



ERITREA: HUMANITARIAN UPDATE 30 July 2004

HIGHLIGHTS

UNDP/PoWER reported that US \$1.8 million is urgently required to provide initial resettlement package to about 8000 rural expellees who have been living in camps in Kotobia and Adi-Keshi, Gash Barka for five years. Resettling these expellees would not only give the people a sustainable means of livelihood but also the humanitarian aid that has been allocated every year by aid agencies to this population would be considerably reduced, if not ceased. UNDP/PoWER, in collaboration with ERREC and the local administration in Gash Barka have resettled 10,000 rural expellees who have been living in camp recently and the expellees are in the process of establishing a sustainable livelihood.

On 16 July the Government and the UN Country Team decided to proceed with the preparation of the Eritrea traditional CAP 2005. In addition, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) of the CAP Working Group in Geneva recommended Eritrea to go for a traditional CAP in 2005 considering the fact that the humanitarian situation did not show any improvement. To kick start the process joint UN/Government Advisory Team has been constituted to oversee the preparation of the CAP and it held its first meeting on 22 July. In addition, a meeting of the chairs and co-chairs of the Sectoral Working Groups was convened on 27 July to discuss sector roles and responsibilities in the preparation of the 2005 CAP for Eritrea. The donor response to the 2004 CAP stands at 28.3% as at 30 July.

ERREC reported that about 2000 IDP families living in Korokon camp, Gash Barka zone have lost their shelter (tents) to a windstorm on 29 July 2004. The heavy rain accompanied by windstorm has also damaged two months of food ration of the IDPs after blowing the rub-hall store. In addition, it has blown the roofing of the Health Station and rendered the only borehole in the camp as well as solar system of the health station out of use. The IDPs are in desperate situation and are trying to put their blown tents together. According to ERREC, unless the IDPs are provided with immediate shelter assistance the remaining shelter would not withstand the impact of more rainfall. There is also a pressing need for food ration and restocking of medical supplies, as they have been lost to the windstorm. The camp is home to around 6,700 IDPs, since 1998.

WFP and FAO: LONG CYCLE CROPS FAIL DUE TO POOR AZMERA RAINS

WFP reported that rainfall remains erratic in terms of frequency and distribution across Eritrea. While it is early to speak about drought, if the current pattern continues, another drought might be the case. In Tesseney sub-zone insufficient rains were reported, similarly in parts of Anseba. Despite erratic rains, water levels in different dams and micro dams in Dehub region have increased slightly. Land preparation and planting of short cycle crops started in Zoba Dehub, Maekel, Anseba and Gash Barka.

The seed distribution of long cycle crops has been completed. Only FAO, ICRC, NGOs and Governmental Institutions covered only 39 % of the 2004 requirements with an estimated shortfall of 7000 MT.

The high prices of seeds in the local markets have also contributed to the reduction of purchasing power of Humanitarian Organizations. Furthermore, the low quality of available seeds in the local market will not allow farmers to have a reasonable yield, even in the event of good rain patterns and distribution.

According to the monthly bulletin on Food Security edited by NFIS with the technical support of FAO, the agricultural situation appears critical for long cycle crops in Maekel and Dehub zones. After the poor performance of the *Azmera* rain season and the late start of the *Kremti* rains, most of the long cycle crops (cereals) have failed in Zobas Dehub and Maekel and the land should be replanted with short cycle crops.

In Gash Barka – one of the main cereal producing areas – a shortage of tractors for ploughing has been reported. Seeds are also in short supply, although the Ministry of Agriculture, with aid funds, is providing some seeds to farmers. In Anseba, the planted area is limited due to the shortage of animals to plough and high prices of renting private tractors. While ploughing and sowing are still ongoing in certain areas, crops at germination stage can be seen in certain parts of the country. In Dehub, farmers are planting late variety crops and in Adi-Teklezan (Anseba) where rains came late, only short cycle have been planted.

Cattle have started to move from the dry season areas to the traditional wet areas. The poor *Azmera* rains and the insufficient rain during the month of June impeded the regeneration of pasture. According to Ministry of Agriculture reports, there are no reported deaths of cattle due to drought, but animals appear in bad condition, with loss of weight and low milk production.

