



TWO CASES OF POLIO FOUND IN ETHIOPIA

Two children have contracted polio in Ethiopia jeopardising the country's chance to be accredited with a polio free status by the end of the year. The announcement by the World Health Organisation (WHO) makes Ethiopia the 14 country to now be infected. This is Ethiopia's first outbreak in four years and both cases were detected in Tigray region but in different areas. The Ministry of Health believes the virus came from Sudan. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is conducting a massive Africa-wide polio vaccination campaign aimed at stamping out the virus globally by the end of the year. The Ministry of Health and WHO has sent a team to Tigray to assess the situation and are expected back on 2 March. A two year old girl is believed to be one of the victims. For further information contact: who-epi@et.afro.who.int

2005 APPEAL UNDER FUNDED, URGENT DONOR FUNDING REQUIRED

The UNCT issued a Special Alert on 23 February advising that the 2005 Joint Humanitarian Appeal is significantly under funded and needs will go unmet unless contributions are made quickly. Emergency food needs are only 30 percent funded and the situation for non-food needs is even more serious as less than 5 percent of contributions have been made so far to the US \$112 million requested. The 2005 Joint Humanitarian Appeal for Ethiopia was launched on 23 December 2004 and seeks 387,482 tonnes of food valued at approximately US \$159 million for the estimated 2.2 million needy people. The alert is available on www.ocha-eth.org

CARE CONDUCTS MONTHLY FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT IN EAST AND WEST HARARGHE

CARE Ethiopia conducted a monthly Food and Livelihood Security Assessment in East and West Hararghe from 7-15 February. The food security condition in many woredas is delicate which may further lead to displacement if not immediately addressed. As a result early reliance on market purchases, increased migration in search of labour, displacement of some households, and an increased dependence on the sale of forest products prevail. Market indicators in both zones show that there is a general increase in the prices of grain which could further rise in the coming months. There is a severe shortage of pasture and water in some lowland areas of the region and seed shortage for *Belg* planting has been also reported due to poor harvest in the last season. For further information contact: moges@careet.org

FUND REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH AGRICULTURAL TASK FORCES AT REGIONAL AND WOREDA LEVEL

FAO in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Regional Bureaus of Agriculture has prepared a capacity building project in 50 selected drought prone woredas of Tigray, Amhara, SNNP and Oromiya regions. The project will provide materials, logistics, budget support including technical assistance and training to establish agricultural task forces and to enhance coordination and information management capacity. It will also improve local capacity in preparedness planning and effective response. The project will establish up to ten seed stores in selected strategic areas. The total cost of the project is about US \$450,000 and donor funding is required to address the need. This action is in response to the recommendations of the Joint Evaluation of the Response to the 2002-2003 Emergency in Ethiopia. For more information contact: fao-ethiopia@fao.org

AFAR REGION EMERGENCY UPDATE

The humanitarian emergency situation in Afar continues to be problematic according to a UNICEF team which has recently assessed the health, nutrition and water availability in the region. UNICEF reports that families whose camels did not entirely migrate are relatively better off thanks to the limited milk available and water trucking continued in February in the most critical areas. The assessment also reported that while in theory 28 percent of people have access to health care services in the region but due to the present situation access is even more limited. UNICEF has sent 45 emergency drugs and renewable supplies kits to the regional health bureau in Semera. The team recommends that April's polio immunisation round for Afar should include measles vaccinations, vitamin A supplementation and de-worming. For more information contact: spizzi@unicef.org

FOREST FIRE IN WESTERN ETHIOPIA

Last week, a team of World Vision staff visited western Ethiopia to assess development challenges and potentials of the area. While traveling, the team observed that forest fires are destroying the forest resource and wildlife habitat in some localities of western Wollega Administrative Zone and Eastern part of Benishangul Gumuz Region. In some areas, the fire also destroyed coffee plants and mango trees. World Vision reports some households near Dedessa valley lost their homes and food crops due to the uncontrolled seasonal fire. As the problem is recurring in the area, World Vision recommends appropriate measures should be taken to mitigate the impact of the catastrophe. For more information contact: wveth@telecom.net.et