Horn of Africa drought impacts some 3.8 million people in southeastern Ethiopia

New drought condition caused by the failure of 2019 spring and the forecast of failing fall rains in the Horn of Africa region will leave an estimated 3.8 million people in southeastern Ethiopia in need of immediate life-saving and livelihood interventions from June-September 2019. The current drought is further impacting the already dire food security and nutritional conditions of communities, particularly in lowland pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas. Predicted below average rains (by the National Meteorological Agency) in the 2019 summer (June-September) in the region, mostly southeastern Somali region situates communities to suffer two consecutive dry seasons. The majority of farmers and herders in Ethiopia are dependent on rain and are vulnerable to strong climate variations.

CERF allocates US$10 million to kickstart drought impact mitigation efforts in south-eastern Ethiopia

On 5 June 2019, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock, allocated US$45 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to immediately scale up programs that effectively mitigate food and nutrition assistance, safe water provision, livelihoods protection and other...
The UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocates US$10 million to kickstart drought impact mitigation efforts in southeastern Ethiopia.

More than 1.3 million IDPs have reportedly returned to their places of origin during the first phase of the Government’s Strategic Plan to Address Internal Displacement and a costed Recovery/Rehabilitation Plan that was launched on 8 April 2019.

Meanwhile, a prioritized Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) prepared by the Somali region, targeting 1.27 million people across all 11 zones, seeks US$20.7 million to mainly address the current drought impact.

Government finalizing the first phase of IDP return plan

The Government’s Strategic Plan to Address Internal Displacement and a costed Recovery/Rehabilitation Plan, which was launched on 8 April 2019, aims to return/relocate/reintegrate IDPs in three phases. At present, the first phase of the plan is completed. Government reported that more than 1.3 million IDPs have been returned to their areas of origin in Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia and Somali and regions. Most displacement sites have been dismantled and officially closed by end of May, particularly in E/West Wollega and Gedeo/West Guji zones. Most of the returning IDPs are not living in their homes but in transit sites near their kebeles due to damage of their houses or sense of insecurity.

Zonal authorities reported that 97 per cent of IDPs (116,000 out of the 120,000) from East Wollega zone and 84 per cent of IDPs (70,000 out of the 83,000) from West Wollega zone have returned to the border areas of Oromia region and Kamashi zone of Benishangul Gumuz region. All IDPs within Kamashi zone have returned to their places of origin. Only 6 per cent of the IDPs (3,449 individuals) are living in the collective sites. Zonal government reports indicate that some 320,000 IDPs have returned from Gedeo to West Guji zone, the majority from Gedeb woreda, while nearly 20,000 IDPs have returned from West Guji to Gedeo zone. Data is unverified by partners and there are still discrepancies in the official return figures provided by the zones. Out of the total 107,000 IDPs in Amhara region, 50,301 (48 Per cent) IDPs have returned to their places of origin in Amhara region. Of which, 43,831 have returned from Central Gondar, 5,659 IDPs from West Gondar and 811 IDPs from Amhara region to BGR. Some 119,000 out of 306,000 IDPs in East Hararge and 69,000 out of the 121,000 IDPs in West Hararge have returned to their areas of origin. An estimated 285,000 IDPs Borena zone have reportedly returned from to their areas of origin. Somali region reported that about 30 per cent (287,000 out of the 962,000) IDPs have returned.

Meanwhile, The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Ethiopia – with support from OCHA - lead a large group of UN, donors and partners’ representatives to IDP return areas in East Hararge (Oromia) and Silti (Somali) zones from 16 to 18 June 2019, where at least 100,000 returnees are hosted. The mission aims to see first-hand the conditions of IDP returnees in these areas, including their safety and assistance needs, as well as gauge the voluntariness and sustainability of the returns. Several previous “go-and-see” missions to these and other return areas concluded that the majority of returnees are still living in transitory sites closer to their areas of origin pending rehabilitation support. Food, shelter reconstruction materials, access to basic services as well as agricultural inputs (tools and seeds) are the most requested support by the returnees.
WFP to start cash transfers for Dawa zone, Somali region

WFP is currently providing food assistance to about 1.9 million food insecure people in Somali region, comprised of 717,000 individuals from displaced households and 1.13 million individuals from areas that were negatively impacted by the loss of livelihoods from previous drought years. Dawa zone, in the Somali region, is among the most negatively impacted areas in the country, currently hosting 41 per cent of the displaced people in Somali region.

WFP will distribute humanitarian cash transfers to 116,000 displaced people in Moyale and Hudet woredas in round 2, to cover the cost of cereals. Other commodities (pulses and vegetable oil) will be provided through in-kind food distributions. Cash transfers will allow beneficiaries, particularly the displaced people, to purchase cereals that are available in local markets and provide the means for targeted households to have access to preferred and diverse food items. Evidence from markets assessments conducted in the targeted locations indicates the availability of the cereals in the markets at affordable prices. Prices will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Transfers are being provided in cash subsequent to feasibility assessment exercise that considered market conditions, protection and security concerns and transfer modality. WFP will also assist the remaining 178,000 IDPs/returnees with in-kind food assistance.

