



Interview with
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What are the chances of the number of beneficiaries increasing from what is reported in the 2004 appeal? What are the plans made by the commission to balance such occurrence?

We do not envisage major change until the end of June. Some pocket areas could report newly arising problems, but their needs will be determined through rapid disaster area and nutrition assessments. Efforts will be made to cover some localized additional needs with resources that would be made available against the current appeal. The situation after June 2004 will be determined by the performance of the Belg harvest in the cropping areas and the main rain season in the pastoral areas.

What is donors' response to the 2004 appeal? Are all needs likely to be covered?

Donors have full information regarding the 2004 humanitarian needs, which are established jointly. We understand that they are working towards responding positively. The efforts to date are encouraging and we are confident that the needs will be met through the usual generosity of the humanitarian community.

What is the harvest situation in the country in general? Is the current season's agricultural production in most areas as expected and indicated in the "2004 food supply prospect"?

For the harvest situation, we suggest that reference is made to CSA harvest report and FAO/WFP report. On our part we believe that there is no major change so far from what was indicated in the 2004 food supply prospect report.

Reports from meteorology had indicated a high probability of unseasonable rain in north eastern and eastern part of the country. What is the situation on the ground?

There were unseasonable rains in many parts of the country. However, there were no reports of major problem in the harvest due to these rains. On the contrary, the unseasonable rains are believed to have positive impact on pasture and water replenishment for livestock.

It is to be recalled that because the assessment team did not cover Somali Region in time to input on the estimated number of beneficiaries, the figure, for the 2004 appeal was derived from the 2003 appeal document.

Subsequently an alert was released stating that October - November rain were late by over a month in the Pastoral areas. Does this fact affect the figure reported in the 2004 appeal?

Although the October-November rains were late and inadequate, the rains in December had improved the situation in Somali Region significantly. In terms of needy population, there is no major change from the estimate reflected in the Appeal document, except that minor adjustment of figures among woredas and zones were made. Detailed report will be issued soon.

Has food aid delivery activities begun for the month of January?

Yes. Relief food delivery was conducted in January 2004, particularly in priority areas of Somali and Afar Regions both by the DPPC and NGO's.

What were the major challenges that faced food aid distribution activities in 2003? What are the preparations being made to avert similar problems from occurring? Lessons learned from 2003

2003 has been both challenging and successful year of humanitarian operation. Challenging because the coverage and intensity of the problem was incomparable to any relief situation in the recent past. Problems of coordination and targeting

was observed in some areas and they required additional effort to smoothen the operation.

It has been successful because the concerted effort of the federal and regional governments, donors, the UN agencies and NGOs has been witnessed and made a great difference in mobilizing resources and in caring for the disadvantaged. All have been joining hands and minds together for the common goal of saving lives and, to a possible extent, livelihoods.

What are the impacts of the previous year loss of livestock on the current situation in the pastoral areas?

The impact of the previous year's loss of livestock is significant on current situation. One of the major factors for food assistance requirement in the pastoral areas is the asset depletion. It has been reported that there are about 73,000 internally displaced people in Somali and 12,600 in Borena alone who have lost their livestock during the previous years' drought and need long term solution such as restocking and rehabilitation.

What is the difference between chronic and acute beneficiaries?

Chronic beneficiaries are those category of needy people that require food assistance due to production shortfall as a result of structural problems such as land degradation, population pressure, low soil fertility, backward agricultural practices, recurrent moisture stress, etc. The nature of the problem is mostly poverty-induced. There might also be current shock such as moisture stress, pest outbreak, excessive rain etc. in such areas which could aggravate the chronic problem; but the underlying cause of the problem is chronic.

Acute are those beneficiaries from non-chronically vulnerable areas; areas that have not experienced recurrent food shortage. These groups of population are normally self-sufficient throughout the year in most cases. But, when they fall into a problem that leads to food shortage due to unforeseen circumstances and shocks such as drought, flooding, disease outbreak etc., they are categorized as acute beneficiaries. Acute problem is a temporary problem that lasts relatively for a short period of time.