The availability of specific commodities like sugar and wheat flour and bread remain limited in most of the country.

UNHCR: SOMALI REFUGEES REGISTER TO GO HOME

UNHCR has begun registration in Emkulu Somali Refugee Camp located in the periphery of Massawa to identify Somali refugees wishing to repatriate to Somalia. An information campaign was held at the end of June with the assistance of Field Officer from Somalia. The campaign informed the 3,400 refugees of the current situation in Somalia and the status of the peace process. UNHCR is promoting voluntary repatriation to the northern areas of Somaliland and Puntland where conditions are relatively stable. Those wanting to return to the less stable Southern Somalia will also be assisted. It is estimated that more than 500 people will choose to return home at the end of the registration exercise in July. The voluntary repatriation movement is scheduled to occur by air in the last quarter of 2004. UNHCR Eritrea together with UNHCR Somalia and the respective Government authorities have begun collaborative planning in response to the many requests by the refugees to return home.

Refugee Teacher Summer Training

In its third collaborative year, UNHCR, Office of Refugee Affairs (ORA) Eritrea and University of Asmara are providing 22 refugee teachers from the Elit and Emkulu Camps with refresher training over the 2004 summer period. The six-week course, from 14 July - 31 August, aims to strengthen the teacher's skills, introduce new teaching techniques and upgrade school management knowledge. The intensive programme will cover six topics in depth, including: basic education theory, contemporary learning and teaching methodologies and lesson preparation, curriculum development, education research methods and child psychology. The added benefit of the course is that it is both instructional and practical, allowing interaction and knowledge sharing between the teachers, building their self-confidence and advancing their working experience.

UNICEF SUPPORTS DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN AND WOMEN WITH SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

UNICEF has provided 380 most vulnerable Child and Female headed households hosting 1,400 orphan children with long term economic assistance in the form of Income Generating Activities (IGA) of their choice to alleviate the burden of poverty they are shouldering due to the effects of the war and recurrent drought. The IGA assistance package includes livestock, shops, tearooms, hair dressing, fishing net etc. worth Nakfa10, 000 each.

In order to see the impact of these responses, UNICEF - Child Protection is doing frequent follow-ups of the assisted homesteads. It recently conducted impact assessments, between 18-28 July 2004 on 20 Child/Female headed households assisted by the project in Southern Red Sea, Northern Red Sea and Anseba regions to assess the situation and impact of assistance.

Findings show that nearly 90% of the visited families have either managed to increase or sustain their initial assistance (covering their basic needs expenses), thereby improving their incomes and the well being of their children.

UNICEF Supports Ministry of Education in Construction of Elementary Schools

UNICEF visited seven sites, which the Ministry of Education has identified for the construction of elementary schools with UNICEF support. The purpose of the visits was to make a situational assessment and analysis of the areas looking at variables that include school age population, existing education arrangements if any, water availability, major economic activities and accessibility. Construction work will commence at some of the sites in the next few weeks.

UNDP MINE ACTION CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

The **Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA)** and **Eritrean Demining Operations** hosted Embassy staff and senior UN personnel for a one-day field visit to Shilalo in Gash Barka on 27 July. The trip included a tour of minefield areas being cleared by EDO, a mine detection dog demonstration from the American company RONCO, a visit to a mine risk education lesson in progress in Shilalo village and briefings from the General Manager of the EDA and the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare.

Eritrean Demining Operations (EDO) manual clearance teams continue to work in the villages of Emba Derho and Karibosa in Senafe and Grat Mariam in Shilalo; these tasks will allow for the resettlement of populations displaced during the border war. Two recently trained manual clearance teams will be added to this capacity once they have completed accreditation, which is a necessary step in order to meet international humanitarian mine action standards.

The training of the EDO's two new explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams is set to begin on 9 August 2004 in Keren. These new teams will be responsible for destroying grenades, bombs and other unexploded ordnance, which are found throughout the country. They will also respond to specific demands from the EDO's Mine Risk Education teams, who often receive requests from communities they visit to remove remnants of war from their areas. UXOs are responsible for more injuries and deaths in Eritrea than anti-personnel or anti-tank landmines, and these accidents overwhelmingly involve young people between the ages of five and 29.

