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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 Food Security Crisis

Situation Report #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

March 24, 2006

Note: The last situation report was dated February 2, 2005.

BACKGROUND

In January 2006, the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (GFDRE), United Nations, and humanitarian partners released the Joint Humanitarian Appeal requesting food assistance for an estimated 2.6 million people throughout the country. The appeal emphasized the vulnerability of 1.7 million agro-pastoralists and pastoralists in Afder, Liben, and Gode zones, Somali Region, and Borena Zone, Oromiya Region due to failure of the October to December 2005 rains, cumulative effects of drought conditions, and livestock losses. Furthermore, as drought conditions worsen across the Horn of Africa, the situation in southern and southeastern Ethiopia has become more precarious as pastoralists from neighboring countries migrate in search of water and pasture resources.¹

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, resulting from delays in the GFDRE's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) and underestimation of emergency needs and beneficiary numbers. From May to September 2005, USAID/OFDA deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) to expand the USG response capacity to the emergency. By late September, conditions in Ethiopia had stabilized and fair to good harvests improved food security for vulnerable households in the short-term.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE	SOURCE	
Total Vulnerable Population in 2006	11 million	2006 Humanitarian Appeal, January 2006
GDFRE Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) Chronically Food Insecure	8.3 million	FEWS NET, February 2006
Emergency Food Assistance Caseload	2.6 million	2006 Humanitarian Appeal, January 2006
Total Emergency Food Aid Requirements in 2006	339,090 metric tons (MT)	2006 Humanitarian Appeal, January 2006

Total FY 2006 USAID/OFDA Assistance to Ethiopia \$2,549,480
Total FY 2006 USG Humanitarian Assistance to Ethiopia..... \$54,760,680

CURRENT SITUATION

Fragile nutrition situation in pastoralist areas. In January 2006, Save the Children US (SC/US) and Save the Children UK (SC/UK), in coordination with the regional authorities, conducted a nutrition survey in Afder and Liben zones of Somali Region. The survey targeted the agro-pastoral population of Dollo Addo and Dollo Bay woredas. Preliminary results indicated 20.1 percent global acute malnutrition (GAM) and 1.6 percent severe acute malnutrition (SAM) among children under 5 years of age. SC/US and SC/UK also reported that livestock prices declined and cereal prices increased significantly since December 2005, aggravating food insecurity among these communities.

From January 18 to February 2, CARE and the GFDRE's Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Agency (DPPA) carried out a nutritional survey in Borena Zone of Oromiya Region. The findings indicated GAM and SAM rates of 10.0 percent and 1.1 percent in Dire; 10.9 percent and 1.0 percent in Moyale; and 6.1 percent and 0.3

percent in Teltele districts, respectively. While CARE and the DPPA did not categorize the malnutrition rates as serious, these conditions increase the population's vulnerability to erratic rains, fluctuating livestock and cereal prices, and irregular food distributions.

USG assessment of Somali Region. In late February, a multi-agency USG delegation traveled to Jijiga and Dolo Odo to assess deteriorating conditions and meet with humanitarian partners working in Somali Region. The team noted that limited availability of water and pasture has forced people and animals to migrate long distances in search of resources. The team met with government officials and relief organizations who confirmed the urgent need for water interventions, as well as human and animal health activities.

On February 21, attendees of the monthly regional Emergency Coordination Meeting reported deteriorating humanitarian conditions throughout Somali Region,

¹ Additional information can be found in the Horn of Africa Situation Report, available at: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/

particularly in Afder, Liben, and Gode zones. In addition, an influx of people and livestock from Somalia and Kenya in search of water and pasture as a result of the drought has increased tensions among populations, raising concerns of potential conflict in the region.

Increasing livestock mortality. According to the Somali DPPFSB, livestock mortality has increased significantly due to scarce water and poor pasture conditions following inadequate *deyr* rains and an aggressive *jilaal* (dry) season. Local elders in Liben Zone estimate livestock mortality at 55 to 60 percent for sheep, 50 percent for cattle, and 40 to 45 percent for goats. The high mortality rates were attributed to scarce water and food, as well as drought-related diseases. Many pastoralists have resorted to selling cattle at low prices and the over-supply on the market has driven prices even lower. In response, the GFDRE and humanitarian agencies have initiated animal vaccinations, provision of feed and water, and commercial de-stocking.

Increased agricultural production expected. Two annual national assessments, conducted by the GFDRE, U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and U.N. World Food Program (WFP), estimated a 15 percent increase in *meher* crop production compared to last year. Both assessments reported consistent increases in production over the last three years—45 to 50 percent in 2003/2004, 10 to 15 percent in 2004/2005, and 14 to 15 percent in 2005/2006—representing an 80 percent increase since 2003. Several factors contributed to the increase, including timely and well-distributed *meher* season rainfall, effective use of inputs, rapid control of pests, and increases in cultivated areas. Despite positive harvest forecasts and possible surpluses in the west, a large segment of the population remains vulnerable to food insecurity due to inefficient markets, poor infrastructure, insecurity, and ineffective government policies.

