



# DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for  
International  
Development

Washington D.C.  
20523

## ETHIOPIA - Drought

Date: March - June 1987

Location: Ogaden area of Harerge region

No. Dead: -

No. Affected: 330,000

Damage: Livestock losses (cattle, sheep, goat, camel) ranged between 25-90% per household.

### The Disaster

Drought cast its dark shadow once again over Ethiopia, this time affecting the Ogaden region. Lack of rainfall in the Harerge region except for the southern Jijiga and Gursum districts (awrajas) over the last three years had created crisis conditions by March 1987. As water sources dried up, the nomads who traditionally herd their flocks across the Ethiopian-Somali border helplessly watched their animals perish. Livestock losses (cattle, sheep, goat, camel) ranged from 25 to 90 percent per family.

Malnutrition and occasional death set in, with milk-dependent children especially at risk. At least 367 people, many of them infants, lost their lives between March and May. The fewer than 20 functioning wells in the entire 90,000 sq. km region yielded only saline or insufficient water. Very heavy rainfall in May slightly alleviated the situation, but also brought about severe flooding in Kelafo and Goda districts. Animals died from disease and bloating; recovery time for the half-starved beasts could take up to ten months.

### Action Taken by the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (GPDRE)

The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), the GPDRE organization charged with coordinating and directing all disaster relief operations, launched an appeal for outside aid. Recognizing the drought's severity, it brought together various western governments and NGOs to facilitate

donor aid and visits to the region. In June, the GPDRE began releasing 1,400 MT of grain from RRC stocks for distribution by World University Service of Canada (WUSC) over the following six months.

#### Assistance Provided by the United States Government

A U.S. Embassy economic officer visited the southeastern area of the Ogaden between May 8-12 as part of an assessment team with representatives of the U.N., RRC, and LWF. Local GPDRE officials briefed the team on drought conditions. From May 12 to 18, an A.I.D. contractor also toured the region with U.N. and RRC delegates, interviewing GPDRE and WUSC representatives.

Despite considerable help from other governments and non-profit organizations, certain gaps remained. Acting on the RRC's appeal, Chargé James R. Cheek determined that modest, selective U.S. aid was needed and accordingly declared the drought a disaster on June 16. OFDA provided \$50,000 to the LWF's emergency medical assistance program. The USG also approved the transfer of 470-MT of NFDM to UNHCR from WVRO's FY 1986 food stocks (whose value is included in the OFDA Annual Report FY 1986). This milk went to UNHCR's program for Ethiopian refugees who had fled to Somalia after a previous drought and were now returning.

TOTAL                      \$50,000

#### Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Organizations

CRS - helped with food and water distribution.

WVRO - donated 470 MT of NFDM to UNHCR.

#### Assistance Provided by the International Community

##### International Organizations

EEC - funded internal transport cost of grain distributed by WUSC.

LWF - spent \$303,900 on emergency medical assistance; dispatched 5 mobile medical teams that provided basic child care.

UNHCR - conducted a program for refugees returning from Somalia to the Ethiopian Ogaden.

UNICEF - undertook a cooperative project with local authorities involving maternal health, limited agricultural inputs, and drinking water.

Governments

Canada - funded WUSC's administrative costs.

Non-Governmental Organizations

SCF/UK - conducted a nutritional survey of affected children in Wardes and Degeh Bur districts.

WUSC/Canada - distributed a 6-month supply of RRC food (1,400 MT of grains); undertook water and health activities, including an expanded program of immunization and preventive health care.

TOTAL \$303,900