



ERITREA: HUMANITARIAN UPDATE 31 January 2005

HIGHLIGHTS

A donor meeting was held on 31 January by the UN Country Team in order to discuss the urgent requirements for humanitarian funding in the country. The Crop Assessment that was made with support by FAO and WFP had indicated an extremely serious situation of food shortages, and with slow pledging of both food and non-food aid support this year, a humanitarian crisis may not be preventable. A number of donors indicated likely support and dialogue would continue with partners: government, bilateral agencies and NGOs, on immediate ways to accelerate the needed emergency response to a growing number of both rural and urban vulnerable populations. A concern was highlighted by participants – on the need to coordinate with government on better ways to insert relief within a wider medium and longer-term recovery and development strategy for the country.

Dialogue between the two UN Country Teams of Eritrea and Ethiopia commenced in January in order to develop common strategies on humanitarian implications of the peace process. A teleconference was held in late January between the teams - in order to establish a systematic approach to harmonizing strategies and ensuring that eventual protection and assistance needs of families near the border would be met as the process is consolidated.

UNICEF and WHO are supporting the Ministry of Health (MOH) to conduct Supplementary Immunization Activities for polio (Sub-National Immunization campaign) in seven districts (bordering the Sudan) in Gash Barka, Anseba and Northern Red Sea regions. The re-establishment of wild polio virus in some African countries which were polio free is a threat to Eritrea. As of 25 January 2005, Sudan has reported 113 case of wild polio virus. The neighboring Sudanese states to Eritrea namely Red Sea and Kassala States have reported a significant number.

To avert the importation of polio virus, the Ministry of Health of the state of Eritrea together with its partners have established an emergency coordinating committee which looks to the prevention of importation of wild polio virus in the country.

ILO-UNHCR STRENGTHENS SUPPORT FOR VILLAGE BANK

An ILO-UNHCR partnership is funding the establishment of a pilot Village Bank microfinance project, to support the socio-economic reintegration of returnees and their host communities in achieving self-reliance.

Up to 50 businesses have been approved with a starting loan of 3,000NKF in Adi Shegalla Village, Gash Barka. The livelihood activities include livestock, shops and trade enterprises. The project will encourage savings, and on the basis of the savings collection, distribute further loans to individuals to support sustainable livelihoods.

New Refugee Registration Database

UNHCR is improving and standardizing registration of refugees worldwide as a special initiative called Project PROFILE. The importance of capturing correct information for each individual is vital as all assistance depends on these records. It is particularly important in planning assistance levels to refugees and asylum seekers, for instance in refugee status determination, for individual case management and for providing refugees with durable solutions such as voluntary repatriation

or resettlement. The new unified tool brings all existing databases together with advanced capabilities to provide individualized attention to refugees with special needs.

A mission to UNHCR Eritrea is installing the improved refugee registration database, streamlining previous data as well as providing training to UNHCR staff and government counterparts. The software tool (entitled proGres) will allow UNHCR to more accurately manage refugee population data and improve the standards of registration, both in the refugee camps and for urban asylum seekers and refugees. There are currently 3,995 refugees and 438 asylum seekers registered with UNHCR in Eritrea, who are mainly from Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia.

CARE International Humanitarian Intervention

CARE International is implementing an integrated multi-sectoral project in two communities in Mai Mine sub-zone. The project addresses livestock problems related to feed, water and women's empowerment. The activities of the project include improving 200 hectares of range land by reseeded and applying improved agricultural practices, constructing of two water ponds, improve veterinary service and enhance income generation through formation of saving and credit associations. To date, the following has been accomplished:

- 240 kg of local forage seed collected from the area and stored to be used in 2005 rainy season to improve rangeland biomass.
- Two pond sites are identified and hiring of heavy machinery to commence construction is in process.
- Eight community-based saving and credit associations were formed and trained on saving and credit methodology and income generating activities. To date, members have saved ERN 16,000.

