

Save the Children in Ethiopia
Drought emergency appeal, June 17th 2008
Save the Children in Ethiopia appeals for US\$20,700,000

Summary

Save the Children is appealing for \$20,700,000 in response to the poor rains and rising food prices in Ethiopia which have created acute food shortages and livelihood insecurity for millions of people. Official statistics state that 4.6 million people are in urgent need and around 75,000 children are severely malnourished.

While the *meher* seasonal assessment¹ at the end of 2007 initially pointed to an overall improved food security situation in 2008, the subsequent poor *deyr/hageya* rains² followed by a generalised failure of the *belg/ganna* rains³ has led to extreme food and nutrition insecurity in many areas, particularly in the south and southeast of the country. *Belg* crop producing areas in the north-eastern highlands, central and southern parts of Tigray, Amhara, and SNNP regions are also of particular concern, with severely reduced or failed mid-year harvests expected. The absence of rains in affected areas has also had major impact on livestock. Lack of pasture has caused animals to die, or their physical condition to become severely deteriorated. In *Belg* dependent areas, these animals would normally contribute a significant proportion to household income particularly during the 'lean' months before the mid year harvest – a harvest which this year will be poor. In parallel, escalating food prices over recent months continue to erode the purchasing power of the majority poor, further constraining access to sufficient food. As an example, a typical poor household in the northern highlands can now expect to spend around half of its income to purchase about 20% of its food needs. Chronically food insecure households receiving ongoing fixed amounts of cash through the PSNP are also finding themselves unable to purchase food in sufficient quantities.

We are providing support to the overall Government-led response helping to meet gaps in the areas of nutrition, livelihood and asset protection, health, water and sanitation, children's protection and education in six regions of the country.

Extent of the crisis and overall needs

On June 12th the Government of Ethiopia and partners released a statement calling for greater assistance to the humanitarian as a result of the drought situation. In addition, it is expected that beneficiaries of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), a government initiative which supports around 8million chronically food insecure people with food and cash for work will require additional support due to the current situation. Funding is urgently required to secure additional supplementary foods.

Requirements for the remainder of 2008 are likely to be adjusted again following further verification of mid-year harvests in the coming weeks. Medium term prospects for recovery will depend to a large extent on the performance of the 'meher' rains during the second half of the year, an important predictor for food security conditions during 2009.

Impact on children

Poorest households are now resorting to drastic action to meet their food needs. Coping strategies may include pulling children from school to save costs and/or to allow children to undertake more paid labour; reducing non-food expenditures such as healthcare; or selling productive assets such as tools and animals which compromises future livelihoods. Young children are always the most vulnerable to malnutrition during food shortages, with weight loss and increased susceptibility to illness. Official current estimates indicate that around 75,000

¹ The 'meher' rains occur from June to October and provide for the main agricultural yields in much of the country, harvested between October and December.

² The 'deyr/hageya' rains occur from October to December in pastoral areas.

³ The 'belg / ganna' rains occur between March and May, with harvesting from June to August.

children are severely malnourished, while assessments continue in affected areas of the country to verify the actual nutritional status of vulnerable communities.

Save the Children Response

Save the Children has a wealth of emergency relief experience in all regions of Ethiopia and is active in providing emergency assistance in collaboration with government and communities, with programmes focusing on emergency nutrition, health, water and sanitation, agricultural and livelihoods, and animal health interventions in the areas most critically affected by the emergency.

In addition to continued support for current activities, funding is required to address the immediate needs of more than 325,000 children directly targeted by Save the Children through a variety of interventions in 6 regions of the country⁴. Priorities include emergency nutrition, health, water and sanitation, livelihoods and asset protection, child protection and emergency education.

In the area of emergency nutrition, Save the Children will implement Community Therapeutic Care and Supplementary feeding for an estimated 48,000 children. Initiatives to support livelihoods and protect household assets include emergency food and/or cash distributions and emergency livestock and agricultural support, to benefit around 250,000 children. To mitigate epidemics and reduce the incidence of disease, emergency health, water and sanitation interventions targeting 158,000 children will be implemented in parallel to the nutrition and livelihoods programmes. Support for education in emergencies in another key area and Save the Children will provide school materials and support for early childhood and safe play areas for at least 25,300 children.

In order to minimize the psycho-social impact of the emergency on children, Save the Children will continue to assess the situation of children and will implement activities to mitigate child labour, exploitation and separation of children.

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>Amount US\$</i>
Emergency nutrition	Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Somali	8,883,000
Emergency livelihoods and asset protection	Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Somali	7,250,000
Emergency health, water and sanitation	Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Somali, Tigray	3,740,000
Child protection	Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Somali	226,000
Emergency education	Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Somali	406,000
Communications and coordination	National	200,000
Grand Total:		20,700,000

⁴ This number does not include any emergency general food rations to populations outside the safety net programme. The number of people to be covered by such emergency rations, and related pipeline needs, are still being confirmed.