

LESSONS LEARNED STUDY: ETHIOPIA DROUGHT EMERGENCY 1999-2000

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ACRONYMS

AA/BHR	Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Humanitarian Response (USAID)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BHR	Bureau for Humanitarian Response (USAID)
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CFW	Cash for Work
CNN	Cable News Network
COMPAS	Commodity Tracking System
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
CSB	Corn Soya Blend
CY	Calendar Year
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/OFDA)
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DMC	Drought Monitoring Centre
DPPB	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (regional level)
DPPC	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (central level)
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Office
EDRC	Emergency Disaster Relief Coordinator (USAID/OFDA)
EFSRA	Ethiopian Food Security Reserve Administration
EGS	Employment Generation Scheme
EMOP	Emergency Operation
ENCU	Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit
ERA	Ethiopian Roads Authority
ERCS	Ethiopian Red Cross Society
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization (UN)
FATS	Food Aid Transport System (WFP)
FEWS	Famine Early Warning System (USAID)
FFP	Food for Peace (USAID)
FFW	Food for Work
FHA	Food and Humanitarian Assistance (USAID)
FHI	Food for the Hungry International
FSAU	Food Security Assessment Unit (Somalia)
FSP	Food Security Program
GFDRE	Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GOE	Government of Ethiopia
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
IWG	Interagency Working Group (USG Washington)
JEOP	Joint Emergency Operation

LFSU	Local Food Security Unit (European Union)
MEDAC	Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation
MSF-B	Medecins Sans Frontieres-Belgium
MSF-F	Medecins Sans Frontieres-France
MT	Metric Tons
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Circumference
MWL	Mean Weight for Length
NDPPF	National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Fund
NPDPPM	National Policy for Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Management
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NMSA	National Meteorological Services Agency
NNFCS	National Nonfood Contingency Stock
NSP	Nutritional Surveillance Programme
NTCC	National Transport Coordination Committee
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
ORHC	Office of the Resident Humanitarian Coordinator
OWS	Ogaden Welfare Society
PA	Peasant Association
PCAE	Pastoralist Concern Association for Ethiopia
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (precursor to DPPC)
SCF-UK	Save the Children Fund-UK
SC/US	Save the Children/US
SERP	Southeast Rangelands Project
SFC	Supplementary Feeding Center
SIM	Society of International Missionaries
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region
SORDU	Southern Rangelands Development Unit
TFC	Therapeutic Feeding Center
UN-EUE	United Nations Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USG	United States Government
VAM	Vulnerability Assessment Mapping Unit (WFP)
WFL	Weight for Length
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)
WHO	World Health Organization (UN)
WVI	World Vision International

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1999-2000, Ethiopia was brought to the edge of a major disaster. A combination of drought, localized crop failure, and worsening poverty in chronically vulnerable parts of the country threatened the livelihoods of an estimated 10 million people: 1 out of every 6 Ethiopians was reported to be in need of emergency assistance.

Although this report considers the two year period as a single period of emergency, the manifestation of crisis was different in the northern agricultural highlands than in the southern and eastern pastoral lowlands. In 1999, the worst affected areas were in the agricultural highlands, which depend upon the short, *belg* harvest to provide staple foods. Thousands of people resorted to distress migration, leaving their homes in search of employment or relief assistance in towns or surplus producing areas. The following year the *belg* rains failed again, but people were assisted to remain on their farms through provision of relief food and other essential non-food support. In these areas the relief operation can be said to be a major success, in that the acute food shortages were brought under control relatively quickly.

In the pastoral lowlands during 2000, however, four years of successive failures of major and minor rains in pastoral areas had brought people to the end of their own coping and mitigation strategies. Throughout Somali Region and Borena and Bale Zones of Oromiya Region, livestock pasturage and water resources were exhausted, and large numbers (many estimates are as high as 50% of all cattle) of livestock died. Men took their surviving herds to far off grazing areas while women and children in extremely weakened nutritional states migrated to towns in search of assistance.

The Government of Ethiopia, the international humanitarian community, and local nongovernmental organizations organized a massive relief operation to provide assistance to those who were already affected and to prevent the effects of the drought from spreading even further. Against the backdrop of the Ethio-Eritrean war, all parties worked together to ensure that the relief operation was given top priority, and that assistance reached people in need as quickly as possible. Between April and December 2000, approximately one million tons of emergency food was made available. Water was provided to many of the worst affected communities in pastoral areas, and measles immunizations were stepped up to prevent a large-scale outbreak of the disease which is common among malnourished children. Effective coordination, largely under the leadership of the Government of Ethiopia, the UN Regional Humanitarian Coordinator and the UN Country Team, but also on an operational level between Donors, NGOs, and the communities themselves, helped to maximize the effectiveness of the operation.

The relief operation carried out over the two year period was a success insofar as food, water, and medical care were given quickly enough and in sufficient quantities that the suffering was brought under control and prevented from spreading to other areas of the country. Most people have avoided using the term "famine" to refer to the crisis that affected Ethiopia, since the emergency did not spread to the entire country. In citing the operation as a success, however, it is important to recognize that for thousands of people, the assistance provided was not enough or came too late for them to be saved.

This desk study examines the development of the 1999-2000 food shortage and drought emergency. It argues that the seeds of the crisis were sown as early as 1997, and that progressive

failure to respond to the root causes of the increasing destitution amplified the effects of continued drought. The climax of the emergency is considered to stretch from the first quarter of 1999 to the present (January 2001). This report seeks to extract the lessons learned, focusing on the successes (of which there have been many) and the failures (unfortunately, also many) of the relief operation. The report attempts to synthesize the findings of agencies and individuals who have been involved in the relief operation to develop an evaluation that will hopefully help to ensure that mistakes will not be repeated and good ideas will not be forgotten in the future.

In addition, this evaluation considers the development strategies currently in place in Ethiopia to determine the best way to shift from a relief approach to one geared more towards mitigation of vulnerability and promotion of sustainable development. The study, commissioned by USAID/Ethiopia, is intended to stimulate discussion among the major players in emergency relief and development in Ethiopia, including the Ethiopian Government, USAID, the United Nations, and the European Union. In addition, it is intended to be submitted to USAID Washington and members of the Interagency Working Group (IWG), including representatives of the US State Department, National Security Council, and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a briefing and strategy document.

This study examines each phase of the response and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the emergency operation. Information for the study is derived from field reports, assessments, program evaluations, appeal documents, journalistic accounts, thematic studies, and strategy documents produced in 1999 and 2000. Finally, emergency operations in Ethiopia over the last fifteen years have been considered to further enhance the analysis of lessons learned.

In considering policy implications of continued response and greater emphasis on vulnerability mitigation and development, the consultant referred to several policy documents of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia as well as of the United Nations and USAID. The GFDRE's Integrated Food Security Strategy, as well as the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission's Five Year Plan, the Draft National Food Aid Targeting Guidelines, and its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper have been consulted. The United Nations' Strategy for Assistance in 2001 and USAID's Integrated Strategic Plan for 2001 have also been considered in writing this piece. Ultimately, the aim is to propose a plan of action for further emergency and rehabilitation response that will dovetail with the existing policy framework in such a way that both will be strengthened.

The following may be considered to be among the major successes of the operation

Strengths:

- Early warning information on agricultural areas was available. Early warning information on the developing crisis in the areas dependent upon the minor agricultural (*belg*) harvest was made available early enough to take appropriate action, although this action was not immediately forthcoming. Pastoral early warning was much less effective due to lack of information (see Weaknesses below).
- Timely provision of relief food in 2000. Between May and December 2000, approximately 600,000 MT of USG food aid was delivered. Local purchases by the DPPC, WFP, EU and others were made totaling some 250,000 MT for distribution to the most severely affected areas of Ethiopia.

- Distribution effective in most areas. Food distribution, carried out under the overall coordination of the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC), was effective in alleviating suffering in the worst affected areas and preventing its spread to other areas.
- Prepositioning of food effective in many remote areas. Up to 70,000 MT of food was prepositioned to remote and inaccessible areas in advance of the main (*kiremt*) rains in 2000.
- Provision of essential emergency support in the nutrition, health, water, and logistics sectors. This included essential funding provided by OFDA valued at \$14.8 million between February - August/September 2000
- Visits by high-level officials. Such visits helped to bring attention to the regional drought emergency. These included the visit of the USAID/Bureau of Humanitarian Response (USAID/BHR) Assistant Administrator, Hugh Parmer, in March, followed by the visit of UN Special Envoy for Drought in the Horn of Africa Catherine Bertini, which helped to galvanize support for the emergency operation
- Smooth port operations. The Port of Djibouti was able to surpass its achievement records in terms of vessel discharge. A maximum rate of 29,400 MT over a four day period was achieved several times in 2000 thanks to smooth coordination by the Port of Djibouti management and WFP.
- Effective food aid transport system. The World Food Programme's Food Aid Transport System (FATS) proved to be an effective means of transporting food from port to inland storage hubs. WFP's special operations to improve port and road infrastructure also helped to speed up transport of relief supplies.
- Importation of Somali trucks. Importation of the WFP short-haul trucks helped to facilitate delivery of relief food to distribution sites Somali region.
- Air service to Somali region. The establishment of dedicated chartered air service to remote and insecure areas of Somali Region helped to increase mobility and access, and improved security of UN and NGO staff operating in the area.
- Increased attention given to improved nutritional surveillance. Following the secondment of a nutritionist from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to UNICEF, and several assessments carried jointly by CDC/UNICEF, WHO, and SC/US, an Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) was established within the Early Warning Department of the DPPC. The ENCU is supported by UNICEF, WFP/CIDA, and SCF-UK.
- Tripartite Agreements between the DPPC, WFP and eight NGOs enabled targeted distribution of supplementary food. In 1999, supplementary food had been distributed by DPPC to children under five and pregnant and lactating women together with the general ration. In 2000, targeted distribution through signatory NGOs to the Tripartite Agreement facilitated targeted distribution to individuals identified as being malnourished or at risk of becoming malnourished. This method of distribution helped to increase the effectiveness of supplementary food assistance.
- Increased capacity of local actors involved in emergency nonfood assistance. Once operational, local NGOs, as well as regional and local authorities, health clinic staff, and water bureau officials showed enhanced capacity.

- Renewed focus on pastoralists. The emergency has given rise to an increased recognition of the need for greater mid to long-term development assistance and early warning systems.

Weaknesses:

- Weak link between early warning information and response. Where early warning systems were functioning, response was slow. No mechanism was in place to ensure that action was taken, and early warning specialists did not assume advocacy roles to spur response.
- Lack of pastoral early warning system. The orientation of the national early warning system towards agricultural production allowed the situation in pastoral areas to deteriorate to extremely poor levels before adequate assistance was mobilized. Although information on the progressing drought was available, there was no mechanism, which could ensure that response was taken quickly and on a scale large enough to address the problem.
- High tax rate on imported and locally purchased commercial food. These taxes discouraged commercial grain trade and made food aid necessary in areas where additional commercial food on the markets might have been sufficient to meet the food deficit.
- Lack of standards used in nutritional assessments. Lack of baseline data and a nutritional monitoring system complicated the task of determining the extent of malnutrition in the affected areas and of assessing the effectiveness of nutritional interventions.
- Shortage of implementing partners in Somali region. Although partly as a result of chronic insecurity and poor infrastructure in the region, there were few NGOs who were able to become operational quickly enough to institute emergency measures. This continues to negatively impact “emergency/transition” and development programs.
- Limited regional and subregional government capacity. Although (as noted above) capacity at regional and subregional levels did improve, continued low level of training of staff and lack of logistical support hampered the effectiveness of relief operations, particularly in pastoral areas.
- Lack of robust targeting and distribution monitoring system. This made it difficult to determine which areas were being underserved, and in a few areas efforts were unwittingly duplicated, leading to wastage of resources. At the distribution level, ration dilution continued, which meant that vulnerability was heightened.
- Specific failure in Denan (Somali Region). Following distribution of general rations, opening of a supplementary and therapeutic feeding center, and tankering of water in Denan, thousands of people flooded into the town. Despite huge resources being provided to the area, nutritional levels of children did not improve as dramatically as had been expected, and people did not return to their home areas even when food distributions were carried out in places outside Denan town. The reasons for this have been examined by MSF-Belgium, but no definitive conclusions have yet been reached.
- Lack of cross border or parallel programming between Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. Both Somalia and Kenya have effective pastoral early warning systems that were not consulted during this emergency. In addition, there was no coordination of relief efforts (to ensure that

people are given the same assistance on both sides of an international border so that discrepancies in packages do not encourage opportunistic migration).

- Delay and inability to repay the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve. Several major donors were unable to repay loans to the EFSR promptly due to bureaucratic and fiscal reasons, and this resulted in extremely low stocks of the Reserve during the end of 1999 and beginning of 2000.
- Lack of continuum between relief and development. Many emergency interventions have been closed down since the arrival of modest rains at the end of 1999 without shifting to recovery or vulnerability mitigation activities. Without effective steps to reduce vulnerability, including a commitment of long-term funding for vulnerability mitigation activities, emergency conditions may be expected to return with the next rain failure.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2000, television media brought to the world's attention images from the Horn of Africa of starving children that were reminiscent of the infamous famine of 1984-85. Children too weak to walk or eat lay in their mothers' arms as the women told journalists of how, having lost all of their livestock, they had embarked on long treks through the desert in search of food for themselves and their children. Many had buried children along the way.

By the time the BBC and other newsmedia brought these images to world attention, the drought was in its third – and in some places its fourth – year. Contrary to the "spin" occasionally put on the story which suggested that the food shortages had caught the humanitarian community by surprise, drought conditions were well known by the Donors, UN, and NGO community. In fact, warnings had been issued repeatedly of impending disaster. However, the resources that could have prevented the starvation of what must surely have been thousands of people, and the further impoverishment of as many as 10 million people, were not in place one year after the onset of the emergency.

It should be noted that, in keeping with the terminology of aid actors in Ethiopia at the moment, this Lessons Learned study does not refer to the emergency as a famine. Since 1984-85, famine has been used to refer to generalized lack of food within a country. Such a shortage, which is itself the result of a process of steady impoverishment over a prolonged period of time, is usually termed a famine only if the scale of need, either in terms of numbers of people affected or geographic scope, far outstrips the humanitarian assistance community's capacity to respond by bringing a halt to this process of resource depletion. While this use of the term "famine" might seem overly conservative to some observers, the motivation is to avoid "Crying Wolf" by reserving the term for situations such as 1984-85 in Ethiopia when the scope of suffering was exponentially wider than anything that has been experienced since. In this way, if it becomes necessary in the future to use the term, it is hoped that the response will be quick enough and of sufficient magnitude to address the actual crisis. Although at its peak in mid-2000 mortality was high (with crude mortality rates of 3.1/10,000/day and under five mortality rate of 6.7/10,000/day in Gode Zone between December 1999 and July 2000),¹ starvation-related mortality was brought under control by timely interventions in 2000. In addition, the manifestation of the emergency in pastoral areas in 2000 (as compared to its focus in 1999 on agricultural areas) resulted in extreme water shortages which in many areas were as significant as food shortages in causing distress migration, and increased rates of morbidity and mortality.

1.1 *Genesis of the current emergency*

Drought is a common visitor to Ethiopia, and food insecurity a seemingly constant condition. Yet the destructiveness of drought is conditioned by structural factors which serve to deepen the vulnerability of a large proportion of the population. This report focuses first on the climatic and local-level economic factors underlying the emergency. The final chapter, however, takes a

¹ Salama et. al. 2001.

broader look at some of the policy-level and macro-economic variables which serve to as challenges or obstacles to vulnerability mitigation. In addition, alternatives to food assistance as the sole or main means of responding to chronically food insecure and of addressing the underlying causes of such destitution are considered.

These structural conditions notwithstanding, the emergency of 1999-2000 can be traced back to 1997. In that year, poorly-distributed rainfall resulted in the poor performance of the main agricultural crop, known as *meher*. This was attributed by NMSA and others to the effects of the El Niño weather phenomenon; this line of causation was discounted by the USAID-funded Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) who claimed that there was too much climatic variability in Ethiopia to be able to generalize about the effects of El Niño.² Those who subscribe to the notion that El Niño was at least partly responsible for abnormal weather patterns, such as Thomson, Jenden and Clay (in a report written for SOS/Sahel/Department for International Development (DfID), hereafter referred to as the SOS Sahel/DfID report), argued that the erratic rains of 1997 were an early warning indicator which suggested that drought would be likely to occur in 1998. In their case study on Ethiopia, these authors say:

Even given the skepticism in many quarters about the relevance of El Niño by October 1997, it was becoming very clear that the 1997 harvest would be disappointing and that rainfall was atypical. However, by this time the DPPC, with the specific mandate for disaster prevention and preparedness, was heavily engaged in responding to the fallout from the erratic weather in 1997 and in preparing for the annual crop assessment to determine relief needs for 1998. In this context there appears to have been little opportunity or resources for contingency planning to mitigate the effects of probable *Meher* failure in 1998 (p. 34).

Because Donors had been informed through the WFP/FAO Crop Assessment that the 1996 *meher* harvest had been extremely good, very little assistance was made available in 1997. It was true that many *meher* producing farmers were able to produce enough food to feed their households for the year. However, in *belg*³ producing and pastoral areas, significant numbers of people did not benefit from this harvest and did not have enough cash to buy grain from local markets. The SOS Sahel/DfID report states that of the 427,799 MT total relief requirement appealed for by the GFDRE, only 187,138 MT were pledged in 1997, and of this, 55,240 MT had still not been delivered to Ethiopia by 1 December 1997. Approximately 108,000 MT of the total 267,647 MT assistance delivered that year was in the form of local purchase, whereby domestic surpluses were bought up and transported to food-deficit areas for distribution. The European Union, together with WFP, led the way with this initiative. In addition to the limited

² Thomson, Jenden and Clay: 1998.

³ *Belg* crops are defined as those which are planted during the short rains which usually fall in March and April. *Belg* crops may be harvested as early as June and as late as September depending on the variety and rain conditions. Although estimates vary as to the relative importance of the *belg* season as compared to the main *meher* harvest, it is generally believed that *belg* crops amount to less than 15% of overall national food production. *Belg* failure, however, can be disastrous in areas where farmers do not receive a *meher* harvest.

food response, there was also little support given to the Ethiopian Government's request for cash and non-food items. The SOS-Sahel/DfID report concludes:

Whatever the reasons, because of the poor response not all people who needed assistance were reached in 1997. In many cases, ration sizes were reduced to cope with the overall shortage of food aid. The effects of the reduced levels of food aid going to affected areas has not been assessed. However, from past evidence it is clear that a large number of already vulnerable households will be facing significant problems and will be facing the next agricultural season with a very much reduced ability to cope (p. 102).

