritional status of children in different parts of Ethiopia. As Federal DPPC is now informed of the exact amounts of food that need to be pre-positioned in each distribution centre, this is having an immediate and positive effect on the targeting of general rations and supplementary feeding. Donors should recognise moreover that this valuable programme will eventually provide time series data on the nutritional status of children, pregnant and lactating mothers, which could significantly improve nutritional surveillance, policy and practices.

The EOS is an ambitious and unprecedented programme. Bearing in mind all that it has accomplished when under-funded, the long and short term benefits of a fully funded programme would clearly be enormous. Without immediate and sustained financial support the programme will not be able to achieve its objectives, but offering real improvements to child survival and development at very reasonable costs, it is an investment we cannot afford to ignore.

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Regional Update

Tigray

Rains in March encouraged farmers to plant and prepare land for the next main season crops and helped improve pasture and water availability for livestock. Moreover, following a dry spell during the first two weeks of May, rains resumed in the second half of the month in Central, Eastern, Western and Southern zones. Performance of *belg* crops has improved and *teff*, sorghum, maize wheat and barely are at a growth and flowering stage in all *belg* producing areas. In most woredas of Southern Zone the physical condition of livestock has improved due to the improved rain. Public works under the Safety Net commenced in late March in exchange for food or cash distributions in all chronically food insecure woredas. Relief Society of Tigray (REST) has started to implement Safety Nets in Ahfrem, Werie Lehe, Mereb Lehe, Degua Temben of Central zone; Wukro in Eastern and Raya Azebo in Southern zone. The May Flash Update of the 2005 Humanitarian Appeal identified 311,078 additional beneficiaries increasing the total number to 702,922 in the region until December.

Afar

The situation in Afar has improved due to good rains during May in all zones except the northern and eastern woredas of Eli Dar, Megale and Erebtı woredas. Although the rains improved availability of water and pasture, it has greatly endangered human and livestock health because of rotting animal carcasses. All the people and their cattle that migrated to neighbouring regions of Amhara and Tigray and between zones within the region have returned to their origin, with the exception of those that migrated from Megale and Erebtı woredas in Zone 2 to Teru in Zone 4. In mid April the Federal DPPC, regional DPPB and Food Security Bureau (FSB) scaled up the relief food distributions in the worst affected woredas following a federal and regional assessment. Currently the May ration for 544,800 beneficiaries is under distribution. The Flash Update of the 2005 Humanitarian Appeal identified 68,700 additional people requiring assistance until July. The upcoming *belg/gu* assessment at end of June is expected to provide revised beneficiary numbers for the region for the period July – December 2005. Food distributions in the region have been regular for each month since January as the regions has been given priority attention.

Amhara

The performance of *belg* rains since April is reported to be good. Following this, land has been prepared and planted with long term crops in Wag Hamra zone, among other places. The improved rainfall has improved pasture and water availability for animals, here and in other zones. However, in lowland areas of North Wollo, excessive rainfall has had a negative impact on planted *teff* which has become waterlogged. Land preparation for *meher* planting has also been disrupted due to the high intensity of rains. Humanitarian concerns persist in Sayint, Tenta and Legambo woredas in South Wello; Sekota and Dehana woredas in Wag Hamra; and Simada woredas of South Gonder. The Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) has arranged with NGOs to conduct standard nutrition surveys in these woredas in order to validate or make necessary adjustments to earlier Enhanced Outreach Strategy (EOS) data. The Productive Safety Net Programme implementation started in February 2005 in most places, but resource transfer has been delayed for various reasons: tardy resource allocation, the election campaign and capacity constraints. This has a negative impact on household food availability and the local market (unusual increase of cereals and livestock price). Although instructions to include the poorest households in the Productive Safety

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Net programme have been passed down from the region to the woredas, concerns persist on whether this policy is being fully implemented and whether resources are sufficient to cover the increased needs that follow this shift in targeting.

