

ETHIOPIA EL NINO EMERGENCY

The Situation

- Ethiopia is experiencing **one of the worst droughts in decades**. The main rainy season (*kiremt* rains) that is vital for producing over 80 per cent of Ethiopia's agricultural yield – in an industry that employs 85 per cent of the country's workforce – failed in 2015, and a powerful El Niño weather event continues to wreak havoc on children's lives and their families' livelihoods.
- Humanitarian needs have more than tripled in the last year. According to the latest 2016 Humanitarian Requirements Document (released in December 2015), more than 10 million people (over 10 per cent of the total population) are now in need of urgent food relief assistance. And this year **approximately 6 million children are at risk from hunger, disease and lack of water in Ethiopia as a result of the El Niño related drought**.
- **Malnutrition rates have greatly increased** – 450,000 children are expected to be treated for severe acute malnutrition, and a further 2.2 million children and pregnant and lactating women for moderate acute malnutrition.¹
- **Other humanitarian shocks:** In a country that already hosts the largest refugee population in Africa (732,709 as of 29 February 2016) there is a concern that the slow onset drought emergency could lead people, particularly pastoralists, to move in search of food, water and pasture from one region to another. As experience tells, this could trigger tensions between various ethnic groups in some regions, as it recently has between Oromo and Somali ethnic groups. It is expected that 210,600 people will be affected by flooding of which 105,300 are expected to be displaced. Displacement, due to flooding, drought or conflict, will lead to critical needs for food, shelter and non-food items.
- How the **El Niño related drought in 2016** compares to the **Horn of Africa 2011 food crisis**: During the Horn of Africa crisis, 4.5 million people in Ethiopia were in need of food aid compared to 10.2 million this year. In 2011, the total severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases were 328,750 compared to the projected 450,000 cases for 2016. **The numbers of refugees being hosted by Ethiopia has more than doubled since 2011** too – approximately 300,000 in 2011, and 732,700 as of February 2016.

Causes

- Ethiopia is highly vulnerable to **climatic hazards – particularly drought and floods**. Such hazards and associated disasters are not unique phenomena to Ethiopia, but what makes them unique is the scale of their consequences in terms of loss of life and damage to properties, livelihoods and to the national economy.
- Food insecurity is recurrent and seasonal in Ethiopia; predominantly in the months of February-May, but the situation varies in severity. **Based on past experience, Ethiopia has put systems in place** to address the needs of the vast majority of Ethiopians affected during recurrent food insecure periods. These include community based treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) through the Health Extension Programme; the Productive Safety Net Programme, which provides cash and food transfers to 8 million vulnerable beneficiaries; as well as Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams in the Afar and Somali regions.
- However, the El-Niño exacerbated drought is **so extreme** that **this year's lean season will be much more severe**, placing even more pressure on families that are already struggling to cope with food insecurity and lack of clean water.

¹ OCHA Weekly Humanitarian Bulletin Ethiopia 14 March 2016

For media interviews and further information, please contact:

Alexandra (Sacha) Westerbeek
 Chief, Media and External Relations
 Telephone: +251 11 518 4039, Mobile: +251 911 255109
 awesterbeek@unicef.org
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Implications on Children

- At a time when Ethiopia had made progress for its children across multiple fronts, **El Niño threatens to diminish gains** made in nutrition, health, child protection and education for millions of children across drought-affected areas. Between 2000 and 2014, child mortality rates were cut by two-thirds in Ethiopia and stunting rates were reduced dramatically from 58 per cent to 40 per cent. However, if the effects of El Niño are not mitigated, millions of children stand to lose out on their health, education, wellbeing and future.

Emergency facts and figures at a glance

Overall number of people in need of food assistance	10.2 million (in addition to the 8 million who will receive cash and food assistance through the Productive Safety Net Programme)
Overall number of children at risk hunger, disease and lack of water	6 million
Children under five and pregnant and lactating women who will benefit from treatment for moderate acute malnutrition in 2016	2.2 million
Children under five who will benefit from treatment for severe acute malnutrition in 2016	450,000
School-age children and adolescents who are unable to access quality education opportunities because of the drought	2.1 million
People who require access to safe drinking water and basic latrine facilities.	5.8 million
Children in need of protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence	1 million
Number of refugees in the country	732,709

Funding Appeal

- Throughout 2016, the level of humanitarian need in Ethiopia is expected to remain very high, requiring sustained response from the Government, humanitarian agencies and donors. We therefore urge the international community to continue their support and assistance to those in need of emergency assistance in Ethiopia, with the added objective of building resilience in order to save lives.
- UNICEF is appealing for urgent funds for the scale-up of humanitarian activities in 2016 in Ethiopia, including for hundreds of thousands of refugee children. The funding gap urgently needs to be covered in order to continue providing life-saving Nutrition, WASH and Health as well as Education and Child Protection services to keep children in school and safe from violence, exploitation and abuse. Child Protection and Education are currently the most underfunded areas.
- The **UNICEF 2016 Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal for Ethiopia is for US\$106 million**, of which approximately US\$ 77.7 million has been raised. Out of the total UNICEF HAC appeal, US\$97.5million is for the drought response, but this figure will be revised upwards shortly due to increased needs. The overall funding requirement as per the joint Government and partners' Ethiopia Humanitarian Requirements Document for 2016 is US\$1.4 billion.