This prediction proved to be correct even though the drought that had been feared did not occur. Rather than failing completely, the 1998 *kiremt* rains were extremely erratic, causing late-season losses due to frost, flooding, and hailstorms. These phenomena were most acutely felt in the areas that were already most vulnerable to crop failure (as a result of high population density, poor soil productivity, and lack of alternative income sources) and food insecurity.

According to FAO, the 1996 harvest reached record levels, and Ethiopia actually had a 400,000 MT grain surplus. Localized food shortages in chronically vulnerable areas were largely relieved through local purchases of food by the European Union and WFP in 1997. In addition, Ethiopia actually exported food to other countries in the region. However, the extent of the food surplus was somewhat overstated, and gave Donors the false sense that Ethiopia's food shortages were finally a thing of the past.

Meanwhile, in early 1997 a drought was developing in Somali Region and Borena Zone, which was exacerbated by the arrival of several thousand pastoralists from southwestern Somalia and northern Kenya, where the drought conditions were more severe.⁴ The UN-EUE reported efforts on the part of the regional administration and local NGOs to raise support for water tankering to alleviate the immediate water shortage. In February, the GFDRE issued a special appeal for additional assistance for nearly one million affected pastoralists. By March, parts of North and South Omo had been added to the appeal, as declining nutritional status and weakening livestock was reported. The GFDRE's DPPC deployed twenty trucks to transport water, fodder and food to remote locations in affected areas.⁵ By August 1997, the Government estimated that 3.4 million people were in need, and that food assistance (excluding carryover) for the year had risen to 201,530 MT, an increase of more than 50% over the December 1996 appeal figures. Also in 1997, widespread failure of the *belg* rains were reported. By August, the Government had announced that relief food needs for the year would total 300,000 MT.⁶ In an update to Donors, the DPPC stated, "In spite of the apparent relief needs in the country, and the acute levels of malnutrition, and at times displacement of people, observed in a number of areas, this year's Donors response has unusually been very low." The report went on to say that the Donors had only pledged 49% of total relief requirements.⁷ Moreover, deliveries were reported to be slow.

⁴ UN-EUE Situation Report, March 1997.

⁵ UN-EUE Situation Report, March 1997.

⁶ UN-EUE Situation Report, May 1997 and June 1997

⁷ DPPC, August 21, 1997.

This late response meant that many people in chronically vulnerable areas did not receive assistance when they needed it, and some had no choice but to liquidate their assets in order to obtain food from the local markets. The failure of the *belg* rains also served to reduce the *meher* harvest, as farmers shifted from long-cycle, higher yielding cereal crops to shorter-cycle, lower yielding ones. In areas where food aid was either late or did not arrive in amounts adequate to meet the needs of the poorest people, ration sizes were diluted in order to serve more people, or were missed altogether if no delivery was received.

The 1998 harvest was initially reported to have been good, but late season losses resulted in a lower than expected final harvest figure. In addition, the short agricultural (*belg*) rains were poor during 1998, and pastoral rains were inadequate to facilitate rehabilitation of herds that had suffered losses during 1997. In November 1998, the DPPC issued an appeal for emergency assistance for 4.2 million people. This increase was attributed to continuing high needs of *belg* and pastoralist farmers as well as late season losses and reduced long-cycle crop yields in Tigray and Wello.

Further lack of rain during the first quarter of 1999 exacerbated the situation; at the beginning of the year, the Government of Ethiopia estimated that 2.2 million people were in need of emergency food assistance.⁸ The DPPC issued a total of six appeals during the year; with each update, the numbers increased. By January 2000 the number of people affected by natural disaster had risen to 7.7 million.

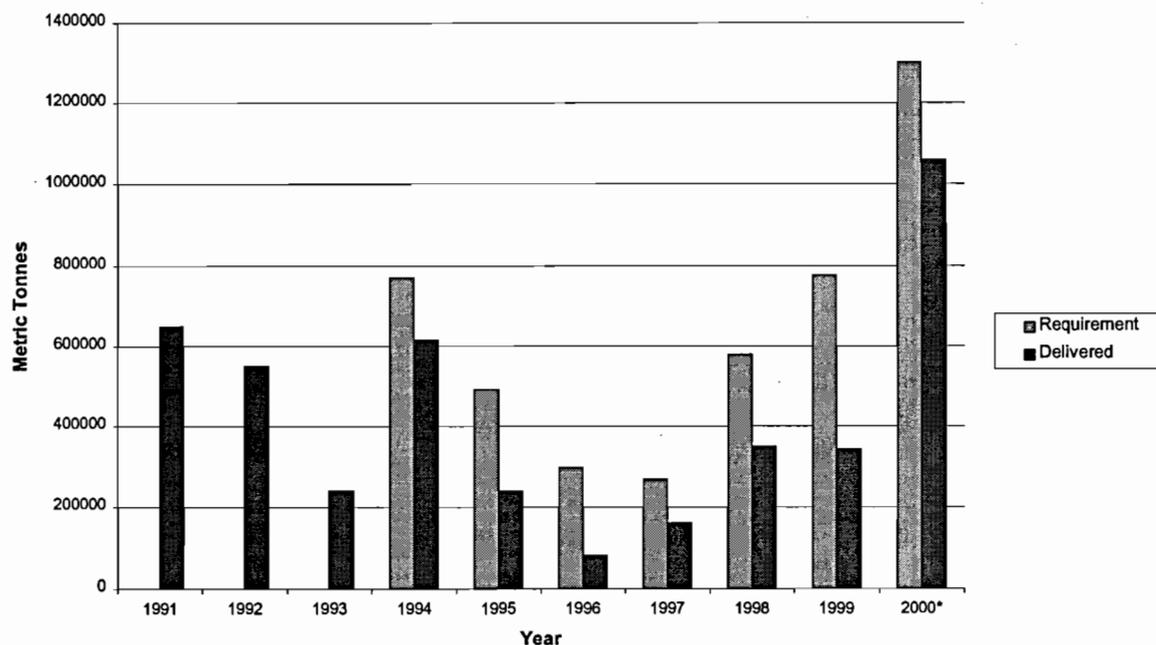
Chart 1 on page 10 shows the final year figures of emergency food requirements versus the actual amount delivered during the year between 1991 and 2000 (Note that figures are not available for 1991-93 for final requirements). The Chart shows the dramatic increases in food needs beginning in 1998 (as a response to 1997 rain failures) and the low level of deliveries that actually arrived in the year for which they were needed. These increases reflect not only acute needs generated by particular rainfall and crop failures, but also the increasing level of asset erosion that was occurring in the years leading up to the 1999-2000 emergency. (Additional information on appeal figures and beneficiary numbers are listed in Appendix 1.)

As the emergency developed in 1999, the alarm bells started to sound. The various sources of early warning information, including those from the Government of Ethiopia, the United Nations, Donors and NGOs, all recognized the indicators that the food shortage was increasing in severity well in advance. In April 1999, an ambassadorial-level helicopter mission led by the DPPC and WFP traveled to the northern highlands and saw large numbers of people suffering from severe malnutrition who had migrated from their homes in search of assistance. Food aid was diverted from other areas to Wello, but in the meantime needs were revealed in other parts of the country for which there were not adequate stocks to respond immediately. The DPPC carried out a few emergency interventions to Somali Region, including provision of 8000 MT of

⁸ Source: GFDRE/DPPC, January 2000. This figure does not include requirements for IDPs displaced by the conflict with Eritrea.

cereals in the Spring of 1999 and again at the end of 1999, but food stocks were not adequate to meet increased needs. Had significant pledges been received early enough (i.e. by the second or third quarter of 1999), and operational agencies developed emergency programs quickly enough, the scenes broadcast in the media in March and April 2000 would probably not have materialized.

Chart 1. Emergency Food Requirements vs. Deliveries, 1991-2000



Sources: Delivery information is from WFP Addis Food Aid Information Unit. Requirement figures are taken from DPC appeals and UN-EUE Situation Reports. Delivery figures do not include beginning of the year carryover stock.

The US and EU made some pledges during the final quarter of 1999 against which food was borrowed from the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve but due to bureaucratic delays, this food was not repaid until mid 2000 (April through July). Actual food availability did not improve dramatically until the second quarter of 2000. By that time, the problem had spread to pastoral areas, where rains had failed for three years and livestock deaths were reaching catastrophic levels. In July 2000 the number of beneficiaries was estimated by the DPPC to have reached 10.2 million.

International media coverage of the food shortage emergency in Somali Region (particularly in and around the town of Gode) and to a more limited extent in Borena Zone helped to raise public awareness of the problem, and spurred increased response from Donors and implementing agencies, most of whom had not previously had a significant presence in pastoral areas. The UN Secretary General gave the matter high priority and appointed Catherine Bertini, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, as Special Envoy to Drought-Affected Countries in the Horn of Africa. The Secretary General also appointed Manuel Aranda da Silva as Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the six drought-affected countries; the ORHC was based in Addis Ababa. High-level delegations from USAID (Assistant Administrators Hugh Parmer and Deputy

Assistant Administrator Leonard Rogers in March and June, respectively); the UN (including the Secretary General's Special Envoy for Drought in the Horn of Africa, Catherine Bertini, in April, October and – together with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan – in December), and the EU (Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Assistance Poul Nielsen) in October helped to bring additional attention to the problem, and to improve coordination.

1.2 Prevailing emergency conditions throughout 2000

The food shortage emergency in Ethiopia continued throughout 2000, although its characteristics and geographic focus shifted. In agricultural areas, the features of the vulnerability included the following:

- Continued drought conditions in *belg* producing agricultural areas and pastoral areas (light rains in the final quarter of 2000 notwithstanding) prevented significant recovery of productive potential for agricultural or pastoral populations. Although fodder availability improved, milk production had not increased substantially by the end of the year.
- Additional areas throughout the country emerged (particularly throughout 1999) as a result of erosion of assets in chronically vulnerable areas that were either previously identified as being in need of close monitoring or else were not identified at all as being at risk of requiring food assistance. Efforts to provide food to all affected areas strained available food resources as well as the government's and relief infrastructure's capacity. The situation in Welayita, for instance, was distinct from that in Somali Region and in the northern highlands. It was thus difficult to bring the situation in all areas under control.
- The scale of livestock losses in pastoral areas⁹ rendered many households without any assets to speak of and caused them to migrate to settled areas in search of relief food. These migrants have not been able to regenerate their herds or regain access to animals although some have left the town centers to return to their rural homes.
- Low levels of Donor food aid arrivals against pledges during the first half of 1999 prevented early delivery of food assistance to affected populations and worsened the process of destitution, thereby raising the number of affected persons in need of assistance. This carried over into 2000.
- Slow repayment of the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve by several Donors (including the USG, WFP, the EU, and the Ethiopian Government) in the second half of 1999 and first half of 2000 limited ability to dispatch food that had already been pledged quickly and to preposition food in remote or seasonally inaccessible areas (although 70,000 MT of food was prepositioned prior to the onset of the *kiremt* rains). Reduced availability of food also perpetuated the problem of reduced ration sizes – food needs in affected areas had to be prioritized such that some needy communities did not receive adequate food assistance, and the cereal ration was kept at the reduced figure of 12.5 kg (rather than the international

⁹ Sandford and Habtu (2000) collected reports of losses in Afar, Oromiya, Somali, and SNNPR. Losses range from 40-80% in Somali Region, 50% in South Omo and Bale, and between 30-80% in Borena. Afar cattle losses were estimated at between 15-45%. Losses were less for sheep and goats, and least for camels.

standard emergency ration size of 15 kg/person/month)¹⁰. However, by the beginning of 2001, Ethiopian Food Security Reserve (EFSR) levels had increased to a comfortable level.

- Poor targeting practices prevented food from reaching the most vulnerable populations in some areas (particularly Somali region). WFP and DPPC did attempt to identify priority areas, but ensuring that the most needy within a population received food has still not been completely successful.
- Inability to properly monitor actual distribution of relief food has resulted in inadvertent neglect of some areas and over-supply of other areas.
- Measles immunization coverage has been low in pastoral areas, and has not prevented outbreaks among vulnerable populations. Other non-food assistance including water, therapeutic and supplementary feeding programs were not implemented in most areas until late April, May or even later.

1.3 Efforts in 2000 helped avert a nation-wide famine

Concerted efforts to provide food and (in pastoral areas) water quickly to the most severely-affected populations helped to relieve and control the spread of the crisis. Ultimately, a nationwide famine was averted, although not without the loss of many lives in pastoral areas. Such a famine could easily have been on a scale equal to or greater than that of the 1984-85 famine, which still stands as a benchmark to define what a worst-case scenario would be like. As it turned out, provision of relief food and a better than expected main rainy season (*kiremt*) appears to have prevented large-scale stress migration in the agricultural highlands, and migration to most settlements in the pastoral areas had greatly subsided by August, with regular supply of food and non-food assistance. The success of the rainy season and harvest also helped people to remain on their farms through the final months of the year. In 2000, more than one million metric tons of food aid will have been imported – mostly through the port of Djibouti but also with the use of Berbera port in Somaliland – or procured locally (through local purchase programs in Ethiopia and to a limited degree Sudan). Coordination efforts have improved the circulation of information, and helped to improve targeting of emergency programs. In many cases, the combined efforts of several organizations with limited resources or mandates to a single project has enabled the provision of more sustainable assistance. The combined efforts of UNICEF, OXFAM, MSF-B, SC/US and others to supply water in Denan (in Gode Zone, Somali Region) is a prime example of such effective cooperation. Unfortunately, the food/water magnet appears to have kept people in Denan town for a much longer period than was necessary, and agencies working there have had a difficult time encouraging people to return to their home areas, even when food is being distributed.

¹⁰ This reduction represents official reductions. In practice, rations were often reduced even further as local officials sought to provide food assistance to more people than they had been allocated food for.

1.4 2001: No time for complacency

Despite these efforts, the emergency is not yet over. In a report written for the UK Department for International Development (DfID) - hereafter referred to as the DfID (2000) report, Sandford and Habtu (2000) state that "The cumulative deficit at two of the [rainfall measuring] stations (Kebri-Dahar and Yabello) over the 25 months concerned is in excess of one year of average rainfall." Recovery from such a loss of water and grazing land will take several good rainy seasons. The short pastoral rains expected in October – November 2000 arrived on time but only lasted one to two weeks before stopping, and then resumed two to three weeks later. While these rains were not enough to facilitate large-scale recovery, they did provide some desperately needed drinking water for humans and livestock, and replenish pastureland. Many people have lost all of their animals, and lack the cash to purchase new ones. For them, the rains have brought little benefit. Others have only a minimum of animals remaining, and will need to wait at least one reproductive season to be able to have animals to sell for cash or trade for grain.

In January 2001, the Government of Ethiopia issued an appeal for emergency assistance for 6.2 million people. Total food requirements are 385,586 MT of cereals and 85,072 MT of other commodities for a total net requirement of 470,658 MT. The Government's appeal cites a total requirement of 639,246 MT (all commodities), but notes that due to a significant carry over of in-country stock and undelivered pledges from 2000 (totaling 168,587 MT), the amount of additional food needed to be appealed for has been reduced. The Government's figures are based on a "best-case scenario" assumption that the 2001 main pastoral and *belg* rains will be good enough that those who depend upon them will be able to become self-sufficient.

On 29 January, the United Nations issued a consolidated appeal for drought-affected countries in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Tanzania, and Somalia). The appeal includes a request for 206,200 MT of food for Ethiopia, to provide emergency assistance to 2.5 million beneficiaries. The appeal also includes US\$ 35 million in nonfood assistance to promote recovery and vulnerability mitigation in Ethiopia, and US\$4 million in support for regional mitigation and response measures.

If the rains improve, it is hoped that some food aid may be used as a recovery ration, and can be programmed in such a way as to promote a return to food for work and employment generation schemes in areas where these types of projects are appropriate. However, the level of destitution of many of the beneficiaries is such that food aid alone will not be sufficient to help them recover their purchasing power and reduce their vulnerability. Continued provision of emergency assistance that does not address the underlying causes of continued poverty and destitution has led to increasing dependency in recent years. At the same time, failure to provide the necessary food to affected populations will force them to resort to further liquidation of assets. For those who have already sold everything they have, or whose animals have perished, the only option may be to migrate to urban centers in search of daily labor and relief handouts. The longer people remain displaced, the more difficult it has been and will continue to be for them to return to their rural homes to resume productive work since they lack the capital necessary to carry out this work.

This report examines each of the different phases of emergency preparedness and response to identify the strong and weak elements. It describes the general steps taken under each phase, and identifies the lessons that may be extracted from each of the following: *early warning, preparedness, Donor pledging, general response (food and non-food), logistics, monitoring,*

coordination, transition to recovery and development, and policy implications for poverty reduction and improving food security.

2. EARLY WARNING

Ethiopia was the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to develop a national Early Warning System. It did this in 1976, following the 1973-74 famine and the establishment of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (the precursor to the present Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission) in 1974 (Buchanan-Smith and Davies: 1995, 59). As Buchanan-Smith and Davies point out, the efforts of the RRC and its Early Warning System to prevent future famines were not able to prevent the famine of 1984-85, in which it is estimated that as many as one million people may have died. These authors argue that the famine:

happened because of a fatal failure to respond early to warnings about the developing crisis; because of inappropriate estimates by international agencies of relief needs, based more on logistical capacity than actual requirements; and because of the response delays even when a relief operation was launched.

The implications of attempting to deliver relief food to areas that were largely outside the control of the government were crucial in thwarting the relief operation. While the political climate has changed dramatically over the last 15 years, but in evaluating the effectiveness of early warning in the present emergency, it is worthwhile to question each aspect of this statement to determine what, if anything, has changed since that time. The principal questions to be asked (some of which are based on the above quote) are:

- ✓ To what extent does the current system of information gathering fail to provide Early Warning information concerning pastoral areas and communities?
- ✓ To what extent were warnings about the developing crisis heeded? At what point did early warning generate response?
- ✓ To what extent were estimates of relief needs seen to be reliable by international agencies?
- ✓ To what extent did early warning information and analysis identify interventions to mitigate famine threats?
- ✓ To what extent do considerations of logistical capacity affect estimations of relief needs?
- ✓ What, if any, delays in response have been experienced in the relief operation since the start of the relief operation?

The first four of these questions is explored in depth below. The third question is explored in more detail in the section on Logistics, and the fourth question is discussed in the section on Response.

2.1 Effectiveness of early warning and its role in generating response

A great deal can be learned by comparing the relief operation of 1999-2000 with earlier operations. In particular, 1984-85 stands out as a true famine and a measuring stick against which all subsequent food shortages have been compared. In 1984-85 (as with the 1973-74 famine), there was at first a concerted effort on the part of the Derg Government¹¹ (and in the earlier instance by Emperor Haile Selassie) to deny the existence of famine conditions in rural areas. National celebrations were being planned for the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Derg's rule in September 1984, and publicity about the famine would have cast the government in a negative light. In addition, starvation was worst in areas where the Derg was fighting insurgents. Some of these places were outside the government's control. Some RRC officials were apparently concerned about the conditions particularly in the northern highlands (as described in former RRC Commissioner's book *Red Tears: War, Famine and Revolution in Ethiopia* [1989]), but were not permitted to sound the alarm bells. Only after members of the international press traveled to the north and broadcast images on television in Donor countries about the extent of the hunger in the north was international pressure brought to bear on initiating a relief operation.

