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At least 6 million people in drought-hit eastern and southern Ethiopia will need life-saving assistance in 2022.

The drought in southern and eastern Ethiopia (Somali, East and South Oromia regions) is already having a devastating impact on the lives and livelihood of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities living in the area after the third consecutive failed rainy season.

According to Somali Region Disaster Risk Management Bureau, there is a significant harvest loss reported in Fafan and Sitti zones of Somali Region, including up to 70 per cent of the expected Sorghum and Maize harvest lost, 30 per cent of the expected wheat harvest lost and 30 per cent of the expected onion and tomato harvest lost. Similarly, an average of 70 per cent harvest loss was reported in southern Oromia.

Livestock body condition continues to deteriorate, and at least 267,000 livestock deaths are already reported in Southern Oromia and Somali Regions due to lack of animal feed and water, with additional hundreds of thousands of livestock at risk and in need of emergency feed, water, and vaccination. Many pastoralists and agro-pastoralists have reportedly migrated mainly from Korahey, Jarar, Erer and Nogob zones in search of pasture and water and across nine woredas in Fafan Zone. The exact number of displaced people is still not validated.
HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 6.4 million people are estimated to require food assistance in 2022 across all drought-affected areas, including 3 million people in Somali Region, 2.4 million in eastern Oromia and 1 million people in southern Oromia.

- The Government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners are providing multi-sectoral response to drought-affected communities in Oromia and Somali regions with the limited resource available, but the response is not commensurate with the dire need.

Some 3 million people (2.3 million in Somali and over 870,000 in Southern Oromia) are currently facing water shortage and require water trucking support. The drought also affected the schooling of more than 155,000 students (99,000 in Somali and 56,000 in southern Oromia) due to school closures and lack of school feeding programs.

The nutritional status of drought-affected communities is deteriorating due to low milk availability and low income from livestock. Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) admissions are increasing in most drought-hit areas. In Somali Region, the nutritional screening conducted by the Regional Health Bureau across the whole region (93 woredas and six City Administrations) in December 2021 revealed a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of 18 per cent, higher than the global threshold of 15 per cent. Out of the 813,000 children under five years screened for malnutrition, nearly 14,000, children or 1.7 per cent were diagnosed with severe malnutrition, while more than 137,000 children or about 17 per cent were diagnosed as moderately malnourished. Similarly, out of the 222,000 pregnant and lactating women screened, about 72,000 or 32 per cent were moderately malnourished. The likelihood for vulnerable pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities to further suffer from the drought impact is high if mitigation efforts are not urgently taken.

Overall, due to the drought, more than 6.4 million people are estimated to require food assistance in 2022 across all drought-affected areas, including 3 million people in Somali Region, 2.4 million in eastern Oromia and 1 million people in southern Oromia. Urgent humanitarian responses are needed including water trucking, provision of food and non-food items, prepositioning of nutrition supplies for children and pregnant and lactating women, deployment of mobile health and nutrition clinics to hard-to-reach areas, animal feeds, and deployment of veterinarians. Without timely mitigation and response measures, could potentially worsen in the beginning of 2022.

Ongoing drought-response efforts not commensurate with the dire need: at least US$34 million required to address all identified needs

The Government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners are providing multi-sectoral response to drought-affected communities in Oromia and Somali regions with the limited resource available, but the response is not commensurate with the dire needs. A drought
HIGHLIGHTS

- An estimated $614 million has been mobilized towards the Northern Ethiopia Response Plan, and $657 million for response towards the Mid-Year Review Humanitarian Response Plan. However, this is far from sufficient to cover the increasing humanitarian needs.

Humanitarian response funding update

The cumulative funding gap for both the Mid-Year Review of the Humanitarian Response Plan (https://bit.ly/3q3CZy4) and the revised Northern Ethiopia Response Plan (https://bit.ly/3Fb8i0k) stands at US$1.2 billion. An estimated $614 million has been mobilized towards the Northern Ethiopia Response Plan, and $657 million for response towards the Mid-Year Review Humanitarian Response Plan. However, this is far from sufficient to cover the increasing humanitarian needs in Northern Ethiopia and in other parts of the country. Acknowledging donors’ efforts throughout 2021 who have contributed towards the response plans so far, it is imperative for current and new donors to continue to avail additional funding to scale-up response to the increasing humanitarian needs across the country in 2022. According to the 2022 Global Humanitarian Overview (https://gho.unocha.org), an estimated 22.3 million people will be targeted for humanitarian assistance in 2022.

Figure 3: Source: OCHA Ethiopia. As of 20 December 2021
HIGHLIGHTS

“"We have not received food assistance for the last six months” Fatima said, “we travel long distance to fetch water, which is very difficult while hungry. We are counting on Allah for good rain and sustenance” she added.

Human Story

“We travel a long distance to fetch water, which is very difficult while feeling hungry,” says Fatia, a mother of eight children, who lost her livelihoods due to the drought in Somali Region.

Fatia and her eight children had a decent life before the drought hit their hometown in Moyale Woreda in Dawa Zone, Somali Region. Her 31 cattle and 20 shoats provided a good source of income and sustainable food and nutrition resources for her family. Agricultural production from her one hectare of land supplemented the family’s livelihood during good rainy seasons. Following the failed rains in late 2021, the family started to lose their livestock while agricultural productivity became scarce. By October, several of Fatima’s livestock were emaciated and by November, within a month, the family had only one weakened cattle left in their compound, while they sent two cattle to relatives living in better-off area. All the other cattle have perished due to lack of water and animal feed. Similarly, only five shoats have survived. “We have not received food assistance for the last six months” Fatima said. “Now, we travel a long distance to fetch water, which is very difficult while feeling hungry. We are counting on Allah for good rain and sustenance” she added.

Figure 4: Left: emaciated livestock in October 2021. Right: the only cattle left in Fatima’s compound in November 2021. Photo credit: OCHA Ethiopia

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