In addition to the above activities, CARE International distributed 100 metric ton of poultry feed to 1,953 women headed households who are participating our poultry project in the Debub and Maekel regions.

WFP highlights

The Special Report of the Joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Eritrea has been released. Cereal production in 2004 is forecast at about 85,000MT, less than half the average production of the previous 12 years. With 80,000 MT of food aid pledged and in the pipeline, the uncovered deficit, for which international assistance is needed, is estimated at 262,000 MT of cereals.

The report also indicates that in 2005 an estimated 2.3 million people, about two thirds of the whole population - including urban and peri-urban areas - will require food assistance to varying levels depending on their vulnerability and the time in the year. Because of this observation and foreseen pipeline breaks WFP has adjusted its food rations: Only IDPs in camp will continue to receive a food ration fully covering their daily caloric requirement of 2,100 kcal. The rations of all other beneficiary types will be reduced to provide 1,400 kcal per day. CSB will continue to be distributed at a ration of 1.5 kg/person/month in those areas with exceptionally high malnutrition rates.

The resourcing situation for the Emergency Operations (EMOP 10261.01) still stands at US\$ 29.45 million or approximately 85,000 MT of food commodities. This amount covers about 80 percent of this operation's total resource requirements. For Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO 10192.0), the commitment coverage increased to approximately US\$27 million. Thus, slightly more than 50 percent of food requirements in this programme are covered. WFP's in-country food stocks will last until March 2005. With no large new donations in sight, it has reduced beneficiary rations significantly in an attempt to stretch the food into the second quarter of the year.

WFP field offices have been furnished with enough fuel. Food distribution and monitoring is back to the levels it was prior to the fuel crisis

UNMEE MACC/FMAC

The Kenyan deminers of the Peace Keeping Force (PKF) have begun their Mine Detection Dogs (MDD) and mechanical demining training, which forms part of the integrated demining operations implemented and monitored by MECHEM's Integrated Demining Capacity (IDC) in close cooperation with the MACC Operations Section. This integrated demining training with the demining assets of the PKF made satisfactory progress and will continue in February 2005.

The Kenyan and Bangladeshi deminers of the PKF continued demining operations in the mine-affected areas in Shilalo (Sector West) of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). The Kenyan deminers focused their operations on areas in the Mai Hbey and Tselim Ruesu minefields, while the Bangladeshi continued operations on the Shilalo-Sheshebit road. In total, the PKF demining assets cleared an area of **39,780 square meters** and **12 km of roads**. They also destroyed **66 anti-personnel mines** and **18 UXO**.

MECHEM's Road Clearance Team carried out road verification and clearance operations in Shilalo in Sector West. In total, the Team cleared **76 km of roads**. During its operations, the Team also detected and destroyed **one anti-personnel mine**, **two anti-tank mines** and **two UXOs**.

The MACC Mine Risk Education (MRE) Field Teams focused their MRE activities on communities in the Debub zoba in Sector Center as well as in the Gash Barka zoba in Sector West. They provided MRE to **2140 people**. They supported their community-based MRE outreach with the distribution of several MRE posters and games.

Mine/UXO Accidents

There were two reports of mine/UXO accidents during the month of January 2005.

One mine accident occurred on 7 January 2005 in the Senafe region, just behind the Camp Dunn Logistics Base. A 14-year-old shepherd boy was tending goats in a known mined area when one of the goats triggered a landmine. The mine exploded and the boy sustained fragmentation injuries to his chest and face. Locals working in the area evacuated the boy to the Senafe hospital.

Three days later, a UXO accident was reported on Monday, 10 January 2005. The accident occurred in the village of Unanazo, 4 km south of Tsorona in Sector Center of the TSZ, killing a 67-year-old man. The MACC Operations Section carried out a Preliminary Investigation Report (PIR), which has been released. In addition, the MACC has deployed the MACC Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Field Team to investigate the area for the presence of other UXO in the area.

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