By contrast, in the late 1990s the Government of Ethiopia, under the leadership of the EPRDF's Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission, sounded the early warning alarm bells of the impending food shortage, but were met with muted response. The DPPC showed strong commitment to mobilizing resources at a point when, had it been available, assistance might have helped people to preserve assets necessary for maintaining productivity (and thus food security) and avoided such high levels of malnutrition as were witnessed during 1999 and 2000. However, the government's capacity to respond, particularly in pastoral areas, was extremely limited due to human resource and logistical constraints.

The only exceptions may have been in Welayita and in some of the traditionally surplus-producing areas where food insecurity was reported late. However, in the case of Welayita, even if specific information was not widely available, the general vulnerability of the population living there and past history of coincidence between food insecurity in other parts of Ethiopia and in Welayita should have been sufficient to indicate that a problem there was likely. Van der Veen (WHO 2000) points out that early warning had been received by the SCF-UK Nutritional Surveillance Programme in August 1999 that prices had reached the levels reported during 1994, when a severe food shortage affected the area.

Information on the impending drought was available from the DPPC Early Warning Department, National Meteorological Services Agency, the USAID FEWS, World Food Programme Vulnerability Mapping Unit (VAM), UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia, Save the Children-UK's Nutritional Surveillance Program (NSP) as well as from NGOs who regularly monitored early warning indicators in areas where they were operational. Throughout 1999, the Ethiopian Government gave notice of escalating relief requirements. For the most part, their warnings went

¹¹ The Derg government, a Marxist military regime ruled by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie in September 1974. The Derg was, in turn, overthrown by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in May 1991 after a 17-year civil war fought largely in the northern (and chronically food insecure) regions of Tigray and Amhara.

unheeded by Donor capitals. A total of five appeals or appeal updates were issued throughout the year. A few Donors, including USAID, did respond quickly, but not at a level that was high enough to prevent distress migration and escalating malnutrition levels during 1999 and the beginning of 2000.

2.1.1 Difficulties with early warning in pastoral areas

The weakest part of the Early Warning System was with regard to pastoral and agro-pastoral areas.¹² Significant efforts have been made since the 1984-85 famine to develop Ethiopia's Early Warning capacity, but most of the emphasis has been on agricultural areas, and even then on *meher* (long-season) producers rather than *belg* (short-season) areas. There was some information available from the UN Emergencies Unit, the International Committee of the Red Cross and from NGOs (particularly Save the Children-US and the Ogaden Welfare Society) working in pastoral and agropastoral areas in the final quarter of 1999 (see Belay/UN-EUE Oct. 1999, Belay and Hammond/UN-EUE November 1999; Ugas/UN-EUE Dec. 1999, SC/US Dec. 1999), but there was no systematic method of ensuring that the warnings stimulated timely response.

The lack of information about conditions in pastoral areas is linked to a general lack of information about pastoral livelihoods and food economy. Coping strategies in times of drought, resource mobilization activities, and even the basic requirements for achieving what is commonly referred to as "food security" are not well understood since little systematic analysis has been done in these areas. What reports are received from aid agencies working in pastoral areas tend to be based on rapid assessments and/or geographic remote sensing data that, taken by itself, provides an incomplete picture of the situation in the area.

On 14 December 1999, a multi-agency mission composed of technical-level representatives from the DPPC, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, UN-EUE, and USAID traveled to Gode Zone in Somali Region (See Ugas/UN-EUE Dec. 1999). The purpose of the visit was to identify appropriate and immediate interventions to be made to alleviate the situation and to prevent conditions from deteriorating further in the coming months. By this time, however, conditions had already deteriorated. The short rains had been extremely poor, and no further rain was expected until at least February 2000. Acute malnutrition was observed among the general population, livestock deaths had increased, and stress migration into Gode town had already begun. In February, another helicopter mission, this time carried out by high level Donor and UN representatives, which helped to focus donor attention on the need for additional response.

In the latter half of 2000, the weakness of the national Early Warning System with regard to pastoral and agropastoral areas was generally recognized. Save the Children-UK is working with the DPPC to develop a proposal for establishing a Pastoral Early Warning System for Somali Region and Borena Zone. Several donors, including the OFDA/EDRC and ECHO, have provided guidance and input to this proposal. Several initiatives are being taken at an individual agency level to attempt to harmonize what little early warning information does exist in the Horn of Africa. Rather than being seen as competing initiatives, these activities should be considered

¹² See FEWS Net/CARE Greater Horn of Africa Food Security Update, 15 Dec. 2000

to be complementary to the overall goal of developing a government-run Pastoral Early Warning System.

Another weak spot in the Early Warning System was the lack of nutritional monitoring systems with standardized methods for determining malnutrition. A study carried out by WHO and an expert from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) seconded to UNICEF decried the shortage of baseline information necessary for evaluating nutritional conditions during times of crisis.¹³ While agencies involved in provision of supplementary and/or complementary food rations (in some cases through supplementary and therapeutic feeding centers) after March 2000 generally did carry out nutritional assessments prior to – or as one of – the first steps in launching their operations, the quality of the assessments varied widely. Due to the use of different methods of measurement and sampling, the results of most of the agencies were not useful in comparative analysis (either between different geographic areas or over time within the same area).

Save the Children-UK, which has been conducting a Nutritional Surveillance Programme (NSP) in the Northeast Highlands (North and South Wollo, Wag Hamra, and South Tigray), East and West Harerghe, and Welayita for the past decade, has suspended its surveillance activities and is focussing its efforts on building nutritional and household food economy assessment capacity within the DPPC. This move should make the assessment system more sustainable. Review of indicators and analysis methods are also being reviewed. (See Box 3 in the section on Monitoring, below).

2.1.2 A crisis of response

The general problem with the Early Warning System was not that adequate data were not available, but that there was no system in place to ensure that appropriate response action was taken (Buchanan-Smith: 2000). With regard to the 1999 emergency in the agricultural highlands of northeastern Ethiopia, pledges were spurred by the high-level DPPC/WFP/Donor helicopter mission in March. Mission members observed hundreds of destitute people who had migrated into Lalibella town in search of food, as well as the widespread use of famine foods – including a green, drought-resistant plant known locally as *vetch* which is capable of causing paralysis when ingested – and a large number of animal carcasses. The migrants reported that there had already been many adult and child deaths in the area.

In 2000, significant pledges were made only after the technical-level mission to Gode Zone of Somali Region in December 1999, and the donor visit in February 2000. Given that food aid generally takes at least four months to arrive in country, and that the stock levels of the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve (EFSR) by late 1999 were extremely low, this was too late to help people avoid selling off their assets, much less to save lives.

Donors' reluctance to pledge bilateral emergency assistance to Ethiopia was in most cases related to their opposition to the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The conflict, which began in

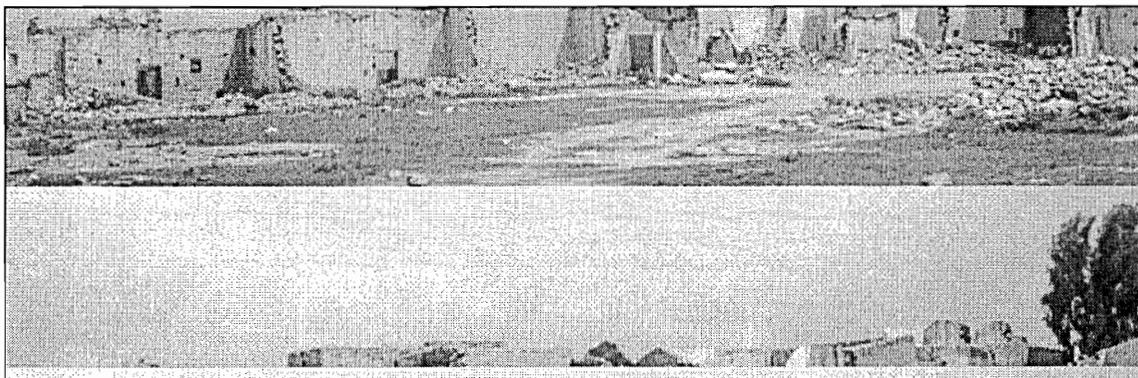
¹³ The lack of such data was also cited by NGOs working in Welayita. See, for instance MSF-Switzerland's "Nutritional survey: Damot Gale Woreda, Wolayita, North Omo, Ethiopia, 21-25 August 2000", written by Katharina Stricker.

May 1998 and effectively ended in June 2000 with the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (followed by the signing of a formal peace treaty in December 2000), was characterized by relatively short but extremely intense bouts of heavy fighting (See Box 1). There was a desire on the part of Donors to avoid indirectly enabling the continuation of the conflict by replenishing resources that had been diverted to the war effort. Most members of the international community were slow to decide that humanitarian assistance should not be denied to victims of natural disasters even when the country was at war with its neighbor.

There is a need to identify "red flags" to stimulate response in pastoralist areas. Such indicators should be based on thorough knowledge of pastoralist livelihoods and coping strategies. At a minimum, they must also incorporate international standards for malnutrition (<90% WFH), mortality (1/10,000/day) and water supply (3 liters/day/person for personal use). Additional standards and response triggers must be agreed upon after collection of baseline livelihoods information (as proposed by the SCF-UK/DPPC pastoral early warning system).

Box 1.

Impact of the Ethio-Eritrean War on the Drought Emergency Operation



Most of the dwellings in Zelambessa town have been destroyed

Photo: Ric Machmer, OFDA

The conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea was fought over geographic borders but was also heavily influenced by economic factors. When the fighting broke out, there was universal condemnation from the international community. The UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo on both countries, and issued a resolution calling for an end to air strikes after attacks which included hits on the Ethiopian towns of Mekele and Adigrat and the airport in Asmara, the Eritrean capital.

Donor sentiment was strong that in the face of a looming drought emergency, neither country could afford to spend large sums of money on defense. The warring parties argued that issues of national defense were too important to be sacrificed, and downplayed the significance of military spending on limiting the effectiveness of their response. Although it is true that significant funds were diverted to the war effort, and that for a short time there was a shortage of transport for delivery of relief items, the war is not seen as a cause of the food shortage emergency, although it did complicate logistics and response. It is clear that even if there had been no war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the drought emergency would have occurred anyway.

This realization, together with the imperative that victims of natural disasters should not be denied humanitarian assistance for political reasons, eventually led to increasing donations from Donors for drought relief.

Even when such assistance was finally forthcoming, however, most Donors suspended their longer term development assistance and other direct bilateral support programs to Ethiopia which focused on health, food security and other critical sectors. This resulted in a loss of food-for-work, cash-for-work and other related income-generation opportunities. Participation in such schemes was important for those who were particularly vulnerable to the effects of drought. In addition, the loss of cross-border trade opportunities between Ethiopia and Eritrea had a significant effect on depressing local border markets. Alternatives to these lost sources of income have not yet been found. Without the possibility of obtaining non-farm income, the process of asset erosion has been accelerated and may continue to have an effect for the foreseeable future.

2.2 *Estimating requirements and issuing appeals*

The process of estimating food requirements has generally become more transparent in the last ten years, and especially since 1997 when multi-agency crop assessments began to be carried out. Previously, the Government of Ethiopia conducted its own pre-harvest assessment, while FAO and WFP collaborated on their own assessment, often carried out in the same areas at the same time. This led to a considerable degree of uncertainty about the reliability of each of the assessments. Greater transparency in recent years has helped to build trust and foster cooperation among the major stakeholders. In recent years, the DPPC has invited participation from UN agencies, Donors, NGOs, and the Ministry of Agriculture in the pre-harvest assessment and calculation of beneficiary figures. While the FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment is still carried out, it focuses more on the total food balance sheet for the main agricultural season and less on calculation of food aid requirements. Recognizing that food production provides only a partial picture of food security or lack thereof, in recent years the DPPC Needs Assessment (with participation from WFP, UN-EUE and several Donors) has also examined off-farm sources of income such as waged labor, petty trade, sale of livestock or other assets, etc. The joint assessments have given rise to a general consensus in Addis Ababa among the humanitarian community that the food aid requirements contained in the DPPC appeals usually agree in general terms with independent assessments and are not excessively over- or underestimated.

A decade ago the international community held the conviction that food requirement figures were somewhat inflated. This was attributed to the fact that the Government of Ethiopia felt that donors could only be expected to provide a portion of the amount appealed for (an assumption that was somewhat correct). In 1999 and 2000, with greater participation from Donors in the needs assessment process and more rigorous assessment methodology, there has been acceptance of the general validity of needs estimates; percentages of requested food actually pledged have thus tended to be higher than was the case a decade ago.

Although the means of determining requirements has improved in recent years, no fixed methodology has yet been accepted. This has resulted in excessive time being devoted to providing training to assessment teams concerning methodologies and has generated a degree of confusion that complicates the process of estimation. Zonal and Regional officials, who carry out their own estimates of needs in their jurisdictions, do not use the same methodologies as those introduced by the federal level, and often question why the teams visiting their areas come each year with a different methodology. They reason, with some justification, that their methodology of visiting every locality and using the same methods each year must surely yield a more reliable result. While it may be valid to fine-tune the assessment methodology from one year to the next, the system should be established and kept as consistent as possible.

A significant problem concerning the appeal process is its timing. The GFDRE's annual appeal calendar is built around the needs of the main agricultural producers and fiscal budgeting but does not fit the pastoral production calendar. This means that while the January appeal may provide a relatively accurate picture of relief requirements for agricultural producers, it is not well suited to determining pastoralist needs. The characterization of the problem given in the DfID report (2000) is worth quoting at length:

The timing of the major "annual appeal" to foreign Donors in January (for the European calendar year starting then) fits in moderately well with the needs in most cropping areas. Fairly reliable estimates can by then have been made of the

previous Meher rains crop's harvest, and that harvest will usually have been sufficient to keep farming households in most areas going until the food aid pledged in the response to the January appeal has arrived. The time when most of the cropping areas' needy people actually require the food is in the months from April/May until the next Meher season's harvest. The emergency food reserve can usually bridge the 1-2 month gap (in some areas) before food aid promptly pledged in response to the January appeal actually arrives in Ethiopia. Nevertheless even for some of the cropping areas (e.g. Welayita) dependent on short-cycle crops (e.g. sweet potatoes), the time between the appeal and the need is *much* shorter than the Donors' response lag to a government appeal.

To some degree, the appeal calendar may reflect something of an institutional and informational bias since in Ethiopia agricultural livelihoods are better understood than pastoralist ones. However, there is increasing recognition of the need to redress this imbalance. The DPPC's decision – beginning in 2000 – to delay the release of the major appeal until January (whereas previously appeals were released in mid-December) was intended to allow late-season developments in the agricultural areas to be considered, as well as for pastoral areas to be assessed following the short rains. However, the main pastoral rains are normally expected from February – May, and thus the major pastoral assessment would be better timed in June. In addition, what is needed is an information system that continuously feeds information back from the local level to zones, regions and ultimately to the central level so that conditions can be monitored throughout the year and not just for three or four weeks a year.

Although there is generally an appeal update issued in June by the Government of Ethiopia, Donors are not usually oriented to expect this appeal to be the main appeal document for pastoral areas, and their fiscal year budgets often do not allow for substantial new commitments in June.

Much more discussion needs to be held between the Government of Ethiopia and Donors to identify an appeal schedule that would accurately reflect the changing needs of the population and provide enough warning for Donors to respond in time to enable effective relief. It may be that Donors need to be "sold" on the idea of two major appeals each year: one (issued in January) for the main agricultural areas, and another (issued in June) for the short-season agriculturalists and pastoralists. In this case, however, contingency planning will be necessary so that donors can anticipate likely food requirements for the second half of the year and make necessary preparations for pledging.

The final point concerning the issuing of appeals concerns the preparation and launch of Consolidated Interagency Appeals (CAPs) by the United Nations. In 1999, Ethiopia was included in the global launch of the CAP by the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Experience has shown that most of the resources pledged to the UN agencies in Ethiopia are obtained locally; response to globally launched appeals has been lower than those that were previously launched in Addis Ababa. There are concerns among many Donors that the CAP becomes something of a "shopping list", with proposals from agencies that are not operational or are not well-prepared to carry out emergency work serving to obscure the important proposals. Donors tend to turn away from appeals if the total requirement is very high. In addition, the time devoted by each agency to prepare such appeals takes valuable time away

from project implementation. By way of illustration, response to the June 1999 UN Country Team appeal (issued in Addis Ababa), food pledges received by 6 October 1999 totaled 85% of requested amounts, and non-food contributions totaled 30% of the total requested.¹⁴ By contrast, by January 2001, response to the June 2000 drought appeal for food was 61% and for nonfood was 22%.¹⁵ Although many factors contributing to Donor decisions to pledge are also contingent on other considerations, there has not yet been a clear added value to participation in the CAP process. It is recommended that the UN should revert to issuing one or two appeals at the country level (which are anyway posted on the ReliefWeb website and so are available to donor capitals as well) rather than as part of the Consolidated Appeal Process.

Strengths:

1. The national Early Warning System did detect food shortages in a timely manner, and translated these into increased food requirements in 1999, with five updates throughout the year in addition to the annual appeal, and in 2000. Early Warning was strongest in the agricultural areas, particularly the northern highlands of Amhara and Tigray Regions.
2. Coordination and information dissemination was good, from not only the DPPC's Early Warning Department, but also from the National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA), USAID/FEWS and the EU Local Food Security Unit (who have published a joint newsletter and are collaborating on a new format), Save the Children-UK's NSP, and the UN Country Team through the UN-EUE.
3. Greater participation by Donors, UN agencies and NGOs in the GFDRE/DPPC's crop assessments has led to more transparency. Most members of the international community accept the Government's appeal figures for both beneficiaries and food requirements. At the same time, the Government has been able to benefit from the technical expertise of many of the participating organizations and it is likely that the quality of the data upon which the assistance requirement estimates are based has improved.

Weaknesses:

1. The national Early Warning System lacks capacity and technical expertise to monitor agropastoral and pastoral areas. As a result, adequate warning was not given in time to avert a crisis in these areas.
2. A national nutritional monitoring system is lacking, particularly in pastoral areas which also suffer from lack of health services and poor physical infrastructure. This has resulted in a lack of baseline information, making it difficult to determine the extent to which conditions have deteriorated since the onset of the emergency, and to monitor changing conditions in a systematic way.

¹⁴ UN Country Team, October 1999. "List of International Contributions for Severely Drought Affected Areas of Ethiopia: Final Update of Contributions to the UN Country Team Appeal," Addis Ababa.

