



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Revised version

# Ethiopia

## Drought response plan and priorities in 2017



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## Overview

Humanitarian needs have continued to rise in 2017, largely linked to the ongoing drought and its impact on pastoral livelihoods, in particular. As of August 2017, the overall number of people requiring emergency food assistance between August and December 2017 is 8.5 million of which 3.3 million reside in the Somali region. Some 2.7 million children and pregnant and lactating mothers will require supplementary feeding; some 9.1 million people will not have regular access to safe drinking water; and 2.25 million households will need livestock support. These people are facing severe food insecurity and are in urgent need of food and emergency livelihoods support.

New threats to food security have emerged in 2017. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)-induced drought in 2016/2017 in southern and southeastern pastoral areas has affected food and nutrition security in Somali Region, the lowlands of Borena, Guji and Bale Zones of Oromia Region and South Omo Zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). Crop production is at risk from floods during the 2017 *kiremt* main season and the emergence of the fall armyworm (FAW), which, in less than four months from its initial identification, has already affected about over 520 000 hectares of maize – almost one-quarter of the total area planted with maize.

The current food security and nutrition crisis in Ethiopia is linked to the collapse of pastoral livelihoods and a failure to invest sufficiently in local food production from the onset of the crisis. Rapid and efficient response to agricultural threats and emergencies saves lives, promotes recovery and reduces the gap between dependence on food assistance and self-reliance. In addition, it can mitigate and avert the loss of lives resulting from food security, malnutrition and loss of livelihoods. For livestock-dependent communities, protecting livestock can literally mean the difference between life and death, particularly for children under five. Livestock represent not just a family's income, but also a crucial source of nutrition for children and lactating women. With Ethiopia currently facing a major nutrition crisis, efforts to protect core breeding stock (through feed, treatment and destocking) are critical.

Building on the success of FAO's interventions and scaled up response to El Niño-induced drought in 2016, the Organization aims to support the livelihoods of 1.1 million farming, agropastoral and pastoral households in Ethiopia during the second half of 2017.

To achieve this goal, **USD 20 million** is urgently required to save livestock-based livelihoods and respond to FAW outbreaks, as well as to strengthen coordination, information and analysis for food security and agriculture.



### EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK SUPPORT

*For extremely vulnerable drought affected households*

supplementary feed and water for core breeding and draught stock • support fodder production and conservation • vaccination and treatment interventions • capacity building of community-based animal health workers • rehabilitation of water points • commercial and slaughter destocking



### SUPPORT TO CROP PRODUCTION

*Response to FAW outbreaks*

capacity building for FAW survey • rapid response in infested areas • capacity building to manage FAW in affected areas and prevent further spread where not yet detected



### COORDINATION, INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

*At national and regional levels for efficient and effective response*

support to national-, regional- and zonal-level coordination structures (e.g. DRM-ATF, emergency technical working groups) • food security, livelihood, seed, crop and livestock assessments





# Severe drought

In 2016, the *deyr/hagaya* (October to November) rains failed in southern and southeastern Ethiopia. In most affected areas, the cumulative rainfall totals during the season were less than 25 percent of the average. This followed the already erratic performance of the main 2016 *gu/genna* (February to May) rains and continued into 2017, with a recent *belg/ gu* season assessment highlighting the late-onset, erratic, poorly distributed and below-normal *gu/genna* (March to May) rains for most pastoral areas. The ongoing drought has been dubbed “the most severe drought ever” owing to its intensity, duration and coverage. In the three pastoral eco-systems covering four regions of Somali, Borena in Oromia, SNNPR and Afar Regions, nine continuous dry months have been recorded to-date and the amount of rain received in the preceding months was insufficient to make any meaningful impact.

Recurrent droughts in pastoral Ethiopia have exposed the critical feed shortage that prevails in the country. Between 2000 and 2017, six drought episodes have been registered, with the latest two (in 2011 and 2016/17) devastating pastoral and agropastoral livelihoods. Herders’ continued reliance on natural, rainfed pasture, in the face of a host of factors that are accelerating the scarcity of these resources has meant their livelihoods are less and less able to cope with shocks like drought. Climate change-induced droughts are happening at shorter intervals with no time for the recovery of pasture in the rangelands. Flash floods that usually happen at the end of drought episodes then wash away the natural seed reserve in the soil, denuding vast areas of the rangeland. The coverage of invasive species is estimated to extend over 1 million hectares in the four major pastoral eco-systems of Ethiopia, implying that this expanse of land is no longer available for grazing. Added to this is the loss of prime dry-season grazing reserves close to major river systems due to various state and private investments and projects.

