



Humanitarian Bulletin

UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

WEEKLY HUMANITARIAN HIGHLIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA

14 August 2006

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE REACHING TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY FLOODS IN DIRE DAWA

On Sunday 5 August, in the dead of night, Dire Dawa and the surrounding areas were devastated by severe flooding. Mortalities have reached approximately 250 so far and this number is expected to rise. Approximately 10,000 people are estimated to be displaced in the town and others are likely to be displaced in the surrounding areas. Impact assessments are ongoing. Humanitarian partners and government have provided emergency assistance and have pledged to provide more. The immediate response includes a one month ration of food by WFP for immediate distribution for the 10,000 people affected by the floods amounting to 170 tonnes of food (cereals, blended food, vegetable oil and salt). Other non-food items required includes shelter as approximately 6,000 displaced people are being housed in temporary shelter at schools in six sites. Disease risks are high due to lack of sanitation and overcrowding. The city council is developing resettlement plans and initial relocation is expected to begin as early as next week. A task force including UNDP and DPPA has been created to assist this process. UNICEF has so far dispatched non-food items, including, 8000 blankets, 3000 jerry cans, 20000 soaps, 1000 mattresses, 10000 cups, 10000 plates. Registration of the population in need is currently ongoing and the UN, Government and NGOs have already begun a gap identification exercise to meet their needs. For more information contact: ocha-eth@un.org

AWD CASES INCREASING

A joint mission comprised of UNICEF, WHO, OCHA, and Government representatives undertook an assessment of the Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) situation in West Arsi zone from 4-8 August. The purpose of the mission was to follow up on a previous assessment of the humanitarian situation following the outbreak of AWD in June. Preliminary data indicate that there have been a total of 9,270 cases and 89 deaths since the outbreak. Currently there are 44 Case Treatment Centers in the affected areas. The highest numbers of cases are reported in Shashamene and Arsi Negele woredas with additional cases now confirmed in SNNPR. For more information contact: mapped@unicef.org

SOMALIA REFUGEE ASSESSMENT MISSION TO DEBRIEF HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

A UNHCR-led joint inter-agency assessment mission to remote areas of eastern Ethiopia reported no refugee influxes from Somalia on the ground, although some cases are yet to be verified. The main goal of the mission was to assess the extent to which Somali refugees had crossed into Ethiopia since the escalation of current hostilities in order to make a needs assessment. The nine day assessment mission comprised of UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, OCHA, FAO and UNDSS. The assessment covered anticipated entry points of potential refugee influx at approximately a dozen localities in Ferfer and Dolo Bay. Local authorities will inform UNHCR in case of any future influx and two possible refugee camp sites have already been identified. The mission will debrief humanitarian partners on its findings on 14 August. There are currently 99,000 refugees in Ethiopia including 16,000 Somali refugees in Kebribeyah camp, near Jijiga in north-east Ethiopia.

WEATHER UPDATE

The main *kiremt* rainy season (June to September) starts in June and peaks towards the end of July in all *meher* growing areas of the country. This is also the time when excessive rainfall results in flooding in many areas. The *kiremt* rains intensified from the second dekad of June, covering nearly all crop dependent areas of the west and the drought-prone eastern half of Tigray. The whole western half and northeastern crop dependent areas of the country received normal to above-normal precipitation in the first dekad of July, with some areas reporting flooding and hailstorms. According to field level reports from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD), moisture conditions improved significantly in all crop dependent areas of the country in July. Afar Region, however, remained very dry with the exception of a few days of rains during the last dekad of July. Pasture and water availability in the southern and southeastern lowlands in Borena zone, Oromiya Region and southern parts of Somali Region remains tenuous. Contact: Ethiopia@fews.net

DFID VISITS HRF PROJECTS

The first donor visit to OCHA HRF projects was conducted 7-9 August. A representative from DFID accompanied by a member of the HRF Review Board and OCHA staff visited FAO's animal health program and CARE's traditional water point rehabilitation activities in Borena zone, Oromiya Region. During the visit, the team met local elders and zonal government authorities and discussed relief priorities. In addition, the OCHA HRF Team plans to travel to Somali Region from 14-18 August to monitor HRF funded projects. Please visit the HRF website for further details: www.ocha-eth.org/hrf/

Contributions are welcome. Please submit to UN OCHA-Eth by Friday 1100hrs, ocha-eth@un.org