¹⁵ "UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals Process Strategy Paper for Ethiopia, 2001," Geneva.

3. The absence of nutritional monitoring standards has resulted in varying quality of nutritional assessment data and analysis, and limited usefulness of data in comparative analysis across geographic area and time.
4. Some organizations have reduced the ability of the DPPC (particularly the Early Warning department) to carry out technical work by hiring government staff. This may have far-reaching implications in the future on the early warning and response capacity of the Government.
5. The Government appeal calendar is currently not suited to respond to the needs of pastoralists. The mid-term update should be better integrated into the appeal calendar year so that the January appeal covers first semester needs but makes reference to the fact that mid-term needs will be reassessed in June. More emphasis should be placed on assessments in pastoral areas.
6. Ethiopia's participation in the UN Consolidated Appeal Process has not demonstrated added value in terms of higher contributions. It is therefore recommended that the UN Country Team issue appeals at country level, and that strict prioritization of only the most urgent needs and the projects that can clearly be implemented in a short timeframe be included.

Steps to be taken or already underway to improve the situation:

1. Support is needed for the development of a Pastoral Early Warning System. A proposal is currently being prepared by SCF-UK and the DPPC. Additional initiatives are also being proposed by the ORHC, FEWSNet, and WHO. These have the potential to be extremely useful to the overall objective of enhancing early warning in pastoral areas, but if not carried out in a well-coordinated manner, could also prove to duplicate efforts. All efforts to enhance early warning in pastoral areas must make a special effort to share information, expertise, and participation between programs.
2. Relatively unexploited resources in both Somali Region and Borena Zone are the Rangeland Development Projects (Southeast Rangelands Project –SERP– in Somali Region and Southern Rangelands Development Unit – SORDU – in Borena). These projects were set up under the previous government. Despite failures in attempting to institute large commercial farms for pastoralists to work on, many aspects of their rural development strategies were rather successful (e.g. water development, rural road construction, marketing strategies for livestock, and veterinary care). However, with decentralization, they have lost much of their funding. It is vital to revive these structures, which have an ability to work in areas which outsiders find difficult due to security and logistical constraints, and could provide important early warning data collection.
3. An Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) has been established within the DPPC's Early Warning System with support from WFP, UNICEF and SCF-UK. The objective of the ENCU is to "facilitate the use of good quality nutrition and nutrition-related information to

enable the rational use of food aid and other resources in emergency-affected areas." The ENCU plans to establish a Nutrition Coordination Task Force.¹⁶

4. Methodologies for carrying out crop assessments and pastoral assessments needs to be agreed upon by all stakeholders and preserved. Once these are arrived at, major changes in methodology techniques should not be introduced unless absolutely necessary, as these tend to generate more confusion than they do clarity. Training and capacity building at all levels will be necessary to ensure effectiveness of assessment methodology. An Early Warning Working Group has been established to address these issues, and is making progress. However, higher level participation from the GFDRE and Donors would help the process.
5. Discussion between the GFDRE and Donors needs to focus on the best way to issue appeals concerning pastoral areas to ensure that response can be generated in a timely manner. This may entail the splitting of appeals into Agricultural (January) and Pastoral (June) separate appeals, rather than the rather less noteworthy "Update" that is currently issued at mid-year.

3. PREPAREDNESS

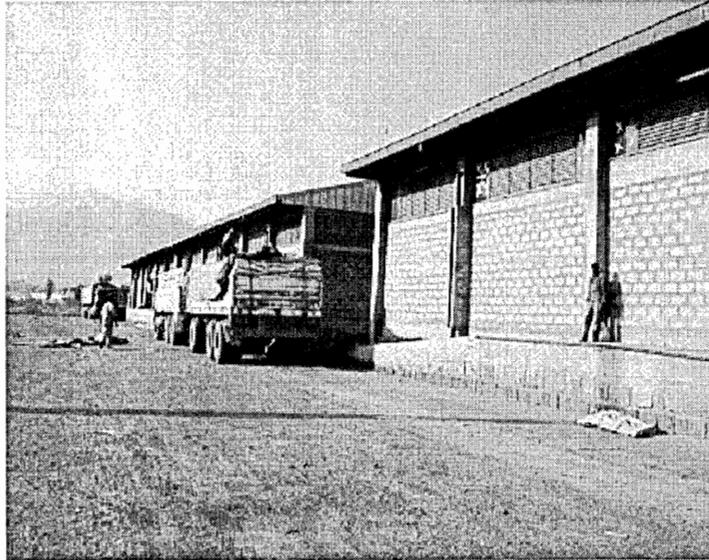
Preparedness is the key to effective response. In the past ten years, the Ethiopian Government has worked hard to enhance its preparedness. It has done this through

- development of the National Policy for Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Management
- institution of a system of Employment Generation Schemes (EGS) which seek to promote food for work projects which are directed towards reduction of vulnerability by employing the most vulnerable people on public work projects which seek to preserve or build a community's natural resource base and infrastructure.
- establishment of the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve (in 1992) to serve as a food bank, from which food that has been pledged by a Donor can be borrowed for immediate distribution and repaid upon arrival in-country.
- improvement of early warning systems and training of staff
- development of National Guidelines for Food Aid Targeting, which have now been accepted by the GFDRE and will be implemented through a series of training events held throughout the country
- establishment of the National Non-Food Contingency Stock (NNFCS) has been approved and funding is currently being sought
- establishment of the National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Fund (NDPPF) has been finalized, and contributions are currently being solicited

The Ethiopian Food Security Reserve Administration (EFSRA) has proved to be an enormous help in facilitating more timely distribution of relief food. However, low stock levels overall impeded effectiveness in 1999 and early 2000. Food from the reserve can only be borrowed

¹⁶ Gladwin, Jean. "Creation of Nutrition Task Force at the DPPC," Discussion paper. Jan. 15, 2001.

against pledges that have been confirmed. When pledges are slow in being delivered, the stock level of the reserve can drop down to a level too low to allow the continued loaning of food against new pledges. The timing of deliveries and EFSR repayments from 1999 allowed the EFSR to loan more than 500,000 MT in CY 2000. However, slow repayments from several



Ethiopian Food Security Reserve Warehouses, Kombolcha

Donors, including the USDA, EU and WFP in 1999 and the first quarter of 2000, prevented the reserve from loaning against confirmed pledges at a time when prepositioning was a priority. FEWS Net/CARE reported in December 2000 that in April 2000 outstanding loans to the EFSR had been 300,000. "Total available grain in reserve was equivalent to less than two weeks worth of emergency requirements and much of the debt was 6-12 months old." In addition, some of the food that had originally been intended as a repayment to the EFSR had to be delivered to beneficiaries directly, which resulted in deferred

repayments to the Reserve. The lesson to be learned from this experience is that loan repayments need to be made earlier, and that the EFSR Administration needs to be informed of the time of expected repayments well enough in advance to allow for a greater degree of forward planning.

Strengths

1. The Ethiopian Food Security Reserve Administration has been an important asset to preparedness, and has helped to prevent breakdowns in the food delivery pipeline.
2. Donations of secondary food storage facilities (particularly in 1999 and 2000) have helped to expedite food deliveries in some areas (although many of the most remote areas remained under or un-served – see below).
3. The National Policy for Disaster Prevention Preparedness and Management (NDPPM) has helped to guide emergency response efforts over the period.
4. Strong cooperation between Donors, UN agencies and NGOs in terms of information sharing has helped to stimulate prompt response. The roles of the UN Special Envoy for Drought in the Horn of Africa, the Office of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, the UN Country Team, and several NGOs who have issued appeals of their own have also helped to bring attention to the need for quick response from actors outside Ethiopia.

Weaknesses

1. Secondary food storage facilities were not available in many of the most remote areas. Reports are still being received of people having to walk more than 50 km to receive their

food rations, although WFP has made it a priority to appeal for enough movable storage units to be put in place that distribution points will never be more than 50 km from beneficiaries. Warehouse facilities in remote locations were generally found to be in poor condition and proper techniques for storing food were not used.

Steps to be taken or already underway to improve the situation:

1. Additional secondary warehouse facilities or movable storage units are needed to preposition food in remote areas. WFP has included movable storage units in its current appeal. Since the beginning of the 1999-2000 emergency, it has provided approximately 100 such units to remote areas of the country. Many more are needed, however.
2. Greater awareness of the National Policy for Disaster Prevention Preparedness and Management on the part of local government officials is needed.
3. More advance information is needed by the EFSRA on expected repayments and loan requests so as to ensure better forward planning and to avoid dramatic drawdowns in stocks at crucial times of the year.

4. PLEDGING

As noted above, Donor responses to the DPPC's Appeal for Food Assistance in 1999 were delayed or could not keep up with the ever-increasing relief needs and rate of borrowing from the Ethiopian Food Security Reserve. The DfID report (2000) claims that this was the result of a lack of attention by humanitarian actors. It is true that although the aid community in Addis Ababa was well aware of the situation that was unfolding, it was difficult to get Donor headquarters to prioritize the emergency. Throughout much of 1999, resources and attention were focused largely on additional crises in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In addition, Donors' reluctance to commit large amounts of food aid to the Horn of Africa was at least partly due to their displeasure at the continuation of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Some Donors had a policy of neutrality with regard to the conflict and were therefore unwilling to donate food directly to Ethiopia. When the fighting began, Eritrea had seized food aid in Assab port that had been destined for Ethiopia, and Donors whose food was involved were not willing to provide additional pledges until issues surrounding outstanding claims were resolved.

In addition, while there was significant early warning information on the situation in Ethiopia, other affected countries in the Horn of Africa had not yet sounded the warning bells. The food emergency was not seen as a regional crisis until March/April 2000, with the visit of UN Special Envoy Catherine Bertini. As the widespread nature of the problem became evident, the assumed connection between food insecurity and military spending was given less emphasis. The crisis was not caused by diversion of resources to the warfront. Other countries in the Horn of Africa were also affected by drought. This delinking of political and humanitarian considerations resulted in greater Donor response.

As conditions worsened, the GFDRE demonstrated its readiness to contribute to the relief effort through two pledges, one in CY 1999 for 20,000 MT for assistance to internally displaced civilians in the conflict-affected areas and another in CY 2000 for 100,000 MT of locally

purchased grain for distribution to drought victims, ultimately leading to additional Donor humanitarian assistance.

In 2000, food aid was more forthcoming. Beginning in June, deliveries through the ports of Djibouti and Berbera began to arrive in large amounts. The US, EU, and WFP worked together to coordinate deliveries so as to avoid congestion in the ports (with the US delivering most of its consignments between April-August), and this was largely successful.

Deliveries to the worst affected areas were accelerated with the increased availability of food. This helped to prevent farmers in the *meher* producing highlands from migrating from their homes in search of work during the agricultural season. It also helped to bring down the migration, supplementary and therapeutic feeding intake rates, as well as (to an unknown extent) mortality rates. Given the encouraging preliminary *meher* harvest figures, it seems that USG and other Donor assistance has helped farmers to maintain whatever assets they still had, and to focus more energy on agricultural production. In the lowland/pastoral areas, it seems that provision of relief food combined with modest resumption of rains, has helped pastoralists begin the long process of herd recovery and income diversification.

There is a danger that Donors may become complacent in CY 2001 based on satisfactory agricultural production levels. However, improved agricultural production will not help pastoralists and most *belg* farmers, who do not have access to this harvest and lack the purchasing power to obtain food through the market. There will also be *meher* farmers whose crops did not perform well, who will lack the purchasing power to obtain grain from the local markets. For instance, despite an overall good *meher* production, farmers in Ziquala woreda of Wag Hamra Zone reportedly received only three days of rain all season. They claim that their crops completely failed. These farmers will remain dependent upon food assistance for most of 2001.

Although food pledges have been high enough to maintain a reasonable level of response, non-food contributions have been more limited. As noted above, response to the UN's appeals in the non-food sectors has been much less than those to the food requirements. NGOs have proved to be somewhat more effective in providing emergency response than UN agencies, due to the fact that they are generally able to respond more quickly. However, significant gaps in agricultural and livestock support, health care, and water supply remain.

Given the expectation that a significant proportion of affected pastoralists and many of the chronically poor agriculturalists (both *belg* and *meher* producers) will continue to require assistance for a matter of years, there is ample justification for forward planning of pledges. Donors need not wait until confirmation of figures by the GFDRE to begin to make preparations for providing a percentage of the expected food requirement. The USG has already (as it did in 1999 for deliveries in early 2000) begun to move forward with delivery of a pledge of 150,000 MT. Such forward planning will help prevent breaks in the food availability pipeline and will promote faster recovery. This will require that the USG and other major Donors (particularly the EU and WFP) coordinate closely their early-year requests from headquarters so that pledges are timed in such a way as to prevent stoppages in the food availability pipeline and/or congestion in the ports/warehouses.

Strengths

1. Once Donors became convinced of the severity of the situation and the importance of quick response, pledging levels were high.
2. Improved coordination and information sharing between the US, EU, WFP, and the DPPC (as well as with fertilizer and commercial importers) helped to ensure that the port of Djibouti did not become overly congested. Information on deliveries was shared by all of the major Donors. WFP's bi-weekly shipping meeting (later renamed the Food and Logistics Coordination Meeting) and shipping bulletins helped in planning vessel deliveries and port discharge.
3. The introduction by WFP of pipeline information related to received pledges and expected deliveries and stock levels has helped to enable better forward planning and coordination for early response.

Weaknesses

1. Donors were slow to provide a commensurate response to the early warning signals that were coming from Ethiopia. No guaranteed response mechanism is in place to ensure that early warning information is acted upon.
2. In some cases, pledges came late which further delayed loans from – and repayments to – the EFSRA.

Steps to be taken or already underway to improve the situation:

1. Additional Donor support for non-food items are needed (particularly support to health care systems and water supply rehabilitation and development). Linkages between development programs and some emergency relief operations are also required. Greater participation in emergency planning and programming of non-food assistance is needed from the relevant line ministries.

5. COORDINATION

5.1 US-EU coordination

From the point of view of emergency early warning, monitoring, and emergency programming, USAID and EU have developed an excellent working relationship. From issuing joint Early Warning System bulletins to coordinating deliveries of food aid so as not to cause congestion in the port, and programming of non-food interventions between OFDA and ECHO, the two major Donors to Ethiopia have effectively developed a collaborative and constructive relationship.

This relationship is in keeping with the Trans-Atlantic Agenda, a presidential initiative which came into effect in December 1995. This initiative was intended " to enable greater access to the

benefits and better response to the risks of globalization by emerging economies and developing countries" (USAID-European Commission Partnership: 1999). Ultimately, there is a general recognition of the fact that closer coordination between the US and EU with respect to development assistance and policy will enhance the effectiveness of each party's respective contributions. (See *The Way Forward: Relief and Development*, below.)

5.2 UN coordination

Following the nomination in May 2000 by the UN Secretary General of a Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Drought Emergency in the Horn of Africa, the UN sought to play a stronger role in the coordination of emergency – as well as longer-term – operations and in consolidated resource mobilization between and within the seven countries affected by drought (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Tanzania). The placement of the ORHC certainly helped to focus Donor attention on the Horn, though it did not significantly increase the level of financial support for UN agencies (see pledging, above). In addition, some progress was made in improving security arrangements in Somali Region, highlighting problems of monitoring and targeting, and harmonizing UN agency mandates with respect to emergency programming. WFP and UNICEF also facilitated coordination between NGOs and other actors working in Somali Region by chairing regular information sharing meetings in Gode and Addis Ababa. The UN Disaster Management Team, a regular forum for senior and technical level staff of operational UN agencies, improved inter-agency coordination and sought to enact more timely response.

The role of the UN Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia in supporting the ORHC and contributing to overall coordination was crucial. The EUE posted a field officer to the UN Joint Office in Gode. In addition, field reports from other affected areas in Ethiopia provided important monitoring information throughout the emergency. The EUE, which is now partially funded through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), plans to become more involved in coordination in pastoral areas over the coming year.

5.3 NGO and field coordination

One of the biggest strengths concerning coordination occurred between NGOs and agencies operating in the field. Whereas during the 1980s NGO coordination under the leadership of the Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA) was very strong, such collaboration was not as effective during the 1990s. The present emergency has seen NGOs working together to provide water supply schemes, target supplementary food, carry out assessments, and share information on changing conditions on the ground. This has helped to minimize the occurrence of parallel or duplicate efforts, and has helped to ensure that areas that might otherwise have been overlooked have in fact been served. Improved coordination in programming between the USAID and the EU in Ethiopia has helped to strengthen coordination between the NGOs that each Donor funds. In addition, USAID is working with its Title II partners to improve coordination. The Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP), by which eight NGOs (the Relief Society of Tigray, Save the Children/US, Africare, Catholic Relief Services, CARE, Food for the Hungry International, World Vision International, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, have received food under the US Title II program and are responsible for joint monitoring and reporting. This

Operation has also enhanced coordination efforts. This kind of cooperation must be promoted and continue in the future, as the emergency phase shifts to recovery and development.

6. RESPONSE

The greatest difficulty related to the response has been the complexity of working in pastoral areas. For agencies accustomed to working in agricultural areas, working with a pastoral nomadic population can be a major challenge. They must face the difficulties of providing assistance and services to people in remote areas, where the demands of pastoralism dictate that people are not able to remain settled in one place for very long (although women and children are more sedentary than men, whose responsibility it is to lead the livestock to dry-season grazing areas). In addition, the insecurity for which pastoral areas have become known has discouraged many organizations from working there. Several security incidents have occurred in recent years and these have led many organizations to weigh the risks of working in the area, and has made them reluctant to have a large presence in the region. However, many other organizations have been working in the area for a long time successfully. Their experiences should be studied to provide guidance for agencies whose experience working in pastoral areas is relatively new.

In highland areas, there has been a tendency among Donors to "wait and see" with respect to the rains. Indications that rains are falling well in agricultural areas encourage Donors to suspend assistance immediately, without allowing for sufficient time for farmers to recover. In addition, there is growing concern that emergency resources do not constitute appropriate assistance for those who are "chronically poor", but when consecutive climatic shocks occur, these are the most vulnerable and first-affected people. There is an urgent need to provide an alternative to emergency food assistance for this population during periods when there are not climatic shocks in order to help build their asset bases, thereby enhancing their ability to withstand such shocks.

Delivery of food assistance in the first half of 2000 was extremely slow. Although the lack of availability of food affected distributions throughout the country, the shortages were most acutely felt in pastoral areas, where the need was greatest. Only 30% of total requirements were met between April and June 2000. Citing USAID figures, the DfID report (2000) says, "Imports during the first three months of 2000...were equivalent to less than one month's food aid requirement at that time as computed by WFP. The stocks were dangerously low although local purchases of food for distribution as relief had some compensating effect, Ethiopia's hungry people got hungrier, and some almost certainly died as a result of Donors' failure to respond." The authors are not correct in blaming Donors' failure to respond (indeed, pledges had been made; it was the slow rate of deliveries (both to ports and internally to distribution sites) that hindered the operation.