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Humanitarian Strategy: Partnerships and Prepositioning

- The **Government of Ethiopia is leading the humanitarian response**, supported by partners including UNICEF, WFP, OCHA, NGO partners and donors. A coordinated response by the Government and its key international development partners, including UNICEF, is vital throughout 2016.
- In line with its core commitments for children in humanitarian action, UNICEF is supporting the Government in scaling-up its response to mitigate the impact of the current drought on children and women and working closely with the Government and partners to ensure **that children have access to education, health and nutrition care, safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and protection support during emergencies**.
- UNICEF commends the Government of Ethiopia for **building the resiliency** of their nation to mitigate the shock of food insecurity and drought, as well as their efforts to host and provide a safe place for refugees from Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Eritrea.
- **Prepositioned supplies:** To respond to any rapid onset crisis in a timely manner, UNICEF has prepositioned stocks in Addis Ababa and at two regional hubs to address the needs of 120,000 people. These stocks include essential supplies such as emergency drug kits, water treatment/purification chemicals, ready-to-use therapeutic food, school-in-a-bag kits, tents and non-food items. These supplies are being used to provide immediate assistance to drought-affected populations based on requests from regional governments. UNICEF has established long-term agreements with suppliers of key emergency supplies and for drilling shallow boreholes, which enables urgent response as needed.

UNICEF Emergency Response

Nutrition:

- UNICEF is the Nutrition cluster lead and provides nutrition supplies including ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), F-75 and F-100 therapeutic milk and drugs for the treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition. UNICEF has procured 543,631 cartons of RUTF for the treatment of SAM in this drought response, in preparation for the anticipated increase in SAM caseload. **This is one of the largest purchases of RUTF for a country in UNICEF history and represents 22 per cent of the global order for 2015.**
- UNICEF supports the treatment of malnourished children through the community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM), along with training, quality assurance (supervision) and coordination with other partners. Regular nutrition screening helps ensure that malnutrition in children is caught and treated early, thereby reducing cases of severe acute malnutrition and life-threatening complications.
- UNICEF supports bi-annual nutrition surveys that are conducted in the six drought-affected regions, Amhara, Afar, Tigray, Oromia, Somali and SNNP.

Health – preventing and responding to disease outbreaks:

- UNICEF and partners support the Ministry of Health and Regional Health Bureaus to maintain a minimum level of preparedness against the high risk of increased health hazards, to improve case management and to build the capacity of the health system to effectively respond to the emergency and ensure access to health care services.
- UNICEF provides financial support, supplies (vaccines and medicines) and technical assistance to partners (including supporting training for health workers) for the prevention of major causes of child illnesses and deaths such as acute watery diarrhoea and other diarrhoeal diseases, vaccine preventable diseases like measles, as well as other diseases such as scabies and meningitis.
- UNICEF supports mobile health and nutrition interventions and teams in the Somali and Afar regions for pastoralist communities, which are providing medical consultations and essential life-saving preventive interventions including for children under five and pregnant and lactating women.

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WASH:

- UNICEF as WASH cluster lead supports the Government and WASH cluster in the collection of real time information on the status of water supply facilities in some of the most drought-affected communities, which helps in triggering rapid response to address urgent needs.
- UNICEF supports the rehabilitation, maintenance and upgrade of water supply systems (including wells and boreholes) and provides household water purification and treatment chemicals to increase access to clean water for drought-affected people.
- UNICEF works to increase access to improved water and sanitation facilities in schools and health facilities and to increase awareness of good hygiene and sanitation practices in communities.
- UNICEF supports the Government in scaling up water trucking activities in chronically affected areas to fill gaps while the rehabilitation of non-functional water supply systems is carried out.
- WASH in schools programmes are being provided in Priority 1 *woredas* to reduce the rate of school dropouts and to provide sanitation and hygiene facilities to reduce the incidence of disease outbreaks.