Sustainable socio-economic integration of refugees and IDPs in host communities

UNHCR estimates 1 M refugees are currently living in Ethiopia. With the rollout of the Comprehensive Refugee Approach (2017), the working populations of the refugees could have the potential to contribute to Ethiopia’s GTP II and its aspiration to become a lower-middle-income country by 2025. However, the refugee landscape in Ethiopia remains complex, given the context of under-developed areas bordering neighboring countries, and a mixture of protracted situations of displacement with recent population influx.

A four-year (2019-2022) innovative inter-agency partnership between the Government of Netherlands, the World Bank, IFC, ILO, UNHCR and UNICEF and in collaboration with the Ethiopian Government is in place. The Partnership aims to strengthen the socio-economic enabling environments of communities (model areas) that host different forcibly displaced populations (IDPs and refugees) to ensure sustainable decent work, training and education opportunities for host communities, first and foremost, and for other vulnerable populations as the policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks facilitate this integration process.

The action will include a particular focus on young people and women and the need to address the barriers they face to socio-economic integration.

Host communities, refugees and IDPs, especially youth and women, gain decent socio-economic opportunities underpinned by inclusive and supportive national education and protection systems.

1. **Outcome:** Increased job/ self-employment for host communities, refugees and IDPs, especially youth and women.

2. **Outcome:** Refugees and IDPs and their host communities, particularly women and youth, have the skills required for successful transition to, and engagement with, jobs and livelihoods.
**Outcome:** The enabling environment for decent work, legal protection, and social protection is strengthened and expanded to build inclusion and diminish vulnerability of refugees and IDPs and their hosts.

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**Gedeo and West Guji Access Snapshot**

Gedeo and West Guji Access Snapshot released on 31 May 2019 reveals that most IDPs returns happened without major incidents as the Government invested significantly in enhancing security conditions in areas of return and maintaining law and order. Nonetheless, humanitarian partners have reported a number of protection concerns, with reports received regarding the intimidation of IDPs resisting to return, instances in which IDP representatives were detained, and sporadic reports of IDPs been beaten by security forces. For more on this: [https://bit.ly/2ISR4ZY](https://bit.ly/2ISR4ZY)

**Multi-agency **belg needs assessment to start from June 22 in 25 zones**

Government and humanitarian partners will start assessing the 2019 Belg/Gu rain performance and its effect on food security beginning from 22 June 2019. 12 teams will be deployed to six regions, i.e. Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Somali and Tigray. The Government-led assessment will last for 15 days in crop growing areas and 20 days in pastoral areas. The 25 zones were selected based on first level analysis done using early warning information and available food security analysis systems. The zones are selected for a verification assessment as representative samples. Non-food sectors will mainly use monitoring information and secondary data analysis as their main methodology. The assessment findings will inform the Mid-Year Review of the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).
The personal story of Halima Abdalla, Darera Arba IDP return site, East Hararge

Darera Arba IDP return site is located 17 kilometers south of Babile. This transitory return site hosts approximately 4,000 returnees who are living in makeshift huts made of plastic sheets. Halima Abdalla is one of the returnees who came from Babile two months ago, around mid-March 2019. She is a mother of eight children, and has four grandchildren. She used to live only 5 km away from the current returnee site. Violence broke out exactly one year ago (Ramadan 2018). Ethnic Oromo’s living along the boundary with Somali region in Babile Woreda fled to Babile Town. Many people were killed during the violence, including three members of Halima’s family. Halima used to own livestock such as cows and goats, but now she lost all her worldly possessions.

While in displacement in Babile Town, Halima, together with other IDPs, lived in collective centers in total lack of privacy and devoid of their fundamental rights and minimum social services. But they were safe. Now they have returned to their areas of origin. But having not returned to their respective homes yet, they are technically still in displacement and require multi-sector assistance as well as rehabilitation support. Halima affirms that it was the IDPs’ informed and voluntary decision to go back.

Halima said, “The needs are huge amongst which shelter is the most important. Our makeshift shelters are not completely rainproof, which is a challenge when it rains. The Government is currently providing some iron sheets to reconstruct our houses, but it is not enough”. We also need NFI support, including clothing.” Halima recalled what they normally do during the Eid festivity, including buying clothes to their children which they could not afford to do this year. There are only two humanitarian partners working in the area, IMC and the Ethiopian Red Cross.

The security situation is conducive for durable solutions investment, but the lack of rehabilitation support is threatening the sustainability of the returns. For Halima to go back to her home, “The moment I get some iron sheets to rebuild my house I’m ready to go back.” The roof, door, and windows of her house were stolen. When asked what would be the first thing she would buy if she had money, she replies, “Clothes for the children, and a goat.” Halima said that they would need continued assistance after their return, for a minimum of 6 months to 1 year.
Humanitarian funding update, as of 04 June 2019

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS
US$ 1.313 BILLION
28.6% FUNDED

FUNDING RECEIVED
US$ 176.7 MILLION
Government of Ethiopia
13.5%

US$199.4 MILLION
International Donors
15.2%

Gap
US$ 937.5M

By Sector (US$)

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Funding provided by donor:

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