

# Alert

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## Ethiopia

# Emergency situation in Ethiopia due to La Nina induced drought

Geneva, 07 July 2011

### 1. Brief description of the emergency

The prolonged *La Nina* conditions in Ethiopia have affected a second consecutive rain season resulting in drought. Following a complete failure of the 2010 October-December rains and related harvests, the 2011 March-May rains began late and were erratic. This has led to drought which by some measures is considered the worst in thirty years. The drought has led to substantial harvest failure, a decrease in water availability, deteriorating pasture conditions and livestock losses in the southern, southeastern pastoral and agro-pastoral parts of the country, including major bulgar cropping areas of Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Tigray.

According to the latest Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) and World Food Programme (WFP) joint food security report, the cumulative effects of the failed October to December 2010 rains and the insignificant contribution of early 2011 rains means that food security in lowland and pastoral areas will be classified at emergency levels in the coming months until the next rainy season between October and December 2011.

Areas most affected and becoming of a particular concern include Borena, Guji, Bale, and the southern and central zones of Somali, Amhara, Tigray and Afar regions.

Humanitarian agencies estimate 3.2 million people require humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia.

### 2. Impact

The drought affected pastoral and agro-pastoral area of south and southeastern lowlands of Ethiopia is dry and with no pasture and water. A considerable number of livestock has died. According to UNOCHA (13 June 2011), milk yields declined by more than 80% for cattle and 50% for camels; no goat milk production was recorded. Herd size has decreased to approximately 20 to 40% of normal for cattle; 65 to 80% of normal for shoats; and 60 to 75% of normal for camels due to increased livestock death, sale and slaughter. Staple cereal prices remain higher than last year and livestock prices are below average making it difficult for pastoralists to meet food needs.

The situation in the bulgar cropping areas of Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Tigray is equally worrying due to the complete crop failure. Inadequate moisture has led to a near total failure of sweet potato

production in central and eastern SNNPR. Coffee plantations have also been affected. An early multi-agency bulgar assessment has just been completed although its results are not yet available. The deteriorating food security situation has had an intensified impact on nutrition in the affected areas, with monthly reports from Therapeutic Feeding Programmes (TFPs) showing increasing admissions trends in most *La Niña*-affected woredas over the past months. Reports from the Multi Agency Nutrition Task Force (MANTF) meeting held on 9 June 2011 indicate rising admission rates to Outpatient Therapeutic Programmes (OTPs) and Stabilization Centres (SCs). According to FEWS NET (June 7, 2011) recent nutrition surveys indicate Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence of as high as 23 percent in Meda Welabu wereda of Bale zone.

### 3. National and international response

As part of the response effort, the government of Ethiopia through the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS), in collaboration with humanitarian partners (donors, NGOs, UN agencies) has been engaged in relief food as well as non-food interventions. Massive water trucking operations to assist those who are in dire need of emergency aid have been carried out since the beginning of May. Commercial de-stocking, animal feed supply, vaccination and treatment of livestock, measles and supplementary immunization campaign are part of the national and international response.

Despite the ongoing efforts of government and humanitarian partners, findings of the ACT Ethiopia Forum members indicate that the situation remains critical.

The government of Ethiopia in collaboration with humanitarian partners has been closely monitoring the situation, and first presented a report of the number of people affected by the drought on 12 April 2011. As part of efforts to expedite timely resource mobilization and response, a further multi-agency and multi-sectoral assessment was conducted during the first half of May, and updated figures will be presented in the coming days.

### 4. ACT Alliance response

Some ACT Ethiopia Forum members are already responding to the situation until a joint appeal can be issued. Accordingly the responses of the ACT forum members are as follows:

#### LWF-DWS

- Water trucking in Jijiga (Chinahassen) as water is becoming a very serious issue,
- Received funding from the Canadian Food Grain Bank to provide relief assistance for affected communities in Bale zone of Oromia region.

#### DCA response:

- Relief and emergency assistance with a total budget of Euro 800,000 in Bale and Borena zones of Oromia region mainly on water trucking,
- Rehabilitation assistance in the form of water harvesting, pasture and pond rehabilitation with a budget of Euro 500,000 in Borena zone,
- DCA is also closely monitoring the situation in the areas of its intervention.

#### EOC/DICAC response:

- An assessment team is in Arsi to assess needs.
- No response as yet.

#### EECMY/DASSC response:

- Engaged in water rationing in Filtu.

## 5. Planned activities

ACT Alliance Ethiopia Forum through its members has physical and operational presence in the affected areas, and plans to respond as follows:

- General food distribution to the most vulnerable and prioritized communities,
- Providing rehabilitation assistance in the form of maintenance of water schemes and water point rehabilitation,
- Re-stocking through the distribution of goats and sheep mainly to women-headed households in the affected areas,
- Providing support in the rehabilitation of pasture and growing of future animal feed.

In addition to the local response, the ACT Ethiopia Forum is working on a joint ACT appeal to be issued soon.

**Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jean-Daniel Birmele, ACT Chief Finance Officer ([Jean.Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org](mailto:Jean.Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org)).**

**Thank you for your attention.**

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