

Key Issues

- A new caseload of more than 2 million people are receiving humanitarian assistance
- A joint UN and Government 'most likely scenario' being developed to guide fundraising and operational readiness
- The methodology sub-working group proposes spring/belg-gu assessment early June
- Emergency School Feeding Program has been instrumental in the re-opening of schools in drought-hit areas

Back-to-back seasons of poor or non-existent rainfall in 2015, exacerbated by the strongest El Niño phenomenon on record, led to the worst drought in decades in Ethiopia in 2016. While the country continues to respond to residual needs from this drought, below average rains in the southern and eastern parts of the country caused by the negative Indian Ocean Dipole have left 5.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2017. Some US\$948 million is urgently required to respond.

A new caseload of more than 2 million people are receiving humanitarian assistance

Ethiopia's humanitarian situation is worsening and the needs have already surpassed those identified in the 2017 Humanitarian Requirements Document, according to the National Disaster Risk Management Commission. Barely four months into 2017, Government and partners are already providing relief food assistance to an additional 2.18 million people, apart from the 5.6 million identified at the beginning of the year. Humanitarian needs have also escalated in other critical life-saving sectors; an update on the growing number of needs is about to be launched.

The surges are mainly attributed to the *meher* harvest loss due to frost in Borena, East Hararge, Guji, West Guji and lowlands of Bale zones of Oromia region and South Omo zones of SNNP region; chronic shortage of water and fodder associated with the deepening drought conditions in the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas. Poor performing spring rains are escalating drought impact and the quickly spreading of Acute Watery Diarrhoea outbreak, particularly in the Somali region.

A joint UN-Government 'most likely scenario' being developed to guide fundraising and operational readiness

Given the poor spring/*belg-gu* rains in the new drought belt and beyond, the most likely scenario exercise is anticipated to come up with an increase in humanitarian needs. As of 02 May 2017, the number of people receiving relief food assistance has already spiked to 7.78 million from the initial 5.6 million. To this number, people projected to be affected by the poor performing rains will be added. The associated financial requirement is also anticipated to increase. The Government of Ethiopia continues to lead the response, but given the scale of the crisis, it has started to communicate to donors on the changes in the humanitarian context for additional support.

The methodology sub-working group proposes spring/belg-gu assessment early June

Chaired by the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), the Methodology Sub-Working Group is discussing timeline for the 2017 spring/*belg-gu* assessment. The assessment will allow Government and partners to capture the impact of the poor/failed spring rains on lives and livelihood and target *woredas* with new needs. NDRMC is communicating the timeline to Regional Bureaus so that they start preparations.

Emergency School Feeding Program has been instrumental in the re-opening of schools

Schools that were closed in Oromia and Somali regions are now re-opening, following an allocation of US\$9 million by the Federal Government for Emergency School Feeding Program to curb drought-induced closure of schools. Regions like SNNPR and Oromia are also allocating resources for school feeding. Currently, some 1.3 million students are benefiting from school feeding programmes across the country, 90 per cent are assisted by the Government. Some 8,000 internally displaced school-age children are pursuing education in Temporary Learning Centers. Funding gap remains high in the education sector and students continue to drop out in South Omo zone of SNNP, Bale zone of Oromia and Somali regions.

The 2017 Humanitarian Requirements Document seeks an estimated \$30.5 million to support emergency school feeding program.

For further information, contact: ocha-eth@un.org