Oromiya

The humanitarian situation in Dodota Sire, Zeway Dugda, Jeju, Hitosa, Aseko, Munesa, Chole and Lode Hitosa woredas in Arsi zone; Meda Wolebo, Menangetu, Guradamole in Bale zone and Fedis, Alemaya, Meyu, Grawa, Bedeno, Kurfachele and Babile woredas in East Hararghe are still a concern. The region has requested the Federal DPPC to conduct a rapid disaster area assessment in the above woredas in Arsi zone to verify the validity of requests from the woredas to include 25,000 new beneficiaries in relief programmes. In Borena, around 6,000 people are displaced by recent floods in Gelana woreda. Neighboring woredas (Agere Mariam and Abaya) are similarly hit by the floods although on a lower scale. The region has requested the Federal DPPC for food, shelter, clothing and household utensils. The situation in Mieso and Doba woredas of West Hararghe zone, formerly designated as hot spots, is now improving. Blanket supplementary food distributions are taking place for the 35 percent of the population considered most vulnerable in all hot spot woredas. Federal and Regional DPPC and Regional ENCU are conducting nutrition surveys in Menangetu and Guradamole (Bale zone) which started the third week of May. ENCU is also coordinating a nutrition survey with DPPC and the NGO Merlin for Zeway Dugda and Dodota Sire woredas in Arsi. Federal DPPC and CARE have conducted nutrition survey in Grawa, Bedeno, and Kurfachele woredas. Meanwhile CARE is handling the Community-based Therapeutic Care (CTC) in these woredas. In addition, the ongoing tribal conflict between Guji and Gabbra in southern Oromiya has resulted in massive displacement of people. Reports also indicate that people are being displaced in the border area of Moyale and Borena zones due to conflict between Oromos and Somalis. Regional authorities requested food and non-food assistance for the displaced. The May Flash Update of the 2005 Humanitarian Appeal identified 182,751 additional beneficiaries increasing the total number of beneficiaries to 682,755 in the region until December.

SNNPR

Recent reports by UNICEF/WFP/DPPB assessment in Aleta Wondo, Dale and Shebedino woredas in Sidama zones identified water problems and water borne diseases. World Vision, in collaboration with local authorities, has begun safety net distributions to 103,031 people in six woredas of the region. Recent EOS second round screening results are more positive than those collected on the first round in in June 2004. There is also an improvement in the food security situation in Gofa woreda of Gamo Gofa zone following food distributions. In addition, reports indicate that the production of sweet potato is improving in different parts of the region, especially in Wolaiya zone. However, the situation in Kucha woreda in the same zone, where distribution of food and cash to Safety Net and emergency beneficiaries have not yet started, is of concern. Flooding and land slides from heavy rains have affected up to 25 kebeles in Boricha (Sidama zone), Gamo Gofa zone and Alaba special woreda. Around 25 km of road between Arba Minch and Sodo was completely cut off. Some assistance is underway for people in the affected areas which are still surrounded by water. However there are no human casualties reported so far. Detailed assessment is being conducted to examine the extent of damage and the required assistance. Despite the heavy rainfall and floods experienced in May, crops are generally performing well in mid and lowland areas of Gamo Gofa zone and elsewhere in *belg* growing areas.

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Gambella

Significant displacement of populations in the Nuer zone is increasingly placing a strain on an already depleted social service system. This situation is expected to worsen with the expected arrival of *meher* rains, which will hamper road access. Ongoing conflict in certain areas of the region raises human rights concerns. Following the completion of measles, vitamin A and de-worming campaigns, UNICEF conducted a polio vaccination campaign in eight woredas targeting 88,522 children from 23-27 May. Preliminary results will be available in the second week of June. ICRC has distributed seeds, food and agricultural tools for 9,140 displaced families.

Somali

Heavy *gu* rain, which began on 23 April, caused rivers including the Wabe Shabele, Jerer and Fafen to create floods in the region. The number of affected remains unclear, with conflicting reports ranging from 23,000 to 100,000 in seven zones of the region. Outbreaks of diarrhoea and urgent need for preventive measures against malaria have been reported from the affected woredas. DPPC reports that the existing food allocations in the 2005 Humanitarian Appeal for the affected areas should be sufficient to cover food needs of flood affected people. On 25 May a joint UN/DPPC mission travelled to the region to re-assess the damage and identify assistance gaps of flood affected areas in Gode, Jijiga, Kebridehar and Degehabur zones. The team looked at water, sanitation, health, agriculture and nutritional needs as well as road conditions in these areas. The team has made recommendations for appropriate interventions to be implemented shortly. The UN, NGOs, ICRC and the Government provided some food and non-food assistance to the affected population. DPPB reports that food aid deliveries have resumed as restrictions requiring military escorts for food aid deliveries has been removed, at least for the time being. Poor road conditions, however are still impeding distributions in some areas affected by the floods.