While it is true that emergency food needs were exceptionally high in 1999 and 2000, it is clear that the burden placed on Donors to provide large amounts of food quickly was made even greater by the fact that high tax rates placed on imported and locally purchased grain and flour were not reduced during the emergency. Box 2 examines the problem of high taxation of wheat imports.

Box 2

High taxes thwart private sector grain purchases

High rates of taxation on cereals imported or purchased locally for commercial purchases may have discouraged commercial traders from supplying local markets. Charges made to grain traders for wheat grain and wheat flour, respectively, were:

	Wheat grain	Wheat flour
1. Duty tax	5%	10%
2. Sales tax	5%	12%
3. Sur tax	10%	10%
4. SGS service fee	1%	1%
Total	21%	33%

In June 2000, following the cessation of hostilities with Eritrea, the sur tax (which had been instituted to help cover costs of the war) was discontinued. However, a withholding tax of 5% was added to the total. Current totals for imported wheat grain stand at 16% and for wheat flour at 31%. Local purchases, which have the same rates of taxation but are not subject to duty, are taxed at 16% and 28% respectively.

Several Donors have attempted to raise the subject of the high taxation rates with the government, with the proposal that during times of emergency, imported and locally purchased food should be exempt from taxation. This suggestion has not been taken up by the government, however.

In a country such as Ethiopia where there is structural food deficit and frequent food shortage emergency, imposing such high rate of taxation on locally produced grain discourages the movement of food grains from surplus-producing to food-deficit areas.

The capacity of Government, particularly the Somali Region DPPB, to respond to the crisis has been identified as a major obstacle to the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness. The DPPB lacks qualified personnel, equipment, and logistical capability (including vehicles and communications equipment) to adequately carry out its responsibilities.

Concerns about security and uncertainty about the extent of the needs appear to have kept many NGOs from organizing emergency interventions quickly enough. There was a nine-month delay in deploying a UN security presence in the area while agencies debated who should cover the costs. This, acknowledged UN Special Envoy Catherine Bertini in January 2001, was unacceptable. In addition, no UN agency had a regular presence in the affected areas, so information about the situation was sketchy.

USAID/OFDA requested proposals for non-food emergency programs in pastoral areas from several NGOs in late 1999, but found that the NGOs were not well prepared to begin implementing until May/June 2000. The slow start to operations, and rapidly changing conditions once emergency programs were set up, has resulted in several NGOs asking for no-cost extensions because they have not been able to spend their funds as quickly as planned.

In May 2000, OFDA deployed a Disaster Assistance Response team (DART) to Ethiopia to manage, coordinate and monitor OFDA-funded activities. The team contributed to overall field

monitoring activities as well. By August, as the situation stabilized, the team was replaced with a full-time OFDA Emergency Disaster Relief Coordinator (EDRC) based in Addis Ababa. These steps helped to strengthen OFDA's presence and role in emergency non-food assistance.

Significant problems with targeting continue to plague the operation. In Somali region, food was often distributed directly off the back of the delivery trucks, either because officials did not have accurate beneficiary lists or appropriate storage facilities did not exist in all areas. The DfID report goes on to observe that while some targeting of areas – that is, zones and woredas – seems to be somewhat accurate, lower level targeting of peasant associations (PAs) and households, where it exists at all, is not systematic. They say that they do not realistically expect targeting to improve in the short to medium term in pastoral areas, however.¹⁷

In the agricultural areas, targeting problems are also widespread, as has been noted above. This is a result of under-resourcing, failure to pre-position food in remote areas, as well as lack of clarity over the objective of food aid. Many local officials observe that those who do not receive food assistance because they have one or two oxen, for instance, are soon forced to sell their animal(s) to purchase food for their families. Once these assets are depleted, they enter the ranks of the destitute and will require food aid. Local officials also know that those who have no animals will need to borrow or rent their neighbors' traction animals in order to prepare their fields for planting. It is thus in the interest of the poorest of the poor to help preserve the assets of those who have only a few animals. They are also targeted to receive food aid, but in so doing, the size of the ration is often cut. So, too, is its effectiveness reduced.

A particular problem with targeting was in the use of supplementary food. In 1999, the DPPC preferred to distribute supplementary food as part of the general food ration, to pregnant and lactating women and children under five. This resulted in dilution of the ration and reduced or negligible impact of the nutritional supplement. The WHO/ORHC consultant has observed, "There is abundant evidence that inclusion of blended food in the general distribution has virtually no nutritional impact."

In 2000, the DPPC signed a Tripartite Agreement with eight NGOs (CARE, OXFAM, the Ogaden Welfare Society, Pastoralist Concern Association for Ethiopia, Society of International Missionaries, Save the Children/US, CONCERN, and Medecins Sans Frontieres-Belgium) and WFP to allow food to be distributed by the NGOs to children and women who had been identified as being malnourished. This has helped to increase the effectiveness of supplementary and complementary food. In total, 2400 MT of blended food was distributed in this way.

¹⁷ For a discussion of targeting problems in Bale and Borena Zones of Oromiya Region, see Kebede Folle, Jan. 2001.

Box 3.

Problems Identified with Supplementary and Therapeutic Feeding Programmes

A CDC/UNICEF/WHO team examined supplementary and therapeutic feeding programs in operation throughout Ethiopia in 2000. These were mostly concentrated in Somali region, although there were also several in Borena Zone and Welayita (North Omo Zone). Among the team's findings were the following:

- Admission criteria was variable and often inconsistent (for example, MUAC and WFH criteria were intermingled, and children were admitted who had other illnesses but were not severely malnourished). Unreliable assessment methodology (weight for age) was used in some cases.
- Routine medical treatment including measles vaccination, micro-nutrient supplementation, treatment of intestinal parasitosis, treatment of infections with oral antibiotics was sometimes inadequate and not in line with standard protocols
- 24 hour care was generally not provided (with the exception of some centers that provided such care for children in the acute phase). Reasons for this included lack of compliance by mothers and security considerations
- Feeding protocols varied widely in terms of: frequency of meals (3 to 8 per day); composition and proportion of calories derived from protein (types of food provided frequently not in line with Sphere/WHO recommendations); misuse (through distribution as a take-home ration) of BP 5 biscuits (which have an inappropriately high protein content for the early phases of therapeutic feeding)
- Nutrition, health education, and outreach strategies targeting mothers were poorly developed
- Little attention was paid to water supply issues prior to opening therapeutic feeding programs; overcrowded centers led to poor hygiene and sanitation
- Malnourished adolescents and adults were usually excluded, except in a few cases where food was given to pregnant and lactating women, malnourished children older than 5 years of age, malnourished mothers and the elderly. The lack of provision of iron supplementation for lactating women was a lost opportunity.
- Although some agencies did report programme indicators, there was very little standardized reporting of results; inadequate documentation and analysis of average weight gains, recovery periods, default and mortality rates. cautioned about jumping to conclusions about reduced admission rates. They said, "Although admission rates to TFCs may give some indication of trends in severe malnutrition prevalence, the decline in admissions reported in some centers in the southern zones in the Somali region remains difficult to interpret. While a real decline in severe malnutrition is likely to partly explain this phenomenon, changing (often more stringent) admission criteria, lack of community confidence in the services, the existence of multiple centers in the same catchment area, competing obligations for mothers and care-givers and lack of outreach may also represent contributing factors." (*continued on next page*)

Box 3 - continued

- Default rates were excessively high in the early months of most programs, but improved in later months

The team cautioned about jumping to conclusions about reduced admission rates. They said, "Although admission rates to TFCs may give some indication of trends in severe malnutrition prevalence, the decline in admissions reported in some centers in the southern zones in the Somali region remains difficult to interpret. While a real decline in severe malnutrition is likely to partly explain this phenomenon, changing (often more stringent) admission criteria, lack of community confidence in the services, the existence of multiple centers in the same catchment area, competing obligations for mothers and care-givers and lack of outreach may also represent contributing factors."

Strengths

1. CARE, with support from OFDA, has been running a destocking program in Borena. This involves purchasing animals before they become too weakened to be of any value, then slaughtering them and distributing the dried meat as supplementary food. Ultimately, smooth coordination between the US and EU with respect to the activities they funded is also likely to have improved response. Although limited in scale, the results of this project have been extremely encouraging. Greater commitment to similar types of assistance must be made.
2. General/GFDRE/Donor/NGO coordination meetings occurred regularly. These included a Nutrition Task Force chaired by UNICEF, a food/logistics meeting chaired by WFP, and regular meetings of the agencies that were operational in Somali Region – held both in Addis Ababa and in the field (Gode Town).
3. Efforts to mitigate the effects of three years of drought in Konso appear to have been effective, according to the WHO/ORHC consultant. This was the result of strong coordination between members of the local Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee and timely response. This was done even in the absence of a functioning early warning system, largely as a result of effective and flexible programming by NGOs working in the area.

Weaknesses

1. Generally speaking, and particularly in Somali Region, distribution of rations has been inadequate in amount and has not been distributed on a regular and timely basis (CDC/WHO report). Coverage has been better where NGOs or the ICRC have supplemented general rations with additional food.
2. Most of the response in Somali Region has been centered in and around the town of Gode and Gode Zone. While in Gode Zone twenty humanitarian relief organisations were providing assistance in 2000 (including fifteen actually implementing programs on the ground), in neighboring Afder Zone there were fewer than ten agencies providing assistance, and only four physically present. The uneven coverage is partly due to the fact that there is better security in this area, and the infrastructure, though still limited, is much better than in some other areas. It should be noted that this is not the first time that Gode has been the

center of operations. During the 1991-1992 displacement of people from Somalia, and the 1997 emergency drought relief operation, Gode was a center for relief organizations. In addition, Gode was until 1995 the regional capital, so people expect services to be forthcoming from this source. The problem was that the emergency operation did not branch out to other more remote areas, and thus migration into Gode was encouraged. Areas underserved by NGOs include Afder Zone (Somali Region), Bale Zone (Oromiya Region) and South Omo (SNNPR). In addition, it is suspected that conditions in Warder Zone (Somali Region) were in fact worse than has been recorded due to the inaccessibility of the area.

3. In pastoral areas, there is a lack of understanding of the other types of assistance that might be provided besides food aid. Several studies have suggested ways of controlling the damage wrought by loss of livestock (destocking, slaughter slabs, fodder supply, marketing assistance, etc.) but these ideas have not been implemented on a large scale.
4. Due to security concerns as well as disagreement over the severity of the situation, ICRC, MSF and others were initially reluctant to respond to the emergency. The high mortality rates recorded post-fact by CDC/UNICEF/SC-US indicated that during the period of highest mortality, very few relief agencies had projects that were fully operational.

Steps to be taken or already underway to improve the situation:

1. Greater efforts must be made to deliver food to remote areas, both in pastoral and agricultural areas. Aid should not be allowed to be focused on one area, as this will encourage stress migration to urban centers. Such migration will make recovery more difficult to achieve.
2. Training of regional and zonal level officials is urgently needed with regard to early warning, distribution procedures, targeting, and logistics. Such training could be the single most effective method of improving response.
3. In pastoral/agropastoral areas (and to a lesser extent agricultural areas) continued efforts must be made to address issues around which inter-clan conflicts arise. These conflicts are usually concerned with access to resources. The scarcer these resources, the higher is the likelihood for conflict, either directed at other clans or at assistance agencies, to erupt. Assistance agencies should be fully aware of the possible implications of the assistance they provide and its potential to inflame dormant feuds and rivalries.
4. Additional NGOs should be permitted to sign Tripartite Agreements with the DPPC and WFP to target distribution of supplementary food.

7. LOGISTICS

For the most part, logistics was not a major obstacle to provision of assistance in this emergency thanks to effective coordination led by WFP, and effective in-land transport of food by the Government of Ethiopia. WFP's efforts to assist the Port of Djibouti to respond to the increased traffic caused by the shift of virtually all Ethiopian cargo from the Eritrean ports of Assab and Massawa to Djibouti and the increased relief food imports, helped to expedite movement of food

through the port to the main hubs in Ethiopia. WFP's Special Operation for the Port of Djibouti helped to clear space near the bulk berths, making it possible to use Berth 13, which previously had been constrained due to lack of space on the quay. WFP (also through Special Operations) also helped to mobilize funding for improvements to the main roads used for delivery in Djibouti and Ethiopia and from Jigjiga to Tog Wojaale on the Somaliland border; the EU funded improvements to the Berbera-Hargeisa road in Somaliland for added use of Berbera port. Although during the war there was sometimes a shortage of trucks available to deliver food, the Government of Ethiopia and WFP minimized the disruption, the former through temporary establishment of a National Transport Coordination Committee (NTCC) and the latter through its innovative use of its Food Aid Transport System (FATS) dedicated truck fleet.

Coordination of logistics issues was carried out under the leadership of WFP through biweekly Shipping Meetings, which were attended by all major Donors, NGOs, and Ethiopian government officials. WFP also issued regular Shipping Bulletins, which showed pledging levels, performance achieved in deliveries and discharges, expected vessel arrival times, progress of local purchases, and status of air operations. This forum proved invaluable during the emergency and helped to foster cooperation on operational matters at the port and throughout the country.

Whereas in the past estimations of relief requirements may have been more conditioned by logistical capacity (and in regions where infrastructure is extremely limited - such as Afar - this may still be the case), improvements in overall capacity to deliver relief assistance has minimized the impact of such considerations.

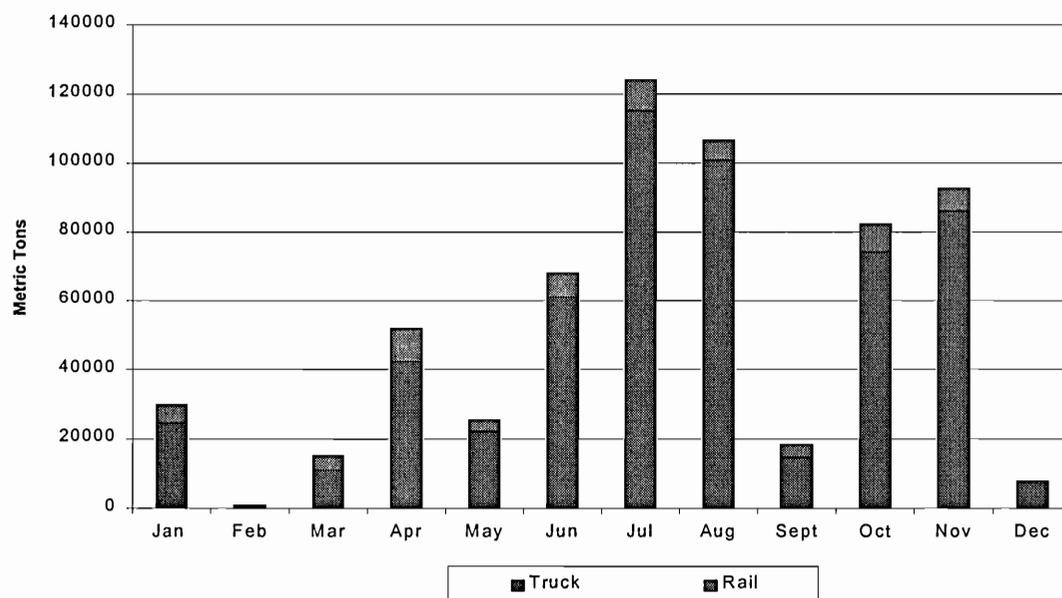
7.1 Port operations

Port operations in 1999-2000 were exceptionally efficient, thanks in large part to the proactive and dedicated efforts of the Djibouti Government and management of the Djibouti Port and the leadership of WFP. Up to ten NGOs used the port during the emergency. In total, nearly one million metric tons of food aid was imported during 2000. Vessel discharge was achieved without causing port congestion through the effective coordination of the Port authorities and WFP. The chart on the next page shows monthly delivery figures of WFP FATS cargo through Djibouti port, and indicates the high level of deliveries between May and November 2000.

Maximum discharge rate of 29,400 MT over a four day period, a level that was realized several times during 2000. A maximum 24-hour discharge rate of 9236 MT was achieved - this was the highest rate for food aid deliveries ever achieved globally. These rates are even more impressive in view of the fact that they were achieved through direct discharge, from vessel to truck. Minimal storage was used in the operation, particularly since June 2000 when availability of trucks was increased.

Once food arrived in the port, it was generally delivered to the central and secondary warehouses quickly and efficiently. WFP FATS facilitated vessel discharge and over-land delivery, and was flexible enough to adapt to changing delivery schedules. The improvements at the ports of Djibouti and Berbera in 2000-2001 are also expected to further expedite port operations.

Chart 2. WFP FATS Deliveries Through Djibouti, Method of Offtake Delivery



In 2001, Midroc Corporation is expected to construct grain storage facilities at the bulk berths. WFP, has already begun to coordinate with Midroc and the Port Management to prevent interruption of discharge operations while the construction is ongoing, and it is hoped that the work will not disrupt relief food deliveries over the coming year.

There has been some discussion in the local news about the Djibouti port management (which took over operation of the port in 2000)'s plans to increase the tariff rates for imports to Ethiopia. This plan has been put on hold indefinitely. However, even if the rates are increased as planned, they are still expected to be among the lowest in East Africa.

The use of Berbera port by the European Union and Euronaid for the first time in 1999 was also successful, and proved to be a viable port for delivery to Dire Dawa (EFSRA and DPPC stores) and Jigjiga (for refugee programs). This initiative was extremely successful; in 2000 82,269 MT of food aid was delivered through Berbera. Contrary to expectations, no security incidents or losses of cargo occurred inside Somaliland (only one incident occurred in Somali Region of Ethiopia, when a truck strayed off the road and drove over an landmine left over from the 1977-78 Ethio-Somali war.

As a contingency measure, Port Sudan has begun to be explored as a viable option for future deliveries to the north of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian and Sudanese governments are both now actively involved in rehabilitating the road links between Port Sudan and northern Ethiopia (via Gondar). One of the advantages to using this port is that Sudanese road transport rates are among the cheapest in East Africa.

The Government of Ethiopia has also made an agreement with the Government of Kenya to begin to pursue the use of Mombassa port for deliveries of commercial goods to Ethiopia. While this plan might become feasible in the long term, it is not expected to have an impact in the short to medium term as road and rail conditions are not adequate to permit deliveries to Ethiopia. In

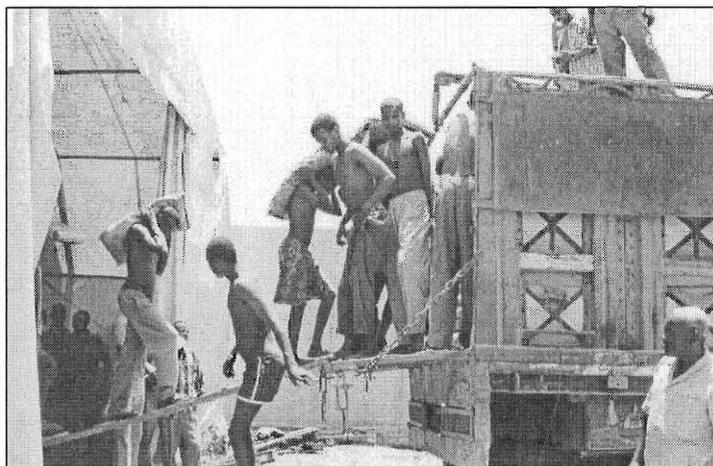
addition, management improvements are needed at the Port of Mombassa before it can be considered a viable alternative port for Ethiopia.