Successive poor/failed rains in 2016 and 2017 have impacted on pasture and water availability, causing abnormal migrations, deteriorating livestock body conditions and weakened immune systems among livestock, resulting in increasing cases of opportunistic diseases and internal and external parasites among animals and further pushing up mortality rates. Milk production in cattle has declined by as much as 80 percent, while significant losses have also been recorded in camels and goats, raising serious concerns over already high malnutrition rates given the close link between milk availability and human nutrition in pastoral communities. Preliminary estimates indicate that between November 2016 and April 2017, more than 1.5 million livestock perished in southern and southeastern areas, representing an economic loss of over USD 350 million. With low livestock production and unfavourable terms of trade, extreme coping mechanisms – such as reducing the number and size of meals, selling remaining productive assets and, in increasing numbers of cases, destitution and displacement owing to the complete loss of livestock assets – have been observed throughout affected areas. According to a recent assessment, the need for emergency livelihood support will continue to escalate for livestock-dependent households until the end of the year with the possibility of extending further, particularly in southern Somali Region, South Omo Zone of SNNPR and the lowlands of Borena, Guji and Bale Zones of Oromia Region.

## Most affected regions are:

**Oromia:** Borena and Guji Zones and lowlands of Bale Zone

**SNNP:** South Omo and Segen Zones, lowlands of Gamogofa Zone

**Somali:** Southern zones, including parts of Fafan, Dollo, Jarar, Korahe, Nogob and Shebele

## Limited livelihood recovery

In Ethiopia, where about four-fifths of the population depend on the agriculture sector for their livelihood, the effects of the El Niño-induced drought in 2015/16 were devastating. Between 50 and 90 percent of crop production was lost, farmers' incomes dwindled and food insecurity soared. Although the performance of the subsequent 2016 *meher* season was relatively positive, with the Government estimating a 19 percent improvement on the previous year's production, the gains made were again undermined by below-average and erratic 2017 *belg* (March to May) rains, which exacerbated humanitarian needs across the country. According to the recent countrywide assessment, *belg* (spring) season rainfall was below normal in almost all *belg*-receiving *woredas* across the country in terms of onset, distribution and/or cessation. The lack of rainfall during the first half of 2017 resulted in a decrease in the area and yield of *belg*-dependent crops (such as wheat, teff and maize) planted – a reduction of up to 60 percent in the worst-affected *woredas*.

In addition, as Ethiopia continues to grapple with the effects of drought in the pastoral lowlands and poor performance of the *belg* season in crop producing areas, the emergence of an exotic and invasive polyphagous pest – FAW (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) – has been reported and is spreading at an alarming rate. FAW, which is known to affect over 80 species of plants, prefers maize, Ethiopia's leading cereal in terms of production (with 7.15 million tonnes produced annually).

Since the first reported case in February 2017, FAW has spread quite rapidly to all six maize-growing regions of SNNPR, Oromia, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, Amhara and Tigray, affecting 389 *woredas* and over 520 000 hectares – about 22 percent of the total area planted. In total, more than 2 million hectares of maize are at risk. Without a rapid control strategy, the livelihoods of about 9.55 million maize-producing farmers are at risk. The country's livestock sector will also be heavily affected as maize residues/stovers provide a major source of feed during the dry season.

The rapid humanitarian response – including the largest emergency seed distribution in the country's history – was critical to fight a major food security crisis in 2016. However, at 7.8 million people, the number of people requiring emergency assistance to meet their basic food needs in 2017 remains far too high. The mid-year review of the 2017 Humanitarian Requirements Document estimates that 3.5 million households will require further support until the end of the year.