On 25 May a joint UN/DPPC mission travelled to re-assess the damage and identify assistance gaps of flood affected areas in Gode, Jijiga, Kebridehar and Degehabur zones of Somali Region

News

Report on Child Survival during the 2002-03 Drought in Ethiopia

The Ethiopia Child Survival Survey (ECSS), sponsored by UNICEF, investigated child survival rates among the general population of rural Ethiopia during the 2002-03 drought. The existence of high malnutrition 'hotspots' during the drought had led to fears that, despite a huge relief operation, increased child mortality might have occurred among the general population. The study sought to examine whether this had happened and what exactly were the determinants of child survival. The ECSS was conducted in 4,816 households in rural communities and seven urban centres across four regions of the country (Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya and SNNPR) covering both drought-affected and non-drought affected households.

Child mortality rates had been falling in Ethiopia during the 1990s; however it appeared that the decline has stalled since approximately 2000. The 2004 ECSS found that overall child mortality levels were higher in drought-affected areas than in non-drought affected areas. However this differential appeared to be attributable not to the recent drought but to structural socio-economic factors prevailing in those localities. Multivariate analysis indicates that household-level characteristics (sex of household head and number of livestock owned) and community level characteristics (water source and district production variability) are the significant predictors of child survival. The study found that the 2002-03 drought itself was not associated with increased mortality. Food aid had a small but significant association with increased survival, implying that the direct and indirect impacts of

the very substantial relief programme served to prevent excess child deaths among the general population.

Beyond child mortality, the study also compared nutrition status (stunting of 1-5 year olds) and education enrolment for school aged children in drought-affected and non-drought affected areas. The study found that the drought was associated with increased stunting and the withdrawal of children from school.

The major conclusion of the study is that the drought of 2002-03 occurred without a measurable increase in child mortality among the general population, and that this can be attributed in part to the relief effort. According to the report, it can be counted as a major success that the largest food crisis in Ethiopia's modern history occurred without a general increase in child deaths. However, this optimistic conclusion must be offset against several observations. The first is that malnutrition rates remain extremely high and human development indices are low in Ethiopia. Relief and child survival interventions in Ethiopia appear to be following the pattern of South Asia a generation ago, where child survival improved, but the nutritional status of children did not ameliorate. Secondly, relief interventions should be broadened from a general ration to include rural water supply and livelihoods support. Thirdly, the evidence outside the present study for increased child mortality in localised 'hotspots' remains compelling. The persistence of localised emergencies resulting in child deaths remains a disturbing feature of Ethiopia's rural economy.

Emergency Food Contributions Reach 81% of Requirements

The coverage of emergency food requirements as of 31 May is 81 percent, with confirmed contributions of 378,000 tonnes, and an unresourced amount of 87,000 tonnes (valued at around US\$37 million). The overall requirements for emergency food for 2005 are currently 464,000 tonnes, based on the Flash Update of the 2005 Humanitarian Appeal for Ethiopia, issued in early May. The upcoming mid-year *belg* and *gu* assessments in June-July will update emergency food requirements from July to December. The adjusted requirements will be included in an Appeal Update in July but donors can begin plans for additional contributions using information on July-December needs in recent years noted in the Flash Update. For targeted supplementary feeding under the EOS/CSI, the coverage is now 77 percent, with confirmed contributions of 47,000 tonnes and a shortfall of 14,000 tonnes (valued at around US\$6.5 million). The requirements for the targeted supplementary feeding have been adjusted downwards slightly from estimates made earlier in the year in view of recent projections from nutritional screening data.

Recent Assessments in Somali Region

Hope for the Horn (HFH) conducted an assessment from 13-21 May to update the impacts of the recent torrential rains in Harshin, Aware, Gashamo, Danot, Galaadi and Bokh Districts of Somali region. According to the preliminary report, the impact of the last season drought and delayed onset of the *gu* rains have taken toll on the livelihoods of the pastoralists in these districts by weakening and/or killing large numbers of livestock. Recent preliminary EOS screening results conducted in ten woredas by the Regional Health Bureau with UNICEF support revealed 16.2 percent GAM and 2.5 percent SAM. In addition to the drought impacts, the late but unprecedented torrential rains that started in April 2005 have caused further heavy losses of property (livestock, shelter) and human lives. Fortunately this has contributed to the flourishing of flora this year and improve pasture for the remaining livestock in all the districts. However rehabilitation of damaged Birkas and supplementary feeding for affected IDP children are crucial.