7.2 Road transport

WFP's innovative use of its Food Aid Transport System enabled the it to mobilize trucks for immediate food delivery. The system, which contracts transporters for dedicated delivery, was flexible enough to expand from a minimum of 250 trucks to a maximum of 1600 trucks within a matter of only a few weeks, based on delivery requirements. The system was also able to respond to the changing arrival schedules at the port and food requirements in-country on a month by month basis. This helped prevent congestion of the port and enabled more timely deliveries to major hubs throughout the country.

Transport recruited outside the WFP FATS system experienced problems in that some individual transport companies over-committed themselves and were sometimes unable to provide all of the trucks that they had promised to contractees. USAID overcame this by increasing its use of the

FATS system for the delivery of NGO food commodities between August 2000 and January 2001.



Loading Food for Somali Region, Dire Dawa, May 2000

At the beginning of May, concerns over the efficient use of available transport capacity, and limited availability of such transport, led the GFDRE to introduce a temporary national transport coordination mechanism. Transport arrangements were coordinated by a ministerial committee known as the National Transport Coordination Committee (NTCC), which was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. Technical issues were

handled by a working level committee led by the DPPC. In the regions, transport coordination cells were formed under the Road Transport Authority (RTA) which included representatives of the major transporters. Additionally, a semi-autonomous coordination cell operated in Djibouti. These committees and cells approved all truck allocations, and transporters were not allowed to accept private contracts unless endorsed by the committee (except long- and short-haul transporters working for the WFP FATS system, who were exempt from these arrangements).

Under the coordination of the NTCC, long-haul transporters were designated cargo on a daily basis in Djibouti and used tariffs fixed at the WFP rate on long-haul routes. However, secondary transport rates were fixed based on distance and road type but often did not consider the impact of poor road conditions. These rates were an average of at least 50% more than was paid previously. While this might appear to be an incentive to transporters, the payment arrangements were not clear, and in practice transport companies were reluctant to deliver food without a clear indication of how rates were to be paid. The immediate impact was confusion, contract concerns, and a lack of trust by the truckers that payment would be received in a timely manner. These arrangements reverted to normal contracting procedures at the end of July 2000.

In June, WFP arranged the import of 110 Sudanese-registered trucks for long-haul delivery. This fleet helped to expedite deliveries. Additional availability of existing trucks in the country, as well as increased private investment in trucks, has led to a greatly improved and active private transport sector. As a result, the imported long-haul trucks were no longer required, and the fleet ceased operation at the end of January.

In September, a fleet of 140 short-haul trucks were imported by WFP from the Netherlands for food aid deliveries within Somali Region. The process of clearing the trucks, with their spare parts and workshops, through customs was excessively delayed for 40 days. However, the fleet has proven to be effective, and will continue its operations until at least the end of March 2001.

Both of the imported truck fleets were made operational without imposing any additional costs on Donors or the government.

The GFDRE's decision to allow Somaliland-registered trucks to deliver food inside Somali region (whereas they had previously not been allowed further into the country than Jijjiga) also greatly expedited deliveries and improved security for food convoys since trucks driven by Somali drivers are less likely to be subjected to banditry in Somali Region.

These steps taken to increase the capacity for deliveries by road helped to minimize the need for airlifts and airdrops, which would have been extremely expensive.

7.3 Airlifts

Prior to this emergency operation, all relief food was delivered by road. In April 2000, the US initiated delivery of supplementary food by air to Gode where needs were acute. ICRC and the European Union have also engaged in air delivery in 2000. In addition, WFP coordinated an airlink between Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa and Gode. One helicopter and two fixed-wing airplanes (one funded by ECHO) were chartered for the second half of CY 2000 to shuttle supplies and personnel to the more remote pastoral areas. This significantly enhanced the international community's ability to monitor conditions in the field, and also added to the effort to improve security for humanitarian staff.

Some difficulties were experienced in instituting airlift and air service operations. Private operators encountered excessive bureaucratic delays in bringing their aircraft to Ethiopia. In addition, confusion over high unloading fees for aircraft (payable even when unloading was not required) resulted in the premature termination of ICRC's airlifts to Somali Region.

7.4 Non-food logistics

With respect to non-food assistance, there are indications that some of the assistance given may not have been as cost effective as would have been desirable. At the height of the operation in pastoral areas, water was delivered by tanker to many affected areas. This type of assistance is extremely expensive, and should only be undertaken where absolutely necessary. Efforts to provide sustainable water sources are to be commended and continued in 2001, even if the rains improve.

Strengths

1. The addition of the WFP-managed airbridge in Somali region has allowed greater movement throughout the region. This has improved monitoring functions and has also increased the level of security of humanitarian staff working in the area.
2. The importation of 140 short haul trucks by WFP for dedicated service within Somali region experienced significant delays in clearing Ethiopian customs, but once in service have helped to expedite deliveries within Somali Region. This fleet should continue to be used for as long as necessary in the area.
3. In addition, the decision to allow Somaliland-registered trucks to deliver food within Somali region proved to be successful in that it increased the number of available trucks and also minimized the security risks (as highland drivers are often targeted for attack by bandits).
4. The rehabilitation of Berth 13 (one of the three bulk cargo berths) in the Port of Djibouti helped avoid congestion during months of highest deliveries. WFP identified this measure well ahead of time (the appeal was launched at the end of 1999), and alerted USAID and other Donors of the need to support a Special Operation to carry out the necessary work (which included provision of additional storage space and installation of four weighbridges in the port, as well as road rehabilitation) so the work was carried out before serious congestion could occur. Likewise, the need to prepare Berbera port in Somaliland for increased use (OFDA funded the construction of a lighthouse and other rehabilitation activities at a cost of \$600,000) helped to avert congestion and delays in delivery.
5. Road rehabilitation between Djibouti and Gelafi, Ethiopia has helped to reduce transit and turn-around times, thus leading to an increased number of available trucks. Although there were some problems with resourcing WFP's appeals for road rehabilitation, the USG lead the efforts to fund these Special Operations.

Weaknesses

1. There were some reports (see MSF-France report) that there were insufficient funds to pay for delivery to woredas and distribution centers outside the zonal capitals in Somali Region. In some cases, drivers who were not paid enough or on time were reported to be selling part of their consignment prior to delivery. Concerns that the National Transport Coordination Committee was not in a position to release funds to transporters in a timely manner, and that drivers were not being given adequate incentives to deliver over routes with poor road conditions, further encouraged this practice.
2. Extremely large shipments of food (vessels in excess of 30,000 MT capacity) can easily cause congestion in the ports and are to be avoided. Djibouti port has only three bulk cargo berths, and large vessels take up more than one berth space. This caused delays in offloading and a backlog of vessels waiting to anchor. WFP's special operation, in which quay space was opened up for offloading, helped to create more space. Where the use of large vessels is unavoidable, it is advisable to use a smaller vessel for lightering and delivery to the berth. This method was used successfully by WFP during 2000 when a USAID tanker of 97,500 MT called at Djibouti port.
3. Wherever possible, food should not be held for direct discharge to trucks if there are not adequate trucks immediately available. During 1999, several delays occurred when food was

held on the vessel while waiting for arrangements for monetization to be completed. This recommendation has been difficult to implement in the past due to the Ethiopian government's preference for vessel-ship offloading (which precludes the need for foreign currency to pay for storage space). Arrangements for making foreign currency available or for paying for storage space in birr will need to be made.

4. In many areas, there are inadequate storage facilities and/or storekeepers are poorly trained. This leads to losses and wastage of food.

Steps to be taken or already underway to improve the situation:

1. Extremely large vessels should not be commissioned to deliver food through Djibouti. Ideally, vessels should be no larger than 30,000 MT capacity. Larger vessels capable of undertaking lightering are acceptable as long as berth space is used effectively.
2. Direct discharge from vessel to truck should only be undertaken when there is an assurance of adequate trucks to discharge the cargo smoothly (with no interruptions) and when port traffic is at a minimum. This will be important in 2001 as construction of the bulk silos at the bulk terminal may result in periodic closure of berths or congestion in the port.

8. MONITORING

8.1 Nutritional monitoring

Monitoring of the nutritional and health status of vulnerable and needy groups has been problematic throughout the areas of emergency operation. In agricultural areas, very often distribution information is kept, but is not reported up through the governmental bureaucracy so Donors and government decision makers at regional and central levels do not have access to this important information. In Somali region, security concerns and poor infrastructure have prevented travel by roads to many remote locations. The areas where organized and non-organized banditry are known to be most common are Warder, Degahbur, Gode, Fik and Jijjiga. In these areas, monitoring of conditions and distributions has been virtually impossible. The irony of the situation is that banditry is often an indication of extreme food scarcity in a particular area; people who have nothing who see trucks travelling through their territory may be more inclined to attack and loot the convoy than those who expect food distributions or whose standard of living is relatively better. Yet the increased insecurity serves to "scare off" assistance providers from these areas where the need may be greatest.

WFP has attempted to address the problem of field monitoring in remote or insecure areas by enlisting the services of the Ogaden Welfare Society (OWS) and Pastoralist Concern Association for Ethiopia (PCAE) to provide up to 60 monitors. While this solution has resulted in better availability of distribution information, the arrangement somewhat problematic since OWS is generally recognized to be an NGO that is closely allied to the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF), whose relationship to the Government is not always smooth. Furthermore, a CDC/UNICEF/WHO study suggested that "WFP implementing partners such as OWS charged with monitoring distributions do not appear to have sufficient logistic or human resource capacity to effectively monitor every distribution".

The use of different methodologies to measure nutritional status has led to a great deal of confusion over the prevalence of malnutrition in pastoral areas. The CDC/UNICEF/WHO study showed that NGOs used a variety of screening methods in their respective impact areas, and that the quality of some of the data, as well as its usefulness in comparative analysis, was questionable or negligible. Generally, the best method is considered to be the 30-clusters random sample survey measuring for weight for height, with Z-scores for <-2 and <-3 denoted. This method was used by some organizations, but others used weight for age and MUAC measurements. These latter methods are extremely imprecise; in particular, measurements that consider age are unreliable since most parents do not know exactly how old their children are. Selection of beneficiaries was not always random, but was sometimes based on the children who were presented at feeding centers or health care facilities as candidates for supplementary or therapeutic feeding, or through calling all parents to bring their children to a central point for measurement. These methods of sample selection are highly susceptible to bias and inaccuracy.

In August 2000, CDC/UNICEF/WHO/SC-US conducted a two-stage cluster survey among 4032 people (595 households) to determine malnutrition, morbidity and mortality rates in Gode zone, the epicenter of the food emergency. Acute global malnutrition rates among children under five were 29.1% (95% CI: 24.7-33.4); among adults the rate was 22.7% (17.9-27.5). Crude mortality between December 1999 and July 2000 was estimated to be 3.1/10,000/day (95% CI: 2.4-3.8/10,000/day) and the under 5 mortality rate was 6.7/10,000/day (95% CI: 5.3-8.0/10,000/day). Most deaths (72.3% reportedly occurred prior to the start of relief interventions. Although it is difficult (nearly impossible in most cases) to determine cause of death after the fact, most respondents in the survey attributed the deaths to malnutrition alone or combined with infectious disease. Measles alone or in combination with malnutrition is said to have accounted for 22.0% of deaths among children and 16.6 % of deaths among the 5 to 14 year age group. Death rates are assumed to be higher in urban areas, where overcrowding, poor hygienic conditions, and easier transmission of infectious disease were common.¹⁸

In some parts of the country (North and South Wello, Wag Hamra, East and West Harerghe, Welayita) SCF-UK has been carrying out food economy assessments using mean weight for length (MWL). This methodology is problematic, as the CDC/WHO report points out. "Because MWL reflects the population mean and not the proportion of children falling below internationally recognised cut-offs for the definition of wasting," the report says, "the MWL alone is an inadequate indicator of nutritional vulnerability in an emergency situation." As an illustration of the misleading nature of mean weight for length data, van der Veen (who represented WHO in the study carried out with CDC and SC/US) points out that although the SCF-UK Nutritional Surveillance Programme's MWL data showed a status of >90% (indicating satisfactory nutritional status), formal 30 cluster surveys using standard EPI methodology showed malnutrition rates of 25%-45%. She further warns that "Child mortality is likely to increase before area mean WFL fall to 90%".

The WHO/ORHC consultant observed that in North and South Wello, the SCF-UK NSP "indicate(d) that the nutritional status remained poor in Legambo and Tenta, but less so in Dessie Zuria throughout the second half of 1999. By the end of May 2000 the nutritional status of

¹⁸ Salama, et. al. 2001.

children started to improve and findings from August indicate that malnutrition levels had decreased to normal in these woredas. However, results from nutrition surveys conducted by ERCS, WVI and Concern indicate that in the period May-July 2000 pockets of high levels of acute malnutrition, often passing the threshold of 15%, persisted in several woredas."

Because health status was not monitored adequately, the relation between heightened morbidity and increased levels of stunting and wasting was often not recognized. The CDC/UNICEF/WHO report observed that: ""In addition to problems of food availability and accessibility, measles, diarrheal disease secondary to inadequate water and sanitation and compounded by population movement, malaria, tuberculosis and micro-nutrient deficiencies are likely to be contributing to the persistently high levels of wasting."

As unreliable as available figures are with regard to malnutrition levels, mortality figures are even more difficult to determine with any measure of accuracy. Most deaths occur outside of feeding centers or health care facilities, and are therefore never recorded. (Although experience during the 1980s showed that death rates in camps and feeding centers were significantly higher than those in rural areas.) Memory-recall studies of child deaths are subject to significant deliberate or accidental human error.

The poor state of health care in Somali region is such that dramatic improvements in monitoring and in the overall health status of the population cannot be expected in the short term. The region has only one referral hospital, in Jigjiga, and in some areas, regional health bureau officials only visit once a year (MSF report). Effective mitigation in Somali Region must tackle the problem of poor health infrastructure

The lack of reliable baseline information regarding the nutrition and health status of the target population has complicated design of appropriate interventions, and has made it difficult to determine the proper time and way to phase out feeding programs.

Strengths

1. The new Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit, established in CY 2000 within the Early Warning Department of the DPPC, is expected to improve monitoring, and to provide a direct link between nutritional monitoring and other forms of early warning information on one hand, and response mechanisms on the other.
2. Many of the therapeutic feeding centers in Welayita (particularly those run by World Vision International, Concern, and later MSF-Switzerland) were, according to the WHO Consultant to the ORHC, run extremely well and followed internationally recognized standards for monitoring nutritional status and provision of assistance.

Weaknesses

1. The lack of baseline information about nutritional and health status of the general population and failure to monitor all age groups has resulted in higher than expected levels of adult malnutrition and delayed "initial" responses as time was spent undertaking assessments that might have been avoided if there had been such baseline information. In some cultures, where feeding of children is considered to be a priority, and where men have left the

household with their animals to travel to dry season grazing areas, adult malnutrition was belatedly reported. This occurred despite warnings from the UN-EUE as early as September 1999 about the likelihood of adult malnutrition in Borena Zone.

2. Even more unreliable are estimates of livestock deaths. Herders tend to exaggerate the deaths in order to qualify for relief assistance. In some ethnic groups (e.g. Borena) it is considered impolite to question a herder about the size of his herd. Such direct questions are not likely to be answered truthfully, if at all, and thus complicate the gathering of realistic figures. Without this information, it is nearly impossible to determine relief requirements or to predict the likely period of time necessary to enable recovery. According to the DfID report (2000), "best guess" figures for livestock losses in the worst-affected parts of Somali Region and Borena Zone indicate that it is likely to take ten years for full recovery to be achieved (assuming that there are no more poor rainy seasons before then).
3. The WHO/ORHC consultant has pointed out that "Regional SNNPR authorities, following the 1996 bumper harvest, dissolved the DPPB/D. As a result, mechanisms to link geographical and household targeting no longer exist; neither are there any reliable distribution figures. Moreover, figures reported do not necessarily reflect distribution to the most vulnerable. In addition, due to the breakdown of the system of checks and balances to assure accountability, there is at present no guarantee even that food has actually been distributed." This gap in early warning, monitoring, and response capacities should be taken up with regional authorities for remedial action.

Steps to be taken or already underway to improve the situation:

1. A regional aerial sample survey must be carried out over affected pastoral areas to determine the extent of herd loss through assessing the size of remaining herds.
2. The new Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit should work to establish baseline nutritional information in areas which are of chronic concern. Training of regional and zonal officials will enhance the effectiveness of the ENCU. The ENCU is also proposing to develop a Nutrition Task Force to coordinate nutrition and nutrition-related activities in emergency affected areas.¹⁹ In addition, the ENCU may institute standards and guidelines to ensure that nutritional assessment information may be used comparatively over time, and in some cases where appropriate between different areas.
3. The WHO/ORHC consultant has noted that MOH guidelines on selective feeding programs are out of date and no longer in line with international standards (WHO, SPHERE). To correct this situation, WHO is assisting the MOH in formulating new guidelines and protocols, standardizing data collection on supplementary feeding programs (SFP) and at zonal and regional levels strengthening MOH staff knowledge on nutrition including standard survey methodologies.

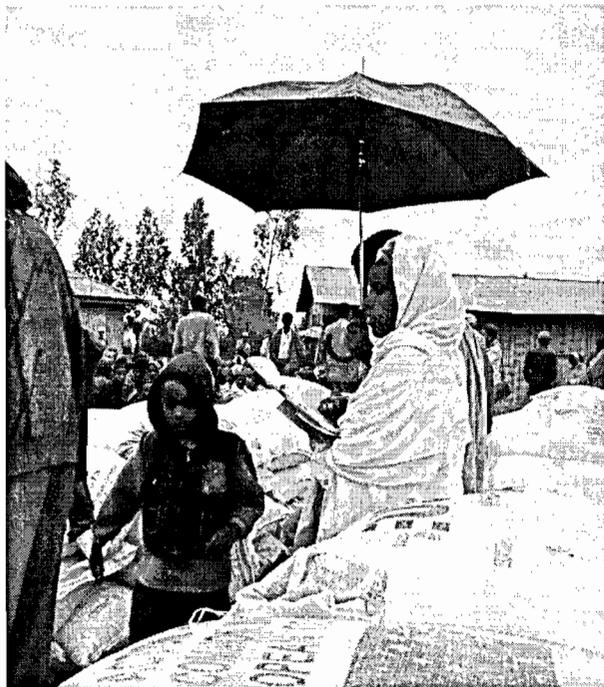
¹⁹ A Discussion paper for the "Creation of Nutrition Task Force at the DPPC" has been circulated by Dr. Jean Gladwin, ENCU Coordinator (Jan. 15, 2001).

