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U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

ETHIOPIA – Complex Health/Food Insecurity Emergency

Situation Report #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

February 2, 2006

Note: The last situation report was dated September 30, 2005.

BACKGROUND

Large-scale nutrition and other multi-sectoral emergency interventions eased crisis conditions in much of the country by late September 2005. However, USAID’s Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported in December that more than 1 million livestock-dependent people in Somali region face extreme food insecurity triggered by the failure of the October to December short (*deyr*) rains. Successive droughts, high cereal prices, a livestock import ban from the Gulf States, and ongoing ethnic conflicts have increased the region’s vulnerability to poor seasonal rainfall in recent years. According to preliminary results of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia’s (GFDRE) Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Administration (DPPA) needs assessment of Somali region, the crisis is most acute in Afder, Liben, and Gode zones.

The current situation follows closely on the heels of the 2005 emergency, when an estimated 12 million Ethiopians faced a large-scale complex food security crisis. The threat of increased localized famine conditions grew as delays in the GFDRE’s Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) and underestimation of emergency needs and beneficiary numbers hindered response efforts to the growing emergency. As humanitarian needs continued to increase, USAID/OFDA deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) from May to September 2005 to expand the USG response capacity to the emergency in Ethiopia. The USAID/DART conducted water and sanitation, health and nutrition, and general food security assessments in the most affected regions and hotspot areas. By late September, the humanitarian situation in much of Ethiopia had stabilized as good rains in much of the country led to widespread favorable conditions for both long and short-cycle crops, and fair to good harvests helped to stabilize cereal prices and improve food security for vulnerable households in the short-term. Despite improved conditions in many of the areas affected by the 2005 humanitarian emergency, pastoralists in Somali region are currently threatened by growing food insecurity.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE	SOURCE	
Vulnerable Population in 2006	8.2 million	FEWS NET, January 2006
Total Food Aid Requirements in 2006	339,090 metric tons (MT)	CAP, January 2006

Total FY 2006 USAID/OFDA Assistance to Ethiopia \$1,380,882
Total FY 2006 USG Humanitarian Assistance to Ethiopia..... \$26,777,082

CURRENT SITUATION

GFDRE issues joint humanitarian appeal. On January 23, the GFDRE, the U.N., and humanitarian partners appealed for \$166 million in emergency food and non-food assistance for 2006 through the U.N. Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). In response to growing needs in pastoral areas in Oromiya, Somali, and Afar regions, the appeal calls for interventions in the health and nutrition, water and sanitation, and agriculture sectors. In addition, the GFDRE and humanitarian partners also emphasized the emerging threat of avian influenza, and the ongoing hazards of malaria, measles, and meningitis. Emergency food needs for Ethiopia are comparatively low in the 2006 appeal, with an estimated 2.6 million people requiring 339,090 MT of food valued at approximately \$145 million.

Donors suspend aid. On December 29, 2005, several international donors including the World Bank, the United Kingdom (U.K.), and the European Union (E.U.) announced a plan to suspend \$375 million in direct

budget support to Ethiopia. According to the World Bank, the move comes in response to the GFDRE’s recent crackdown of opposition supporters, and will remain in place until the situation improves.

On January 19, the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) clarified that while aid to Ethiopia will not be reduced, DFID will withhold direct budget support to the GFDRE as a result of recent human rights violations. Meanwhile, the World Bank, DFID, and the E.U. are currently finalizing a new mechanism to disburse the \$375 million in suspended funds to support relief initiatives at the community level.

Tension builds along border with Eritrea. Beginning in October 2005, the U.N. expressed concern at the build-up of weapons and military forces along both sides of the 1,000 km Ethiopia-Eritrea border. Eritrea’s decision in early October to ban U.N. peacekeepers from patrols and helicopter flights along areas of Eritrea’s border further

exacerbated the situation by preventing access to much of the area the U.N. Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) is charged with monitoring. Although Eritrea and Ethiopia officially ended a two-year border war in 2000, tensions remain high.

On November 23, 2005, the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 1640, threatening actions including sanctions if Eritrea did not rescind its ban on U.N. peacekeeping movements and if both parties do not reverse their military build-up and return to their December 2004 troop levels within 30 days. The UNSC also demanded that Ethiopia accept the boundary commission's decision. Following the UNSC Resolution, Ethiopia re-deployed its troops to December 2004 positions. However, Eritrea responded by expelling UNMEE peacekeepers from the U.S., Canada, the European Union, and Russia, purportedly due to their countries' support for the November 23 UNSC Resolution. Peacekeepers from these countries represent 160 of the approximately 3,300 peacekeepers who patrol the border area.

Needs assessments underway. Two annual national assessments, the DPPC-led multi-agency *Meher* and Pastoral Areas Assessment and the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Program's (WFP) joint Crop and Food Supply Assessment are currently underway to determine emergency needs and food aid requirements for the 2006 Humanitarian Appeal, which is expected to be launched in late January 2006.