Elevated cereal prices. Following months of steadily increasing prices, FEWS NET reported that cereal prices stabilized in January, although at an elevated mark. Cereal prices in the capital were 30 percent higher in January 2006 than January 2005. Moreover, prices were above average in surplus areas in the western part of the country. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Somali Region and Borena Zone reported a steady rise in cereal prices in recent months, exacerbating food insecurity among vulnerable populations.

In February, the GFDRE through the Ethiopian Grain Trade Enterprise began selling grain at relatively low prices in different urban areas in an effort to stabilize cereal prices. In addition, the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry indefinitely banned the export of all grain products. FEWS NET also attributed the recent price stabilization to GFDRE and donor plans to locally purchase 190,000 MT of grain for food aid programs.

Seasonal rain forecast. According to the National Meteorological Agency (NMA), the outlook for the

belg/gu season (March to May) indicates above-normal rainfall for parts of central, southwestern, and western highlands; however, below average rainfall over northeastern highlands, as well as south and southeastern pastoral lowland areas. According to FEWS NET, if rains are poor in pastoral areas, water and food resources will decline, conflicts over resources will increase, and famine conditions will emerge.

Delayed food distributions. According to WFP, confirmed food aid donations and carryover stocks from 2005 totaled 238,000 MT, leaving a net requirement of approximately 100,000 MT to cover the food needs of 11 million beneficiaries in 2006. As of March 20, the DPPA has transported 90 percent of January allocation to Somali Region and 70 percent of the February allocation to Borena Zone. Although insecurity and logistical constraints continue to hamper food distributions, the GFDRE is increasing efforts to expedite the delivery of March allocations.

Continuing vulnerability in Afar Region. From February 14 to 18, USAID staff traveled to Afar Region to assess humanitarian conditions. The team met with partners, GFDRE officials in Zones 1, 2, and 4. The team reported limited health services, scarce water resources, and depleted pasture lands as key factors increasing vulnerability among pastoralist communities. Moreover, the team noted that food availability had decreased as a result of livestock losses in 2005, high cereal prices, and irregular food distributions. USAID staff concluded that the underserved population of Afar Region lack sufficient coping mechanisms to endure continued drought conditions and that if the upcoming rains are not productive, a greater segment of the population may require additional assistance.

U.N. Special Humanitarian Envoy appointed. In February, the U.N. named Kjell Magne Bondevik as the new Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa, succeeding former U.N. envoy Martti Ahtisaari. Mr. Bondevik traveled to the region in late February to assess conditions and discuss contingency plans with government officials, senior U.N. officials, and humanitarian and donor communities.

Ethiopia and Eritrea: Border demarcation. Representatives of the governments of Ethiopia and Eritrea met with the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) in London March 10 to discuss steps necessary to resume demarcation of the border. The EEBC intends to meet again with the parties in late April.

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 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 Afar.

In FY 2005, USAID/OFDA committed more than \$33.6 million through 3 U.N. agencies and 21 NGO partners for humanitarian activities in Ethiopia. This included support for nutrition and health programs, water and sanitation interventions, and agriculture and livelihoods recovery initiatives. USAID/OFDA also provided funds to enhance coordination, strengthen GFDRE emergency response capacity, support pastoralist initiatives, and provision of relief supplies. To date in FY 2006, USAID/OFDA has committed \$1 million to WFP for drought insurance initiatives. A portion of USAID/OFDA's FY 2006 program will focus on nutrition and emergency water support to drought-affected populations in Somali and Oromiya regions. USAID/OFDA has provided more than \$1.1 million to NGO partners for emergency water support activities

with more interventions expected to become operational in the coming weeks.

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 of assistance, valued at more than \$454 million. To date in FY 2006, USAID/FFP has committed 66,160 MT valued at more than \$44 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.

In FY 2006, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) contributed \$2.3 million to the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for refugee assistance programs in Ethiopia.

U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA IN FY 2006

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
CHF	Water and Sanitation	Somali Region	\$648,889
Merlin	Water and Sanitation	Somali Region	\$350,000
PSI	Water and Sanitation	Somali and Oromiya regions	\$197,009
WFP	Food Security and Agriculture	Countrywide	\$1,000,000
USAID/Ethiopia	Health-Volcano Response	Afar Region	\$50,000
	Administrative and DART Support Costs	Countrywide	\$303,582
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$2,549,480
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			
WFP/PRRO	40,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$23,266,200
NGO Partners	19,260 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance (towards the PSNP)	Countrywide	\$24,145,000
NGO Partners	6,900 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance (towards drought emergency)	Countrywide	\$2,500,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$49,911,200
STATE/PRM ASSISTANCE			
UNHCR	Refugee Assistance	Countrywide	\$2,300,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM			\$2,300,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA IN FY 2006			\$52,460,680
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA IN FY 2006			\$54,760,680

¹USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of March 24, 2006.



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USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/.