

**Minutes of the 33rd Technical Information Management Exchange Forum (TIME) Meeting May 27, 2004 10:00 hrs.
DPPC conference room**

Chairperson: Ato Getachew Tesfaye

Agenda:

- Agriculture Task Force Report, Ato Mathewos Hunde
- Food Task Force Report, Ato Belete Tilahun
- EFSR, Ato Getachew Tesfaye
- AOB

Agriculture Task Force

Ato Mathewos Hunde

Dry weather condition prevailed over much areas of the country since the 2nd week of May except in a few areas of western, south western and southern parts, which received sporadic rains. Signs of improvement in performance of rainfall which was favorable for agriculture was reported around the 3rd week of the month over western Oromiya (Ilubabor), West and East Wollega, Jimma, western Amhara (Awi), few areas in west Gojam, Benshangul Gumuz, Gambella as well as SNNPR (Keffa, Sheka, Bench Maji, Sidama and Gamogofa). Nevertheless, further improvement is needed in the stated areas as well as in others (e.g. central and western Tigray, most of western Amhara, south and south eastern lowlands including Bale. Particularly, improved rain performance is needed very much in areas where prolonged dry spell was reported posing unfavorable condition for agriculture. Dry spell during the month was reported to have affected Belg crops, especially those sown late March.

Outbreak of armyworm

Outbreak of armyworms was reported from ten zones in eastern and southern parts of the country. Accordingly, Mena Angetu and Rayitu Woredas of Bale zone, Babile woreda of East Hararghe, Bakogazer Woreda of South Omo, Konso, Derashe, Burji, Amaro, Humbo Woreda of Wolaita and Arbaminch Woreda of Gamogofa were moderately affected. Control operation was underway during the month in order to minimize damage.

Response to 2004 agricultural requirements

Agricultural Task Force provided information that emergency interventions on agricultural requirements such as seed distribution, animal health service, restocking, and supply of farm implements were underway in targeted woredas. More complete information on pledge status will be compiled once the implementing agencies provide the Task Force with required data on their interventions.

Given the low level of response to the Agriculture sector emergency needs is considerably low donors are encouraged to give more focus and response in order that the food situation is improved.

Emergency seed requirement for resettlement sites in Oromiya Region

Proposal for emergency seed supply to some resettlement sites in Bale and Guji areas in Oromiya region has been endorsed by Agriculture Task Force and submitted to the DPPC for further consideration. The proposal stated the need to buy and distribute 1712 quintals of different seeds for the coming rainy season to more than 5,000 households.

Belg assessment conducted

During the discussion additional information was provided by Early Warning Department indicating that mid Belg assessment was conducted. According to the assessment the crop situation in Belg dependent regions of Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya and SNNP, are in bad situation. Specifically, East and West Hararghe zones, Konso and Derashe have been severely affected, it was noted. On the contrary, Arsi and Bale zones seem to be performing better. The Assessment generally indicates that Belg is not a success except for some localized areas. Pest infestation was also reported from different areas.

Food Task Force

Ato Belete Tilahun

Food aid distribution of 106,390 MT (53,297.90 MT allocation by the DPPC and 53,092.10 MT by NGOs), total of which is 106,390 MT has been in progress during May. European Union (EU) supported NGOs completed their work. The DPPC covered 50% of its allocation. Prepositioning has also been done to cover areas inaccessible during the rainy season.

Signs of malnutrition

Early Warning Department indicated reports of signs of malnutrition in some areas of East and West Hararghe, particularly, in Bedeno, Girawa, Kurfachele and Bisidimo (situation in Goro reportedly being poor). Remark was made on the need to arrest it with enhanced involvement of NGOs before things get out of control. It was indicated by Food Task Force that the main problem with East Hararghe was not lack of resource but lack of efficient distribution. A case in point to this is Babile, an area where adequate resource was allocated but even March distribution has not been completed. With respect to the reportedly increasing rate of malnutrition in Konso special woreda, sufficient information is needed to verify since operational problems exist there too. It was noted from recent experience of Food Task Force that resource allocated to the zone by NCA was not distributed. Apparently, it is essential to have information from concerned areas at least a month ahead since uplifting of relief resources is done upon requests.

Therapeutic feeding centers

Concerning Therapeutic Feeding Centers, UNICEF reported that there are 23 TFCs opened by NGOs with UNICEF support during the 2003 crisis. Several of these TFCs are currently being assessed to consider if they meet the criteria for their closure as per the national nutritional protocol guidelines and recommendations required assessment may be completed within two weeks to determine their status.

There are other 18 "Integrated Therapeutic Feeding Units- ITFU" that were established with UNICEF support at government hospital and health center. These ITFUs are established to offer a permanent therapeutic nutritional care as part of the overall health management by the National Health Service and as per the adoption of the national nutrition protocol (June 2003). 10 more ITFUs are in the process of being established.

Food Aid Pipeline (WFP)

It was reported by WFP that food aid pipeline of May has been completed fully (100%) and that of June 97% has been accomplished. But for period between July and December available resources are depleted leaving the situation risky. Therefore, it was noted that donors should be encouraged to forward pledged resources. Meanwhile, two small ships with 43,000 MT of food had arrived at Djibouti port the shipment being for loan repayment. There were unconfirmed reports of pledges by EU with possible signing of agreement in June, 2004.

Stock Status of EFSR

Ato Getachew Tesfaye

Stock status of Emergency Food Security Reserve (EFSR) on May 26, 2004 was reported as follows:

Stock at hand	283,316 MT
Outstanding loan	72,806 MT
Under withdrawal	48,882 MT

AOB

Delay of Customs Clearance for Food and Non Food reported

Customs Authority has been assisting UN agencies and NGOs through the DPPC to bring in food and non-food items pending actual customs clearance process. The Authority has been entertaining these customers through letter of undertaking. But clearance that should have been accomplished have been delayed for years, that is, since 1992 E.C. As the result, many outstanding cases prevailed without the required clearance done, involving 52 UN agencies and NGOs. Customs Authority has now warned to clear outstanding transactions with immediate effect that any consignee needs a letter on every bill of quantity to clear the issues.

Participants of the meeting discussed various points on how to clear the identified issues. Some of the NGOs indicated that the time allotted for clearance, that is, 20 days would not be sufficient to go through all the process effectively.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:40

Next TIME meeting will take place on July 29, 2004, at 10:00

Attendance by more participants is expected.