The 2005/06 *meher* season crop production for 2006 is expected to show a marked increase over the previous year. Several factors contributed to the increase, including good *belg* and *kremti* rains, an increase in planted area in recent years, and above average cereal and other cash crop prices. As a result, the number of people in need of assistance in 2006 could be lower than in recent years and less than the 3.8 million beneficiaries who received emergency food assistance in 2005. Humanitarian needs are expected to be much lower in crop-dependent areas which will benefit most from this year's good production and where it is assumed that the PSNP will address the needs of chronically food insecure households. Despite good production prospects and expected modest decreases in grain prices, a large segment of the rural population, especially in pastoral areas, continues to be unable to access adequate food.

Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM). On December 8 and 9, FAO and WFP provided an overview of findings from the 2005 joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) to representatives of the GFDRE, U.N. agencies, donors, and NGOs. Conducted from November 14 to December 4, the CFSAM covered 62 zones and special woredas in order to assess the 2005 *meher* season crop production and prepare an estimate of food needs for 2006. Preliminary findings indicate good production, except for

some pocket areas. According to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), increased production is attributed to good rains and increased use of fertilizers. CFSAM also reported favorable livestock conditions and steady prices in most areas assessed.

Pockets of food insecurity persist. On December 2, WFP reported that while overall food security has stabilized and even improved in much of Ethiopia, pockets of food insecurity remain in SNNP and Somali regions. While food distributions are ongoing in the lowland parts of SNNP's Kembata-Tembaro Zone, WFP field missions indicate that additional assistance is required. WFP has observed unusual consumption of immature sorghum and increased labor migration at a time when food availability is normally increasing. At the same time, poor rainfall in most of the seven *deyr*-rain-receiving zones of Somali Region has led to poor pasture and livestock conditions. According to FEWS NET, the emergence of stress signs in Somali Region including abnormally early livestock migrations, deterioration of livestock body condition, and crop wilting in agro-pastoral areas—at such an early stage is a serious concern. In recent years, successive droughts, high cereal prices, conflict, and the ban on livestock imports by Gulf States markets has rendered the livestock-dependent population highly food insecure and increasingly vulnerable to poor seasonal rainfall performance.

Food allocations had been halted in Somali Region since July 2005 due to the region's failure to account for the use of previously allocated food. However, WFP reports that in the past two months, the federal Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) allocated one-month rations to more than 220,000 beneficiaries in Liben, Afder, Gode, Fik and Deghabur zones, all identified as areas of concern.

USAID/OFDA conducts assessment in Amhara Region. In mid-October 2005, a USAID/OFDA team traveled to Wag Hamra and South Gondar Zones of Amhara Region to follow up on humanitarian concerns reported by the USAID/DART in June. At the time, the USAID/DART reported that malnutrition rates had reached emergency levels due to delays in PSNP implementation and emergency beneficiary numbers that excluded the most vulnerable groups from receiving assistance.

The USAID/OFDA team concluded that conditions have improved since June. Although residents visited remain vulnerable to chronic food insecurity, the humanitarian situation has stabilized. More effective transfers of PSNP resources and favorable *meher* rains have improved food security and livestock conditions. However, concern remains regarding continued delays between the identification of malnourished children through the GFDRE's Enhanced Outreach Strategy (EOS) screening and the provision of supplementary food. USAID/OFDA will continue current efforts to expedite delivery of supplementary food for malnourished populations and

establish community-based therapeutic centers (CTCs) to address severe malnutrition.

USAID/OFDA assesses humanitarian situation in Oromiya Region. In mid-October 2005, a USAID/OFDA team traveled to East Hararghe, Oromiya Region, to follow up on humanitarian concerns reported by the USAID/DART in July and to monitor progress of USAID/OFDA-funded emergency nutrition programs. At the time, the USAID/DART reported that the health and nutrition situation had become tenuous and emergency nutrition interventions were critically needed. The team observed that despite the late arrival of rains, the overall situation of *meher* crops appeared promising particularly compared to previous years. Although some farmers cited problems of infestations which may reduce agricultural yields, the humanitarian situation has stabilized with the end of the hunger season and the start-up of emergency nutrition programs.

Ongoing humanitarian concerns in Afar Region. In October, GOAL Ethiopia conducted nutritional surveys in areas of concern in zones 2 and 4. In Berhale woreda, Zone 2, the GOAL team reported alarming malnutrition rates among children: 19 percent global acute malnutrition (GAM) and 2 percent severe acute malnutrition (SAM). In Ab Ala woreda, Zone 2 of Afar Region, where GOAL had been conducting a 3-month supplementary feeding program, the survey revealed a 13.6 percent GAM and 0.5 percent SAM with the presence of aggravating factors. GOAL concluded that nutritional levels have not improved with the supplementary feeding program. According to OCHA, GOAL's survey recommended improvement in the quality and quantity of general ration by revising beneficiary numbers and by blanket supplementary feeding program for children under five and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Volcanic activity. In late September and early October, a series of earthquakes of magnitudes 4.2 to 5.5 caused the eruption of a long dormant volcano, Mount Arteala, in Teru Woreda, Zone 4 of Afar Region. Although no human casualties were reported, thousands of people were displaced and hundreds of livestock perished.

