

Key Issues

- High number of non-functional ground water points in drought-affected areas remain critical sources of public health risk in the second half of the year, including Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD)
- The Tigray Regional Health Bureau has requested support from the Federal Ministry of Health and international partners to address the fast spreading AWD outbreak in the region.
- Flood is affecting households and damaging public facilities in Afar region

Following poor performing spring rains, the number of people receiving humanitarian assistance has reached 7.8 million in the first quarter of the year and is expected to heighten further in the second half of the year. The joint Government and humanitarian partners' mid-year needs assessment reports have been consolidated. The Mid-Year-Review of the 2017 Humanitarian Requirements Document that will inform the actual humanitarian needs is expected to be launched in early August. Increased funding is needed urgently, in particular to address immediate requirements for food and nutrition as well as clean drinking water, much of which is being delivered long distances by truck as regular wells have dried up.

Access to safe water remains a key challenge in priority *woredas*

As a result of three consecutive failed rainy seasons in Southern and Eastern parts of Ethiopia, the level of ground water and overall water availability has been reduced. According to the WaSH Cluster, less than 20 per cent of the existing deep boreholes in priority 1 *woredas* are functional. Following recent spring rains – albeit poor – people have been able to access rain-fed water sources. But these sources are mostly unprotected and remain sources of critical public health risks, particularly when coupled with poor sanitation and hygiene practices and the existing high rates of malnutrition. As part of the emergency WaSH response, the Cluster has prioritized household water safety through the distribution water treatment chemicals together with hygiene promotion activities. The Cluster also conducts targeted water trucking prioritizing schools and health centres to minimize public health risks and works to ensure adequate WaSH services are available in large displacement sites where access to basic services is limited.

Meanwhile, the Government and partners continue to strengthen the overstretched Regional Health Bureaus (RHBs) to address ongoing Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) outbreak. Significant success was achieved in Somali region – the epicenter of the AWD outbreak – where the capacity of AWD treatment facilities was strengthened, including through the deployment of nearly 700 Government health workers from around the country. Surveillance and early warning systems have also been expanded and although the outbreak continues, it remains at a much-reduced rate. AWD continues to spread in Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions.

Tigray Regional Health Bureau (RHB) requests urgent support for AWD response

In Tigray region, an AWD was first reported in Degua Tembien *woreda* on 22 June and has since spread to 24 *woredas*. More than 225 suspected cases were reported as of 26 July. There are increased concerns around a further spread of AWD due to the seasonal mobility of daily laborers and pilgrims to the Western and North Western zones – areas known for traditional gold and sapphire mines as well as holy water sites. In the last week, the Tigray RHB requested support from the Federal Ministry of Health and international partners to address the fast spreading AWD outbreak in the region. A rapid multi-agency assessment team was deployed and will remain on the ground till 7 August. Meanwhile, the Health Cluster has sent a second team to support response efforts. Requested support includes, CTCs, ORS, Ringers and medicines and other material as well as financial support. The existing four CTCs donated by UNICEF are not sufficient to respond to the outbreak. In 2016, some 3,339 AWD cases had been reported in 49 of the 52 *woredas* in the region and some 16 CTCs and over 224 ORPs were established.

Flood affects households and damages facilities in Afar region

A flooding incident on 20 July has reportedly affected 204 households and damaged one school and health center in Megale *woreda* of Zone 2 in Afar region. In response to a request for support by the Regional Disaster Prevention and Food Security Programme Coordination Office (DPFSPCO), the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) has dispatched emergency food and NFIs from Mekele warehouse to the affected areas. The Afar region Flood Contingency Plan had identified some 63,000 people at-risk of flooding, of whom 44,100 are expected to be displaced during the current *karma/kiremt* (July – September) rainy season. *Woreda*-level Flood Task Forces will be reactivated in all flood-prone *woredas* in the region (and have so far been reactivated in eight *woredas*).

Flooding in Afar is mainly caused by the overflow of the Awash River and by flash floods resulting from heavy rainfall in some highland areas of Amhara and Tigray regions.