8.2 Targeting and monitoring of relief food distribution

Problems related to targeting and monitoring of food aid distribution continued to plague the emergency operation throughout 1999 and 2000. Lack of information concerning delivery of food to final distribution sites and actual distribution to beneficiaries made it difficult to assess the effectiveness of food aid, to determine which areas were being adequately served and which were not. In some cases, the lack of information also led to duplication of efforts, as more than one organization distributed food in the same area.

Targeting of beneficiaries at the community level has been a problem for a long time. During 1999 reports were gathered all over the country of household rations being reduced. Households of three people received food for two, those with five members received three or four rations each. In many communities it was reported that no household received more than five rations; apparently the average household size was being interpreted as the maximum allowable number of rations to be delivered. In this way, food was made available to more people than had originally been allocated assistance. The reduced size of the ration per person, however, reduced the effectiveness of the overall assistance intervention since the caloric value of each ration was far below the minimum daily requirement. For those who had some assets, receipt of partial rations may have helped them postpone the need to sell them to purchase food. For the most needy, however, who had no assets to speak of and were on the verge of starvation, receipt of reduced rations kept them perpetually vulnerable.

The Government of Ethiopia has been working with the international community since 1997 on a process of targeting guideline formulation. The process culminated in 2000 with the drafting of National Food Aid Targeting Guidelines. These guidelines were adopted by the Government at the end of the year and will be implemented through training and capacity building at regional, zonal and woreda levels in 2001.



Community leaders manage distribution, Wuchale, South Wello - Jan. 2001

Targeting of supplementary food items (corn soy blend, famix, and other high protein, high energy foods) was also a serious problem. In 1999, supplementary food was distributed in selected vulnerable woredas to all children under five and pregnant and lactating women by the DPPC and its implementing partners as part of the general ration. Follow-up surveys conducted by SCF-UK and the DPPC found that this method of distribution was ineffective, as the ration was consumed by the entire family. Those who were severely malnourished did not receive enough of the complementary food items to make an appreciable difference.

In 2000, the Tripartite Agreement signed between the DPPC, WFP, and eight NGOs to target distribution of supplementary food items as part of a nutritional monitoring program was

very successful. Supplementary or therapeutic feeding centers were established as needed to provide supervision and medical care to the most malnourished individuals.

Strengths

1. National Food Aid Targeting Guidelines have been finalized. A comprehensive training programme, accompanied by periodic monitoring of targeting throughout the country, must now be undertaken.
2. Installation of the WFP Commodity Tracking System (COMPAS) Commodity Tracking System in the DPPC central office and main warehouses will hopefully improve efforts to improve the quality of distribution information and help facilitate more smooth coordination of logistics.
3. Distribution of supplementary food by NGOs under the Tripartite Agreement proved to be a far more effective way of distributing this food, which is expensive and usually not donated in sufficient quantities, than distribution by local authorities together with the general ration.

Weaknesses

1. It will not be possible to establish a perfect targeting system any time in the near future. While efforts can and should be made to improve information about distribution and to ensure that needy areas are served, it is unrealistic to expect that ration reduction will cease completely. People will continue to redistribute amongst themselves even after final distribution and dilution of rations can be expected to continue.
2. The establishment of a WFP field presence in Gode and Hargele, and the strengthening of the office in Dire Dawa, has helped improve programming and monitoring to some degree, although much remains to be done. The benefits of these actions will carry over into 2001.

Steps to be taken or already underway to improve the situation:

1. Training is needed for storekeepers to monitor actual deliveries to secondary warehouses and to keep accurate distribution records. This information must filter up through zonal and regional levels, and finally be compiled by DPPC at central level for reporting back to Donors.
2. There is a need to implement a "sentinel system" to overcome the problem of lack of communication between DPPC warehouses in Dire Dawa/Jigjiga and transport routes. If HF radios were installed at selected sites (but not in trucks, as this would make them vulnerable to hijacking) along delivery routes, progress of transporters could be monitored. This would assist DPPD in Gode (and other distribution hubs) to plan for distribution and might minimize losses along the way.
3. There is also a need to institute a system of nationwide monitoring of distribution results, which flows from the community level back up the bureaucracy to regional and central levels. WFP's COMPAS system has been installed in DPPC offices at central and some regional levels, but the system needs to be extended to local levels through installation of technology as well as training of relevant DPPC staff.

4. Supplementary food must continue to be targeted through health care centers or through a process of nutritional screening, with follow-up evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and the progress of those who are identified as being malnourished.

9. THE WAY FORWARD:

MOVING FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT

Given the apparent overall success of the 2000 *meher* harvest (despite acknowledged localized failures in chronically vulnerable areas), there is now an opportunity to begin to recover from the effects of the 1999-2000 drought. It is expected that if the 2001 *belg* and main pastoral rains are favorable, it will be possible to phase out most emergency food assistance to these groups by the middle of the year. The DPPC's appeal for US\$ 40 million in non-food aid for pastoral and agro-pastoral areas is a significant step towards addressing the most pressing needs for mitigation and recovery in these areas. However, if mitigation and recovery are not pursued aggressively, then an emergency of equal or greater magnitude can be expected to recur when the next rain failure occurs. Given the historical frequency of drought, this is likely to mean that another major emergency could develop within the next five years. Without adequate assistance to regain their productive assets and diversify their economic activities, those who were worst affected by the drought this time will remain destitute, and their vulnerability to future droughts can be expected to worsen. Given the frequency of rain failures in pastoral areas of the Horn of Africa, the need to reduce vulnerability in the short to medium term is vital. While it will not be possible to prevent drought, the effects can be minimized through assisting people to resume their productivity and rebuild their productive asset bases by improving infrastructure, developing social services, and strengthening government's implementing capacity at central, regional, zonal, and local levels.

9.1 *Disaggregating the needs*

The drought experience of 1998-2000 has given rise to a new level of awareness on the part of humanitarian actors working in Ethiopia. There is general acknowledgement that there is a need to distinguish between types of beneficiaries:

- ✓ *Chronically poor*: people who have suffered from repeated climatic shocks and/or have consistently suffered from an inability to meet the basic costs of living. The chronically poor no longer have adequate assets to obtain the food they need (either through production, purchase, or trade). Many of the chronically poor live in areas where food is available on local markets but they lack the purchasing power to access it. They are also generally unable to benefit from favorable rainy seasons as they have lost their productive base (livestock, seeds, tools, plow oxen).
- ✓ *Victims of natural or man-made disasters*. people who have been particularly severely affected by disaster over a relatively short period of time such that they are not able to meet their basic food and water needs

The DPPC's annual emergency appeal for relief assistance usually combines these two beneficiary groups to arrive at a gross figure of food aid required. Although several variables are considered in determining the extent of need, the most significant indicator is crop production. Yet while overall food production may help in compiling a food balance sheet on a national level, such calculations mask food insecurity in chronically vulnerable areas where farmers do not produce enough to support their households for the year no matter how good the harvest is.

Similarly, overall production figures do not provide much information about the well-being (or lack thereof) of pastoralists or *belg* farmers whose crops may have failed.

Although it is known that there are millions of people in Ethiopia who do not have access to adequate resources to support their households without regular assistance, much more needs to be learned about the process of destitution. Debates about whether the rural population is better off or worse off than it was a decade ago work at cross-purposes due to different scales of analysis and definitions of progress. SCF-UK, with support from DfID and USAID, is commissioning a study to be carried out by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at Sussex University to examine the rural economy in Northeast Ethiopia (North and South Wello, Wag Hamra, and Central Tigray). The study, which is expected to be carried out in 2001 and 2002, will address the following questions:

- What is destitution?
- How do people become destitute?
- How many people are destitute?
- Are more people becoming destitute?
- What are the most appropriate policy measures to address destitution?
- How can these concerns be effectively communicated to policy-makers?

As a working definition, the study team defines destitution as:

a state of extreme poverty that results from the pursuit of 'unsustainable livelihoods', meaning that a series of livelihood shocks and/or negative trends or processes erodes the asset base of already poor and vulnerable households until they are no longer able to meet their *minimum subsistence needs*, they lack access to the *key productive assets* needed to escape from poverty, and they become *dependent* on public and/or private transfers (emphasis in the original).²⁰

It is anticipated that this study will provide important information pertaining to rural poverty, and will help point the way to providing more appropriate assistance that addresses not merely the symptoms of extreme poverty, but also its causes. A similar type of study is needed in pastoral/agropastoral areas to determine trends in household food economy over recent years.

Until these studies are completed, it will not be possible to quantify with much precision the extent of destitution existing in the country today. However, steps can and must be taken to address the causes of extreme poverty in order to prevent a return to emergency conditions. In addition, there is a need to provide "safety net" assistance to those who remain with some productive assets or access to employment but are in danger of not being able to obtain adequate food resources as a result of climatic shocks or removal of access to income-generating activities.

Towards this end, the DPPC appeal for emergency assistance in 2000 outlines a program of recovery and vulnerability mitigation for pastoralists which includes non-food assistance.

²⁰ Devereux and Sharp, 2000. Draft Research Proposal, Destitution Study Phase II.

Implicit in this type of appeal is the recognition that food aid may not be the only or best form of assistance for helping people to regain their productivity and assets, and that failure to reverse the asset degradation process will quickly render those who are chronically poor in need of emergency relief.

This kind of thinking has been implicit in much of the work that Donors, UN agencies, and NGOs have been doing in recent years. Even during the last two years when food aid requirements and deliveries exceeded anything seen since 1984-85, there has been growing awareness of the need to understand the process of destitution better, and to come up with forms of assistance that more effectively address the root problem than relief food can do.

In this regard, the following steps have been taken. They are listed together with the general results:

1. implementation of employment generation schemes (EGS), food for work (FFW) and cash for work (CFW) programs that seek to protect soil and water resources, provide greater access through feeder road construction

The general principle behind EGS, FFW and CFW – for vulnerable people to "self target" by working for relief food or cash – is sound. This is especially true in areas where there are adequate grain markets, and where the principle problem is that people lack access to adequate cash to purchase food (e.g. areas in Gondar, Bale, Western Tigray, and Welayita which are close to surplus-producing areas. However, there are still some problems with implementation of these types of projects:

- the wage rates which are not usually high enough to enable people to climb out of destitution
- provision of high levels of cash to a particular area may drive local grain prices up, while provision of large quantities of food may drive local grain prices down, acting as a disincentive to local traders
- there are not adequate supplies of non-food components of the work projects, including tools, building materials, and budget for supervision and monitoring of the work
- the timing of work does not always coincide with the slack times when people are not engaged in other essential work
- availability of food as payment for EGS work completed is not always guaranteed, so work may be delayed
- in most areas off the shelf projects, intended to be ready for immediate implementation when conditions deteriorate, are not prepared
- mechanisms are lacking for handing over projects to line ministries upon completion or end of emergency conditions.

In addition, it is necessary to ensure that cash-for-work is targeted to areas where local grain markets are available, and infrastructure is adequate to enable people to obtain access to local markets. Areas adjacent to surplus-producing areas, in particular, should be given top priority for implementation cash-for-work projects.

2. agricultural assistance – extension packages, provision of seeds and tools, livestock

- extension packages have proven useful for farmers who have adequate assets to repay loans at harvest time. However, many poorer farmers who fear that they will not be able to repay the loans refrain from borrowing
 - in marginally productive areas, inputs of fertilizer is not considered to be a worthwhile investment
 - in the most vulnerable areas, fertilizer is not able to make an appreciable difference in productivity, although fertilizer has been shown to produce significant production increases in more fertile, surplus-producing areas
 - seed distributions have often been too late for farmers to plant, and varieties are not always familiar or acceptable to farmers. Distributions of seeds that are procured locally generally have the highest success rates.
 - Herd restocking has been tried on a limited basis. The main constraints to restocking are the logistical difficulties of transporting large numbers of animals, and the sustainability of providing animals to households who may not be able to adequately care for them.
3. means of strengthening pastoral markets have begun to be explored – by CARE, FEWS, ILO, etc.
- difficulties imposed by the Gulf countries' ban on livestock imports from the Horn of Africa (except Eritrea, which has recently been exempted from the ban) have complicated the prospect of strengthening such markets
4. herd protection through provision of water, herd destocking (to provide cash for the herder before the animal becomes too weak to be saleable).
- CARE's experience with livestock destocking has been successful in the short term, but is not sustainable. Efforts are now being made to find ways of privatizing the practice.²¹
 - Water provision is also an effective short-term measure to protect livestock and human health in localized areas, but is extremely expensive. It is preferable to develop renewable water resources to minimize the need for water tankering.
5. provision of opportunities for micro-enterprise and small-scale (non-farm) enterprises.
- Tigray and Afar regions have been identified by ILO as having a very low degree of economic diversification; they (and other regions in a similar position) will need to be targeted for these activities.
 - promotion of such micro-enterprise schemes will need to be accompanied by policy development and institutional strengthening.²²

²¹ For additional information on measures to be taken to mitigate losses in pastoral drought situations, see Hogg (1997) and Sandford and Habtu (2000).

²² See ILO: Dec. 2000.

The point of mentioning these weaknesses in the implementation of assistance to the chronically poor is not to suggest that the activities should not be attempted, but rather to identify challenges to effectiveness that need to be overcome to maximize the impact of such assistance.

Despite the progress made in disaggregating the problem, there is much that remains to be done. Many members of the humanitarian community question whether DPPC should include the chronically poor in its annual appeal. They argue that the needs of the chronically poor would best be served by providing vulnerability mitigation and development assistance through line ministries which have more technical capacity to implement projects. These line ministries are, after all, the government counterparts that will eventually assume responsibility for management and maintenance of the projects. Some people have suggested that a separate, multi-year appeal for the chronically poor should be issued, probably by the Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (MEDAC). Ideally, Donors would respond to the needs of the chronically poor with multi-year pledges of assistance, which would allow for medium term planning of development projects in vulnerable areas. As it stands now, annual appeals for assistance provide an opportunity for action that is too short for meaningful mitigation activities.

Although there is growing awareness of the existence of these two groups in need of different kinds of assistance, there is presently no way to distinguish between those who are victims of natural or manmade disasters and those who are chronically destitute. Should the identification of the chronically poor follow an area-based approach, whereby areas that are food insecure year after year are targeted for longer-term assistance and do not receive relief food aid? Is it reasonable to identify groups or individuals within a community that are chronically poor or victims of acute disasters? How should the decision be made, and by whom, as to the kind of assistance that should be extended in each area to each community? And at what point is it necessary to acknowledge that the chronically poor have become "acutely affected" and require emergency assistance? These questions must be addressed by policy analysts. USAID has hired a consultant to look at these questions and to recommend measures to be taken to tie the mission's emergency activities to its longer-term development work.

The need to understand the different situations and needs of the two potential beneficiary groups is of vital importance for the following reasons:

- ✓ As long as the group remains undifferentiated, the principal form of responding to its needs will remain emergency food aid. Donors will become increasingly frustrated that annual assistance requirements remain high even when harvests are good. This will occur, since millions of farmers are so destitute that they are not able to farm and/or lack the cash to obtain food from local markets. They will therefore not benefit from the increased food availability at national level.
- ✓ In many areas and with some people, food aid is not an appropriate form of assistance. The destitute lack cash to obtain food from local markets and the assets to engage in productive activities (whether agricultural, trade, pastoralist, etc.). Appropriate forms of assistance would seek to restore the productive capacity of the destitute, through employment generation, training, micro-credit, and provision of livestock, animals, seeds, etc. However, little such assistance has been truly tested in Ethiopia.
- ✓ Food aid is designed to meet basic nutritional needs for a temporary period, and is not sufficient to help a household rebuild its assets. Therefore, its effectiveness is negligible for the destitute.

- ✓ In addition to food aid, Donors should also consider cash-for-work and micro-finance opportunities for the chronically poor whose main problem is lack of purchasing power. For those who live near markets where food is available, it makes no sense to bring additional food into the area (and may well deflate grain prices, adversely affecting farmers who are trying to sell their small surpluses to build their asset bases).

9.2 National food security strategy: a policy vacuum

In December 1996, a Food Security Strategy paper was prepared by the GFDRE, and was accepted at a meeting of the Consultative Group. This document outlines specific goals – doubling per capita income over the next 15 years, stimulating agricultural and livestock production, prioritizing rural development, pursuing aggressive macro-level economic policy reforms, promoting agricultural exports and providing safety-net assistance to help the chronically vulnerable – implementation of the strategy has been hindered by the fact that it does not assign specific responsibilities to each stakeholder, and does not identify target dates for achievement of the goals. Thus, while the paper is useful in guiding development efforts, its usefulness is limited.

Four regions (Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya, and SNNPR) currently have Food Security Policies (FSP) in place. For the most part, these policies seek to enhance food security through maximization of productive capacity as well as economic diversification (through non-agricultural activities such as employment generation, market development, and industrial development). Each respective strategy is managed by the regional administration. However, as the USAID Agriculture and Natural Resources office has pointed out, central government does have a role to play in harmonizing these policies and promoting their implementation. Specific responsibilities include:

- establishing a comprehensive policy framework for achieving national food security
- initiating and coordinating measures to improve and avoid distortions in national food markets
- fostering economic integration among the regions
- overseeing construction of road networks
- facilitating migration flows and improving labor markets
- fostering application of different food security initiatives among and across food surplus and food deficit regions
- conducting dialogue with Donors

As there is currently no central government office concerned with food security issues, coordination at the central level remains fragmented. Donors find it easier to work at the regional level (which is perhaps how implementation should be pursued), but lack a partner with which to discuss issues of inter-regional policy harmonization. It is recommended that a single office be formed at central level with the authority to deal with regional governments, Donors and stakeholders on food security issues. Given the multi-sectoral nature of policies that impact food security, and the Ethiopian tendency for centralized decision-making, the logical location for this

function is the Office of the Prime Minister. This office would be responsible for defining an initial policy agenda in consultation with regional governments, Donors and stakeholders.

9.3 Need for a national policy on nutrition

Following years of economic decline during the Derg regime, Ethiopia has experienced impressive growth at the national level. During the 1970s and 1980s the country had an average growth rate of 2%. Since 1992, when the country's economic recovery program was initiated, growth has averaged 6.5% and inflation has been kept below 4%. These advances are credited to:

improved economic management, currency and trade liberalization and grain and agricultural input marketing liberalization undertaken as part of the reform programme of -0.5 percent in 1998 and 0 percent in 1999) mainly due to the multiyear drought, war with Eritrea and increased burden of AIDS in the country.²³

Despite these successes, the benefits accrued nationally have had little impact on the livelihoods of the rural population. In 1995/96, 45.5% of the population was estimated to be living below the poverty level. Rural household income averaged US\$ 159 (and US\$ 217 in urban areas).²⁴ Rates of stunting are among the highest recorded in the world.

