



AWD UPDATE

AWD continues to be of concern in Afar Region with reports of more than 6,000 cases and 240 deaths in 17 woredas since September 2006. The situation is exacerbated by poor case management, limited facilities and shortage of health professionals in the CTCs. Most CTCs are located in remote inaccessible areas. To highlight the need for urgent action, the Minister of Water Resources visited the region last week. An AWD response plan developed with technical support from the joint advisory mission is awaiting the region's endorsement. UNICEF redirected an EMWAT kit from Gambella to supply the worst affected woredas of Gewane and Buri Mudaitu woredas. In Somali Region despite a slight decrease in numbers of cases, the disease continues to spread to new areas. A response plan has been prepared and the regional Emergency WASH Taskforce in Jijiga has been reactivated. Meanwhile, UNICEF and MSF-Belgium are supporting training of regional and zonal Water and Health Bureau Officers on AWD prevention and control including case management; further training will take place in Gode and Filtu in the coming days. Meanwhile in SNNPR, Oxfam GB has reported that six new woredas in Gedeo zone have been recently affected. Moreover, the situation in Bale zone, Oromiya Region continues to be of concern. For more information contact: ocha-eth@un.org

GU RAINS IN SOMALI REGION

Recent reports from Somali Region indicate that Jijiga town and its vicinity have started receiving rains. This might signal the onset of *gu* rains that usually start between the last dekad of March and the first dekad of April. The rains are anticipated to alleviate water shortages in some woredas of the region. Nevertheless, vast areas of pastures have been destroyed by wild fires in parts of Chereti woreda of Afder zone of the region. For more information contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org

MIGRATION IN EAST HARERGHE ZONE, OROMIYA REGION

According to WFP, more than 65 households have migrated from Chenaksen woreda of East Hararghe zone in search of employment due to food shortage. Further migrations are anticipated to increase in the coming weeks unless immediate food interventions take place. The federal Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Agency (DPPA) is planning to conduct a rapid assessment to further assess the situation. Meanwhile, DPPA has dispatched 90 percent of March's allocation of 396 tons of relief food for approximately 21,240 emergency beneficiaries in Tocha and Mareka woredas of Dawro zone in SNNPR. In addition, GOAL is undertaking a US\$ 50,000 capacity strengthening program with the bureau of health in Derashe Special Woreda and Aroresa woreda in SNNPR funded by USAID/OFDA. Furthermore, the organization plans to establish a CTC in these woredas as requirements arise. For more information contact: wfp.addisababa@wfp.org and dinkneha@goalethiopia.com

NEW VACCINE INTRODUCED

The Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) and partners including UNICEF and WHO launched a five-in-one vaccine in Jijiga town on 23 March 2007 - an upgrade from the previous three-in-one package. In addition to the regular vaccinations for measles, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio and tuberculosis, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) has supported the inclusion of Hepatitis B and Haemophilus Influenzae. The vaccine has been tested and pre-qualified by WHO and has no distinct adverse effect. It also reduces mothers' frequency of visits to health centers and is convenient for health care providers. For more information contact: aingabire@unicef.org

OVER 10,000 SUDANESE REFUGEES REPATRIATED

One year since UNHCR commenced the repatriation of Sudanese refugees from Ethiopia, over 10,000 have safely returned home. Further convoys are expected to continue until the onset of the rainy season in the area. There are currently five refugee camps hosting Sudanese in Ethiopia. UNHCR plans to close Yarenja camp at the end of this month if its repatriation programme goes according to plan. For more information contact: gegziabk@unhcr.org