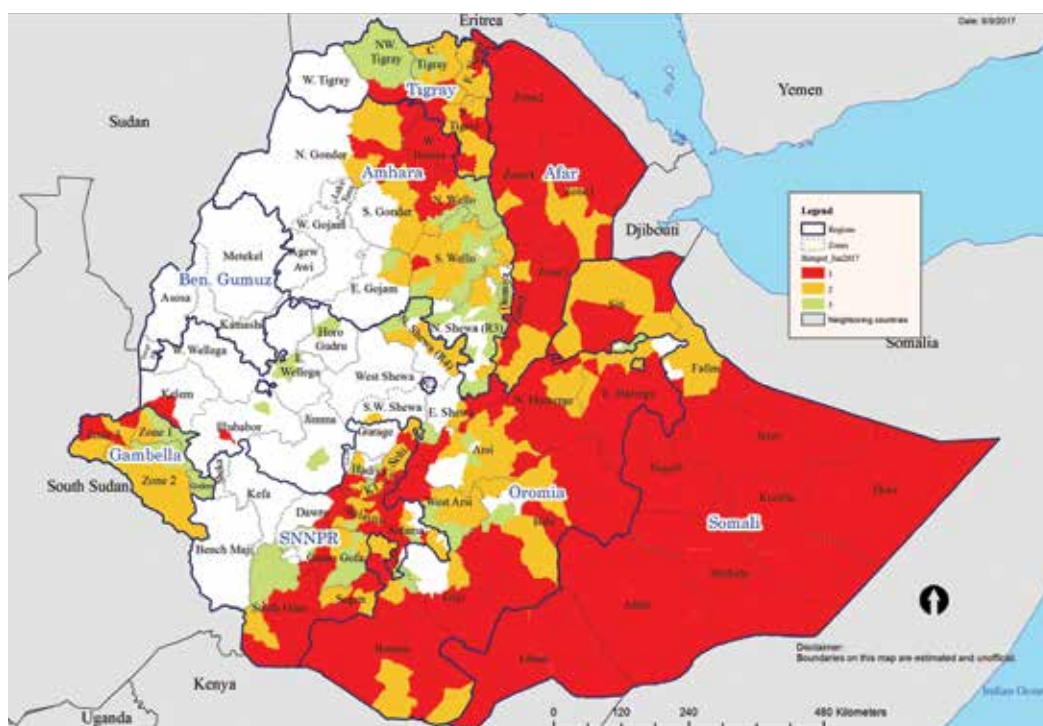
# Food security situation

The latest hotspot classification (June 2017) indicates that while the number of Priority 1 hotspots had initially declined since the height of the El Niño drought, the total number of priority 1 hotspots is again rising owing to the ongoing drought in the southern and southeastern areas.

**Despite increasing national food availability due to the 2016 *meher* harvest, the food security status of 70 *woredas* has worsened since December 2016, bringing the total number of priority 1 *woredas* to 228 compared with 192 *woredas* in December 2016.** Over 90 percent of the worse-off *woredas* are in in Oromia, SNNP and Somali Regions, and more than half were not considered priority at all just six months ago.

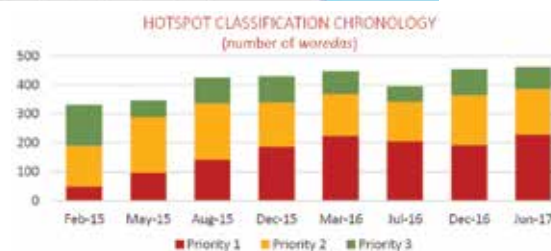
Drought-affected pastoral households face reduced milk production and limited income generation, rising malnutrition and severely constrained access to food. Three-quarters of the *woredas* that rank as Priority 1 for the hotspot nutrition indicator are in the three newly-affected regions. High rates of acute malnutrition are being observed in the worst-hit areas. Accounts of extreme coping mechanisms are widespread, such as skipping meals, reducing portion sizes, reducing the diversity of meals, begging for food and selling remaining productive assets to afford food.

Other areas of concern include Gambella Region, where food access is constrained by limited livelihood options, and Afar Region, where food insecurity is becoming chronic. Alarming, 192 *woredas* have remained in Priority 1 throughout Ethiopia since December 2016. Given the slow pace of recovery, these extremely vulnerable households require urgent, targeted assistance to avert a worsening situation.



Hotspot classification is derived using six multisector indicators, including agriculture and nutrition, agreed at regional and federal levels. A hotspot matrix is often used as a proxy for the acute Integrated Phase Food Security Classification (IPC) and is indicative of food security and nutrition status. Scaled from Priority 1 to 3, hotspot *woredas* require urgent humanitarian response.

Source: Government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners, June 2017



## Climatic outlook

There is an increased likelihood of normal to above-normal rainfall over northwestern, western, southwestern and central regions. Early cessation of the 2017 *kiremt* rainy season in some parts of the northeast lowlands and the normal cessation of seasonal rains is expected over most of the country, as per the forecast of the National Meteorology Agency. Moreover, there is an increased likelihood of near-normal rain over northeastern, eastern and southern highlands. The south and southeastern parts of the country are expected to have enhanced rainfall in late summer, which shows early onset of *bega* rainfall. In general, the seasonal rainfall is expected to be dominated by the near-normal category, with the exception of the pastoral lowlands in the southern and southeastern part of the country, which are now experiencing the third consecutive poor season, resulting in a total of nine continuous dry months.