UNMEE MACC/FMAC ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

The majority of the Peacekeeping Force (PKF) demining assets, which currently include the Bangladeshi and Kenyan demining contingents (the Slovak contingent left the Mission in June 2004) continued to conduct clearance operations in Sector West of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ), in particular in the minefields of the Shilalo region. During the period 16 – 30 July 2004, the PKF assets cleared 7,554 square meters of land and destroyed four landmines and three UXOs. The MACC route clearance contractor, MECHEM, cleared 1,332 square meters of land. The MACC Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team disposed of 22 UXOs.

The MACC Mine Risk Education (MRE) Field Teams deployed to Dehub zone in Sector Center are providing community based MRE to more than 850 people of various villages in the area.

Two investigations were completed into UXO incidents in the TSZ (Sector Center and Sector West). In both cases, young boys were tampering with fuses by hitting them with stones. Both boys lost several fingers as a result. MRE efforts are now being directed at young shepherds in these regions.

During the period 21-23 July 2004, the Programme Manager and the Programme/Training Officer of UNMACC travelled to Addis Ababa where the Programme Manager gave a general briefing on the current status of MACC operations to the donor community in Addis Ababa for the purpose of raising funds to cover outstanding 2004 budget requirements and for the full budget requirements of 2005. The same briefing was carried out a second time at the UNMEE MACC in Asmara to the donor community on 26 July 2004.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC)¹ CONTINUES TO SUPPORT WAR AFFECTED POPULATION

In accordance with its mandate under the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions, the ICRC remains active in Eritrea. Delegates continue to visit Ethiopian detainees in the transit camp, police stations and central prisons. 2600 Red Cross Messages, the only means of communication between family members across the sides of the Eritreo-Ethiopian border, were collected and distributed in the country. Thirty new family-reunion cases were opened. These persons will be reunited with their families as soon as the ICRC has been able to meet them and obtain their consent. During the period under review, the ICRC successfully located 4 persons for whom relatives had opened tracing requests. Family links were thereby re-established by the ICRC. 19 persons approached the ICRC to open new tracing requests.

Water and Sanitation: In Ayumen (Southern Red Sea), The ICRC set up its second solar-powered water-supply system. The ICRC is also upgrading hand-dug wells in Kisademba, Embahsa, AdiEnkirti and Golo villages, all in Senafe Sub-Zoba. ICRC staff repaired four hand-pumps wells in the villages of Kisad-bruka, Migdarebeyna (both in Senafe Sub-Zoba) and Sebo (Adi Quala Sub-Zoba). The ICRC updated the inventory of wells in Mai Aini and Tsorona Sub Zobas with the cooperation of Water Resources Department Branch of Zoba Debub. In addition, the ICRC conducted a survey of 24 villages' wells to monitor the impact of the draught on the static water level.

Economic Security: The ICRC distributed 58,948 packs of soap in the following Debub IDP camps: Afoma Metera, Hahaile, Mai Wurray, Kudo Woiba and Una Nazo. In Kudo Woiba and Una Nazo IDP camps, 1054 blankets were also distributed. The soap distribution targeted 14'737 people and should meet their needs for the coming 4 months. Blankets distribution targeted 527 families. In addition, the ICRC continues to provide shelter for IDPs. During the period under review, 1501 families in Mai Wurray camp, 2000 families in Gerenfit resettlement camp and 100 families in Dembe Doran camp were given an extra piece of tarpaulin each (with rope) in order to reinforce their existing ICRC-provided shelter for the rainy season. In addition, 432 Kg of BP5 (a standard food supply) were distributed to the Debai Sima Health Post in Southern Red Sea to the children feeding programme run by that centre. The ICRC has also constructed 100 new fuel-efficient mogogo ovens in Afoma IDP Camp. The ovens consume up to 75% less firewood than conventional ovens used in the country.

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¹ *The ICRC is a neutral, independent, non-UN organisation with an international legal mandate established by the Geneva Conventions*