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Glossary of Important Meteorological and Seasonal Terms Used for Ethiopia (Source: FEWS NET)

Ethiopia's *Keremt* or *Meher* Rains Defined

Since Ethiopia is in the tropics, physical conditions and variations in altitude have resulted in a great diversity of climate, soil, and vegetation. Rainfall is seasonal, varying in amount, space, and time. There is a long and heavy summer rain, normally called the major rains or *keremt*, which falls from June-September. It is followed by the *baga* hot, dry period from October through February. In some areas there are short and moderate spring rains in March and April known as the minor rains or *belg*. These rainy periods correspond to Ethiopia's primary and secondary agricultural seasons, known as the *meher* and *belg* seasons. *Kiremt* and *belg* rains cover all regions of Ethiopia with exception of Borena zone in Oromiya region and Konso special woreda and South Omo zone in SNNPR which receive *gu* and *deyr* rains (see below for definitions).

Ethiopia's *Belg* Rains Defined

In the spring, a strong cyclonic centre develops over Ethiopia and Sudan. Winds from the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean highs are drawn towards this centre and blow across central and southern Ethiopia. These moist, easterly and south-easterly winds produce the main rain in south-eastern Ethiopia (traditionally termed *Sugum/Genna*) and these spring rains cover the north-east, central, and central part of the north-western highlands. The little rains of the highlands are known as *belg* rains, referring to the second most important sowing season of the region.

Somali Region's *Gu* Rainy Season Defined

Rainfall in southern Somalia is bimodal; there are two rainy seasons. Rainfall from March through early June affecting both water sources and pasture is called the *gu* rain. Sometimes it is also referred to as the 'long rains.'

Somali Region's *Deyr* Season Defined

A minor, but important, rainfall from late September through to early December which affects water sources and pasture in January/February is called the *deyr* rains. Sometimes these are also called the "short rains". (A fair amount of the *deyr*, or *der* crop is recessional or irrigated.)

Somali Region's *Hagaa* Season Defined

The time between late June and early September, which is dry, windy cloudy, but rarely rainy is locally called *hagga*. In southern Somalia, light coastal showers may fall after the *gu* and before the *deyr* from July through October.

Somali Region's *Jillal* Season Defined

Jillal is the hottest and driest season in Somali Region between late December and early March.

See table below on the Normal Crop Calendar for Long Cycle Crops and Rainfall Calendars for Ethiopia:

***Kiremt* and *belg* rains cover all regions of Ethiopia with exception of Borena zone in Oromiya region and Konso special woreda and South Omo zone in SNNPR which receive *gu* and *deyr* rains**

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Normal Crop Calendar for Long Cycle Crops and Rainfall Calendars for Ethiopia

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Long cycle Crops	Planting												
	Mid Season												
	Harvesting												
Crop Dependent Areas	Belg Rains												
	Meher Rains												
Afar and Northern Tip of Somali	Major Rains (<i>Karma & Dadaa</i>)												
	Minor Rains (<i>Sugum</i>)												
Somali Region and Borena Zone	Major Rains (<i>Gu/Genna</i>)												
	Minor rains (<i>Deyr/Hagaya</i>)												

2005 Food and Non-Food Contribution

Total food Requirements (464,385 tonnes)	US\$184,760,800
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2004 carryover stocks and 2005 contributions:

Grand Total (377,673 tonnes)	US\$160,824,017
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Shortfall (86,712) (19%)	US\$23,963,783
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Total non-food Requirements	US\$ 135,635,016
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2005 contributions:

Agriculture	US\$ 2,557,219
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Health and Nutrition	US\$ 38,263,313
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Water and Sanitation	US\$ 6,866,304
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Disaster Response / Capacity Strengthening	US\$ 123,414
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Overall Coordination	US\$ 869,494
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Grand Total	US\$ 48,679,744
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Shortfall (64%)	US\$ 86,955,272
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