Education – disruption in learning:

- UNICEF is a co-coordinating agency for the Emergency Education cluster, supporting the Ministry of Education to ensure that assistance across the six affected regions is efficiently targeted and delivered. An essential component of this is the gathering and analysis of data on the impact of the drought on schools and educational institutions to inform a sector-wide emergency response plan.
- UNICEF assists the Regional Education Bureaus in six regions with the provision of primary school teaching and learning materials to offset the additional costs schools are bearing to stay open during the drought. Further, communities hosting displaced families and their children have been provided with temporary learning facilities, attached to existing primary schools, in order to accommodate increased numbers of school children.
- UNICEF has advocated for the Government to support school feeding programmes and the Government has commenced these programmes in Priority 1 *woredas* in the six affected regions.

Child protection – children at risk:

- UNICEF advocated for child protection to be included in the Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD) and it has been included for the first time in the 2016 HRD. However, interventions are currently only 7 per cent funded.
- UNICEF provides child protection in emergency services including psychosocial support through child friendly spaces, identification and referral of children at risk of or victims of abuse, violence and exploitation, and through working with communities to prevent and/or respond to family separation, at-risk migration, child marriage, gender based violence and other protection issues.

Background of UNICEF in Ethiopia

UNICEF Ethiopia's cooperation with Ethiopia began in 1952 and the office was established in 1958. Since then, UNICEF has continued to work closely with the Government of Ethiopia and other partners in the realisation of the rights of the children and women in Ethiopia based on the programmes and projects developed and agreed upon by the Government of Ethiopia and UNICEF. UNICEF works in all regions of the country in the areas of Health, Nutrition, WASH, Education and Child Protection and will continue this work under the new Country Programme (July 2016 – June 2020).

UNICEF and partners

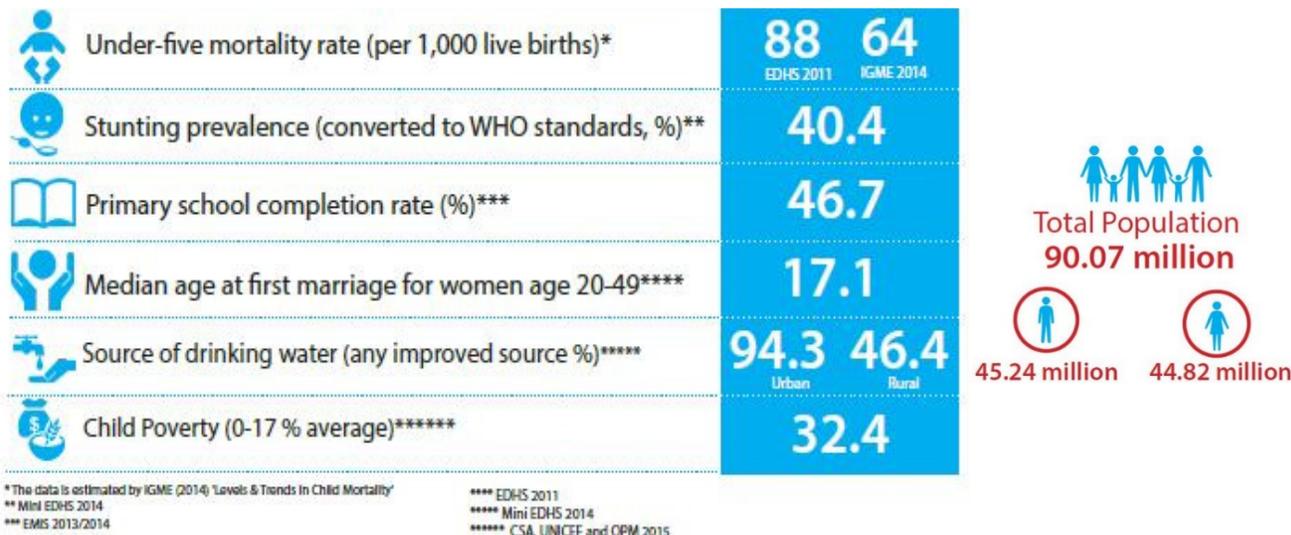
UNICEF Ethiopia works with partners including governments, UN agencies, NGOs and communities to provide emergency relief in line with the Core Commitments for Children in emergencies. Among its key donors and partners are the Governments of Canada, Germany, Japan, Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States, HRF, CERF, ECHO and EU among others, as well as UNICEF National Committees.

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Facts about Ethiopia



Media interviews

Languages spoken by staff are mainly English and French. Other languages are: Amharic, Arabic, Danish, Dutch, Fula, Italian, Mandinka, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili and Wolof.

For further information:

Latest Humanitarian Situation Report available here: <http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/emergency.html>

Humanitarian Requirements Document: http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/ECO_Ethiopia_HRD_2016.pdf

Humanitarian Action for Children 2016 appeal for Ethiopia: <http://www.unicef.org/appeals/ethiopia.html>

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