From October 6 to 7, a team with representatives from the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), Action Contre la Faim (ACF), and the Afar Pastoralist Development Association traveled to Teru Woreda to assess the humanitarian situation. According to the team, the volcano caused nearly 1,000 livestock deaths, damaged roads and water points, and covered large areas of grazing land with lava. The earthquake displaced an estimated 6,000 to 12,000 residents in Zone 4 woredas. UNICEF and ACF provided emergency water, health, and nutrition assistance to an estimated 6,000 internally displaced persons. In addition, the DPPC deployed assessment teams to the area and provided plastic sheeting and household items from DPPC stocks, and the

Ethiopian Red Cross distributed food to the displaced populations.

Locust sightings trigger increased vigilance. Beginning in November, FAO reported a tree locust invasion in Afar Region, raising alarm over the prospect of an additional threat to livelihoods and food security. As of November 28, a team from the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD) had traveled to investigate the situation. To date, damage is minimal, although concerns remain that Ethiopia may yet experience increased locust activity this season.

Potential for Avian Influenza Epidemic. According to the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO), Ethiopia is one of the countries at greatest risk of avian flu due to the annual arrival of millions of migratory birds in December. Increasing the country's risk of pandemic, more than 85 per cent of Ethiopia's 77 million inhabitants live in rural areas, in close proximity to their poultry.

In response to the global avian influenza threat, the MoARD banned imports of poultry and poultry products on October 26. In November, the GFDRE established a joint National Task Force with representatives from the MoARD and the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH). The MoARD has warned all woredas and the commercial sector about the threat of the bird flu virus and requested all citizens to report the death of any bird to the nearest veterinary clinic. In collaboration with the WHO and other partners, the FMOH prepared a Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, requesting \$1 million for the initial phase of an estimated \$53 million program to deal with a potential avian influenza pandemic. By late November, the FMOH reported that it had received more than \$1 million, including \$400,000 from USAID, for strategic preparedness activities. The National Task Force is finalizing a National Plan of Action for further preparedness and response. The GFDRE has established an integrated Disease Surveillance and Response Task Force in partnership with UNICEF, USAID, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and other donors. The U.N. has also established its own Crisis Management Team and is finalizing contingency plans.

Malaria. In late November, malaria epidemics were reported in two woredas in Beneshangul Region and in six woredas in Jimma Zone, Oromiya Region, according to OCHA. Following the treatment of more than 2,000 patients in Beneshangul and 16,000 patients in Jimma, the Regional Health Bureaus reported that the situation was under control. UNICEF reports that an additional \$3.7 million is required to acquire sufficient supplies of CoArtem and rapid diagnostic tests.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

On October 7, 2005, Charge d'Affaires Vicki J. Huddleston redeclared a disaster in response to the continuing health and food insecurity emergency in Ethiopia. Volcanic activity in Afar Region prompted the Ambassador to issue a second disaster declaration on

October 13, 2005. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 through USAID/Ethiopia for emergency health and nutrition interventions for the affected populations in the Afar Region.

In FY 2005, USAID/OFDA committed more than \$33.6 million through 3 U.N. agencies and 21 NGO partners to support humanitarian activities in Ethiopia. This included \$17 million to for nutrition and health programs, \$4 million for water and sanitation interventions, and \$9 million to support agriculture and livelihoods recovery initiatives. USAID/OFDA also provided \$1 million to enhance coordination, \$2 million to strengthen local government capacity to respond to emergencies, and more than \$728,000 for pastoralist initiatives and the provision of relief supplies. To date in FY 2006,

USAID/OFDA has committed \$1 million to WFP to enhance food security initiatives countrywide.

The USG is the largest donor of food assistance to Ethiopia. In FY 2005, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) pledged 958,310 MT through a combination assistance packages, valued at more than \$454 million. To date in FY 2006, USAID/FFP has committed 40,000 MT valued at more than \$25 million to Ethiopia. USAID/FFP assistance is provided to vulnerable populations through direct distribution, food-for-work programs, emergency school feeding, maternal and child health, and therapeutic and supplementary feeding programs.

U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
UNWFP	Food Security/Agriculture	Countrywide	\$1,000,000
USAID/Ethiopia	Health-Volcano Response	Afar	\$50,000
Administrative and DART Support Costs	Various	Countrywide	\$330,882
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$1,380,882
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			
WFP/PRRO	40,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$25,396,200
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$25,396,200
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA IN FY 2005			\$26,777,082
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA IN FY 2005			\$26,777,082

¹USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of February 2, 2006.



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