Ethiopia's Five Year Development Plan and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) both focus on outlining measures to meet overall production goals and are not linked to nutrition or health considerations. In addition, these plans are focused on macro-level development; there is no safety net to ensure that the needs of extremely vulnerable households are met in the short to medium term while these development strategies are being implemented. The WHO/ORHC consultant has recommended that a national nutritional policy be developed to highlight the relation between national development goals and meeting the basic challenges of ensuring that people's basic food needs are met.

9.4 Need for effective Donor collaboration

One of the great successes of the emergency operation was the strong cooperation and coordination between the major Donors working in Addis Ababa. In particular, the US, EU, WFP, and DPPC worked extremely well together to coordinate pledges and deliveries and shared field monitoring information and expertise. Several joint field trips by technical staff have helped to harmonize emergency programming. This has been extremely important, as each of these players brings different strengths to the table.

As we shift from an emergency phase to a vulnerability mitigation/recovery phase, the continued close collaboration must continue. This will be especially important in view of the lack of a

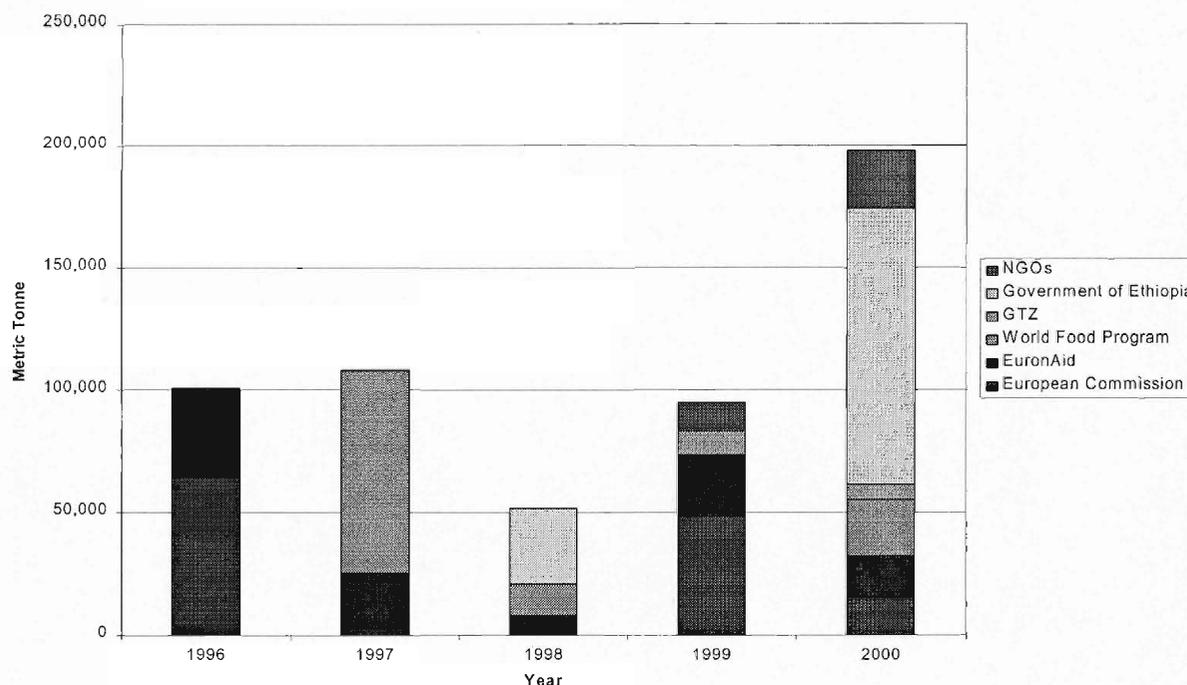
Note: WFP 1997 figure includes 51,431 MT pledged by the EU through WFP

national food security strategy. Each Donor has its own comparative advantage in terms of the

²³ FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Ethiopia, Jan. 2001.

²⁴ Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) Draft, MEDAC, October 2000.

type of assistance it can provide and the relationship it has to the Ethiopian government, and these advantages can be used creatively to provide comprehensive assistance that addresses the causes of poverty rather than merely attempting to place a bandage on the visible wounds of that poverty.



An important step towards redistributing surpluses to food deficit areas, which reduces the need for imported food assistance, is the local purchase of cereals. Since 1996 the EU, WFP, the Ethiopian government and several other Donors have carried out local purchase operations. The chart below summarizes the amount of each Donor's local purchase activities.

Local purchases are particularly important since regulations do not permit the USG to conduct such activities itself. Such programming must be continued and coordinated with food aid imports and other forms of assistance to ensure maximum complementarity.

The principle of effective coordination between the US and EU was formalized in the New Transatlantic Agenda in December 1995. In 1999, follow-up discussions were held to identify priority areas for US/EU joint action. The seven countries were selected as part of a recognized need to enable greater access to the benefits and better response to the risks of globalization by emerging economies and developing countries". In addition to priorities more germane to Europe and Southeast Asia, the priority areas include:

- ✓ conflict prevention
- ✓ environmental stress and global climate change
- ✓ food security
- ✓ global threats to combating infectious disease
- ✓ impact of illegal drugs on development

Seven priority countries have been selected for this collaboration: Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Bolivia, Bangladesh, and Haiti. Furthering the cooperation between the US and EU with respect to vulnerability mitigation and development will enhance the effectiveness of this initiative. This is, however, secondary to the primary objective of providing complementary assistance to populations in need in Ethiopia.

Recently, the USAID mission and EU delegation have begun to discuss concrete measures that can be taken to improve coordination between themselves. The following points have are currently under discussion:

- ✓ that current excellent coordination on the emergency side must be continued and carried over into post-emergency recovery
- ✓ that the two missions can and must do more to provide appropriate assistance to the chronically destitute
- ✓ that an effort must be made to identify the areas of Ethiopia which require emergency food relief, the areas that would benefit more from employment generation (whether EGS, FFW, or CFW), and those areas for which a combination of relief food and employment-based assistance would be appropriate. In some areas, the possibility of joint programming, whereby the US would provide food inputs to food for work or EGS projects and the EU might provide the non-food components (tools, technical support, materials).

Additional modalities of future collaboration at the operational level will be worked out in the coming weeks.

9.5 Specific challenges in agricultural areas

The National Food Security Programme and National Five Year Development Plan both emphasize the need to stimulate both agricultural and industrial development. Recognizing that industrial development will take some time to put in place and yield results, emphasis is placed in the short term on promoting agricultural productivity. This is primarily to be achieved through agricultural extension packages, consisting of credit, training, and subsidized fertilizer and seed availability. For farmers who can afford to take advantage of the extension packages, the impact may be significant. For those who are most severely affected by food shortage, however, such packages are less useful. Many farmers have complained about the fact that they cannot afford to repay their loans at harvest time, and thus do not take advantage of the credit schemes. They often need to sell food aid and farm products to repay their loans. There is at present no way to ensure that the poorest farmers receive assistance to prepare their farms (with seeds, fertilizers, plow animals, tools, etc.).

Many observers have also argued for the need to implement land reform in Ethiopia before meaningful progress can be made to increase agricultural productivity. Currently, all land in Ethiopia is owned by the state. In rural areas, farmers are allocated land, but the local political leadership has the right to reallocate land periodically to accommodate changes in local demographics (new households formed, in- or out-migration, changing environmental conditions, etc.). This makes farmers' tenure over their land insecure. However, it is generally agreed that the stronger a farmer's claim to a particular piece of land, the more he/she is likely to invest in conservation and improvements, to use such inputs as fertilizer, and to practice

following techniques. It is unlikely that the GFDRE will privatize land ownership in the near future. However, even if this does not happen, steps can be taken to increase farmers' security over their land. There is also a need to strengthen people's rights to transfer use rights for land, so as to allow for normal, temporary migration to labor markets. This will ultimately reduce the level of distress migration.

Ultimately it must be accepted, as one observer has put it that, "the impoverished rural peasantry is not going to produce itself out of poverty". In addition to promoting agricultural development (including cash crops and agro-forestry), there is a need to stimulate local markets and to generate employment opportunities in urban centers (outside of Addis Ababa) throughout the country. Ethiopia is distinctive in that most urban dwellers live in Addis Ababa. The capital city has an estimated population of 3-4 million depending on the source consulted, whereas the next largest city, Dire Dawa has a population of only 200,000. Stimulation of other urban centers (with complementary improvement of urban infrastructure such as housing, water supply, electricity supply, health care and education) could provide important sources of income for people who are unable to produce enough to survive on their farms.

9.6 Specific action in pastoral areas

Following moderate rains in the last quarter of 2000, agencies are beginning to prepare for a mid-term recovery phase. An inter-agency mission to Somali Region in October noted that the nutritional status of affected populations had improved markedly in the third quarter of the year. However, the OFDA/EDRC noted that many of the most destitute had lost all of their animals and would therefore require assistance to rebuild their asset base. In some cases, this may entail the continued provision of the general food ration, which it must be expected will be monetized and used to purchase small livestock. In addition, restocking, destocking of weakened animals, and other forms of income generation must be pursued. The GFDRE's appeal for emergency assistance, which includes \$40 million in non-food recovery assistance, seeks to address the fact that the low coverage of health care and water supply services in pastoral areas contributes to the vulnerability of the pastoral population. The appeal reflects the need to "do business differently" by providing longer term assistance to pastoral areas that seeks to reduce the population's vulnerability, ultimately (hopefully) also reducing its dependency on emergency relief supplies of food and water.

The DfID study (2000) makes the important point that the goal of recovery efforts should not be a return to the status quo.

...we do not think that humanitarian relief can or should simply try to restore some previous situation. The present crisis is not the result of a sudden, unpredictable and unique act of Nature. It is merely the latest of a series of crises reflecting the pressure of human population growth confronted with natural resources of unchanging productivity. Unless this pressure is relieved, putting the destitute back into pastoralism is simply to say "Au revoir. See you again soon".

The reorientation away from a return to the status quo towards the creation of more sustainable livelihoods is an important shift for many organizations, for whom recovery and reconstruction are the goals of emergency assistance. However, when livelihoods have become so unsustainable

that people are left in a constant state of life-threatening vulnerability, the paradigm must be changed.

They go on to argue that the objective of relief and rehabilitation activities should be to help people living in drylands to make changes to their local economies such that their vulnerability to climatic shocks will be decreased. In the past the argument has been put forward that the solution lies in agricultural development of traditionally pastoral areas. However, there is now ample evidence to prove that making farmers out of pastoralists can actually increase their vulnerability, as their traditional migration is in effect a coping strategy to respond to changing resource levels within the environment. Therefore, it would seem that more sound pastoral development strategies would involve promotion of markets and generation of wage-labor activities in pastoral areas.

Problems that need to be addressed during the recovery phase in pastoral areas include the following:

- 1) Need for water supply in settled areas. The DPPC Appeal includes plans to construct 40 new water supply schemes in Somali Region, Borena Zone and Bale Zone, and to rehabilitate 100 existing schemes in these areas. Although water supply is essential, care must be taken not to place water sources too close to grazing areas, for this can cause overgrazing of pastureland and unsustainable settlement.²⁵
- 2) Lack of health care facilities. Somali Region has only one referral hospital (in Jigjiga) and very few health posts. The DPPC has proposed to construct 12 health stations over the next two years in Somali Region and provide additional drugs, malaria control support, and immunization in both Somali Region and Borena Zone.
- 3) The need for increased veterinary care for the animals that have survived the drought must be addressed urgently. Livestock weakened by the drought are more likely to succumb to veterinary diseases. Essential activities include improved coverage of vaccination, provision of veterinary care, and testing and certification of livestock destined for export.
- 4) Domestic markets must be further developed. The proposal prepared by FEWS to develop a marketing information system should be supported as a first step.
- 5) Conflict prevention measures are needed to address the problems that are caused when pastoralists enter territory controlled by other clans or ethnic groups. Such migration, heightened during periods of drought, leads to heightened tensions between groups, particularly between those living along the Ethiopian and Kenyan border. Lack of livestock markets has exacerbated this problem. Herders who try to sell their animals before they lose all of their market value have found that there is no outlet. The Borena livestock marketing corporation is not presently active.
- 6) The imposition of a ban on livestock imports from the Horn of Africa (excluding Sudan and Eritrea) from Gulf Countries reportedly due to fears of Rift Valley Fever has already had a

²⁵ For a comprehensive account of how inappropriately placed water supply schemes have placed restrictions on pastoral activities due to overgrazing and settlement, See Sugule and Walker 1998.

negative impact on the market options of pastoralists in the area.²⁶ To remedy this situation, several steps are needed to be taken:

- a) The Borena Livestock Marketing Board should be encouraged to become active once again, and other steps should be taken to strengthen local markets
- b) Additional marketing possibilities for livestock (locally and to countries other than those in the Gulf) should be explored
- c) The Ethio-Kenya Cross Border Commission should be requested to consider allowing a limited number of cross-border sales of livestock
- d) Most importantly, efforts to lift the ban imposed by the Gulf Countries on livestock from the Horn of Africa must be pursued. This will include:
 - i) testing of livestock for Rift Valley Fever in the areas affected by the ban (Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti)
 - ii) institution of a coordinated, multi-country livestock vaccination and certification system

At an October 2000 meeting in Isiolo, Kenya, representatives from Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and Somaliland committed themselves to pursuing these activities. FAO and UNDP will provide technical support as well.

9.7 Other developmental challenges

Other challenges which pose a threat to food security in Ethiopia must not be neglected in this mitigation/recovery phase. These include:

- 1) Efforts to encourage family planning. Ethiopia's growth rate is 3%, which generates an estimated 350,000 MT in increased food needs each year. Agricultural productivity, at 2.5%, is not enough to offset this increase in consumption needs. However, while it is essential to try to bring Ethiopia's population growth rate down in the coming years, it is also necessary to realize that results in this area are not likely to see fast results. Put in the crudest terms, households who have lost children through starvation or disease are usually eager to replace them, and those who perceive that as many as half of their children may die prematurely are likely to want large families so that they can ensure that they will have enough children to perpetuate the family and to assist with the household's work. This line of thinking, of course, perpetuates the trend of premature deaths, but it is unlikely to change unless people perceive an improvement in a child's chances for survival.

There is some indication that attitudes towards family planning may be gradually changing, especially among women. There is an increased willingness to use family planning methods, but opposition from men and limited availability of reproductive health services and contraception constrain the progress of these attitudinal changes.

²⁶ See IRIN 11/24/00, WFP/DPPC Operational Review Assessment Mission, October. 2000.

- 2) HIV/AIDS poses an enormous threat to household productivity, and thus is potentially a major factor in generating chronic poverty. Ethiopia is committed to reducing the spread of HIV through aggressive public education efforts. USAID-Ethiopia is currently funding projects valued at US\$ 8.2 million in this area.

9.8 Conclusion

Ethiopia's problems in confronting food insecurity are both structural and climatic. Efforts to address the root causes of livelihood failures must take a comprehensive approach, focusing not only on the operational aspects of emergency and vulnerability mitigation assistance, but also on the policy-related aspects that concern food security and rural livelihoods in general.

Towards this end, USAID has embarked on a number of initiatives to try to find alternatives and complements to providing emergency food aid. A pilot project is being developed whereby a highly vulnerable woreda will be selected for multi-faceted assistance, to try to find methods that work (or do not) for replication in other parts of the country. USAID is also considering, together with the EU and other Donors, the provision of multi-year commitments of food and non-food assistance to the chronically vulnerable. Target areas are being selected where assistance besides relief food can be provided (such as cash for work, EGS, vocational training, or other employment creation).

Ultimately, the goal is to reduce Ethiopia's dependency on relief food and to attack the root causes of chronic vulnerability such that those who have lost, or are in danger of losing their productive assets, will be able to redefine their relationship to their economic environment such that they will not fall through the cracks and be rendered food aid dependent.

The emergency operation of 1999-2000 had many successes, but many of the weaknesses mentioned herein could have been avoided. It is hoped that this report will help to illuminate not only the good ideas that were successful and the mistakes that were made, but will also point to an agenda for concerted action to reduce vulnerability in the medium term so that an emergency of equal or greater severity does not recur in the near future. Drought will occur, of that one can be sure. But drought need not spark the kind of suffering that was witnessed in 1999-2000.

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APPENDIX 1. RELIEF REQUIREMENTS AND BENEFICIARY FIGURES, 1993-2001

Date of Estimate	Period Required	Beneficiaries	Food Assistance Requirement	Amount delivered by end of year
Dec. 1993	1994 projected	4.45 million (incl manmade disaster victims)	570,000 ²⁷	
April 1994	1994 revised	6.7 million incl. 1,120,500 manmade disaster	895,000 MT	
Dec. 1994	1994 final		771,000 ²⁸	985,195 pledged 806,339 delivered 600,000 distrib ²⁹
Dec. 1994	1995 projected	4 million	492,848 MT	453,334 MT pledged, 230,040 delivered, 347,379 MT distributed ³⁰
Dec. 1995	1995 final		492,848 MT	
	1996 projected	2.26 million ³¹	253,111 MT (exc. past & urban)	
Dec 1996	1996 final	2.78 million	295,575 MT incl. carryover	152,093 (1996) ³² 264,995 distributed

²⁷ Source: UN-EUE "Briefing Paper: 1994 food needs for Ethiopia"

²⁸ UN-EUE Situation Report, Oct. 1994

²⁹ UN-EUE Situation Report Jan. 1995

³⁰ DPPC Appeal for 1996, Dec 1995

³¹ UN-EUE Situation Report Jan. 1996

³² Source: UN-EUE Situation Report Dec '96/Jan'97.

Dec. 1996	1997 projected	1.93 million	79,369 MT (excl. carryover), 199,846 total ³³	
Aug. 1997	1997 revised	3.4 million	300,000 MT (excl. carryover)	
Dec. 1997	1997 final	4.1 million	268,098 MT	267,000 MT by end October
Nov. 1997	1998 projected	4.2 million	572,835 MT ok	
July 1998	1998 revised		602,134	
Dec. 1998	1998 final	4.5 million	579,172	277,903 MT distributed
Dec. 1998	1999 projected	2.16 million	192,969 MT	
May 27, 1999	1999 update	4.2 million	320,392 Jun-Dec only)	
Nov. 1999	1999 final	7 million	775,548 MT	408,315 MT
Jan. 2000	2000 projected	7.7 million	758,864 MT (not including carryover)	
Dec. 2000	2000 final	10.5 million	1.3 million MT	

³³ DPPC Appeal Dec. 1996