In the pastoral areas of southern and southeastern lowlands, conditions are expected to continue to deteriorate until October/December 2017, when the main *deyr/hagaya* rains are expected to commence. This would mean a third year of poor rainfall for many of these lowland zones following poor rains in 2015 due to El Niño, and delayed and erratic *gu/genna* rains and failed *deyr/hagaya* rains in 2016 and poor *gu/genna* in 2017. Pasture and water points, which are critically needed for the recovery of affected pastoral and agropastoral households, are unlikely to regenerate/recharge sufficiently, further constraining food and income access for livestock-dependent households.





# FAO in Ethiopia



FAO has been working alongside the Government of Ethiopia, implementing a mixture of development and emergency livelihoods interventions since the 1980s. FAO's presence across the country and existing projects and programmes mean the Organization is well placed to rapidly upscale its ongoing emergency interventions in the worst-hit areas of the country. In 2016, FAO played a key role in mobilizing the largest recorded emergency seed distribution to farmers affected by the El Nino-induced drought. In 2017, FAO has already begun

providing crucial support to livestock-dependent communities reeling from the ongoing drought, including through mobilizing its own resources. However, funds received so far have been insufficient to meet the growing needs of severely food insecure populations. Massively scaled up support between August and October will enable livestock owners to take advantage of expected rains to begin the recovery process. This assistance is extremely time-critical and a failure to invest now will further exacerbate hunger and malnutrition among pastoral communities, leading to a greater reliance on external assistance and for a longer period.

Investing in agriculture-based livelihoods from the onset of a crisis saves lives, protects livelihoods and lays the foundations for recovery and resilience building. As failed or insufficient rains, season after season, deplete livestock assets and erode livelihoods, the humanitarian caseload builds, placing unsustainable pressure on the local, national and international humanitarian actors, while the number of people severely food insecure rises inexorably. FAO's emergency interventions are therefore embedded in broader resilience-building efforts that seek to simultaneously tackle the root causes of the crisis, while enhancing preparedness and strengthening livelihoods so that families and communities can better cope with future shocks.

## Achievements to-date in 2017

FAO has been proactive in responding to the needs of livestock-owning households in the drought-affected areas of Ethiopia. So far, FAO has assisted 81 301 households<sup>1</sup> (equivalent to 499 806 drought affected people<sup>1</sup>) in Borena Zone of Oromia Region; South Omo Zone of SNNPR Region; and Doolo, Jarar, Korahe and Shabelle Zones of Somali Region through the provision of emergency livestock feed and destocking operations, along with prophylactic treatments. In terms of livestock, FAO support has reached 229 873 livestock. To-date, FAO has received USD 6 438 128 (almost one-quarter of the resources raised by the Agriculture Cluster [USD 23 million]) for drought response between January-July 2017.

In response to the FAW outbreak, FAO has committed USD 600 000 of its own resources through the Technical Cooperation Programme and is providing coordination support for the initial stages of the FAW response. This represents just 6.5 percent of the total resources required to adequately respond to the FAW emergency in Ethiopia, which is estimated at USD 9.2million (for three years). The FAW management strategy was developed by Government of Ethiopia in collaboration with FAO and other key stakeholders and includes short-, medium- and long-term strategic actions

<sup>1</sup> An average of 6 persons per households was used to calculate the number of people.

# FAO drought response plan and priorities for 2017

FAO is appealing for **USD 20 million** to address the urgent needs of farmers and herders in Ethiopia for the period August to December 2017. Priorities for the remainder of 2017 are as follows:



## EMERGENCY LIVESTOCK SUPPORT .....

*For extremely vulnerable drought-affected households*



Immediate response • August – December 2017



USD 17 million

Severe drought in southern and southeastern pastoral areas is threatening the livelihoods of pastoral communities – urgent response is required to protect households' productive assets. Emergency assistance is required at least until December, when needs will be re-evaluated together with the Government under the *meher/deyr* seasonal assessment which will define the 2018 Humanitarian Requirements.

## PROTECT CORE BREEDING STOCK

### *Supplementary and survival feed*

FAO will provide supplementary and survival feed – e.g. hay, alfalfa bales, bagasses, molasses and multivitamin blocks – to minimize livestock losses in the run-up to the onset of the rains. Where possible, feed will be distributed at temporary feeding points along migratory routes, with preference given to core breeding stock. In addition, FAO will enhance resilience of the pastoral system through promotion of fodder and feed production and conservation through rehabilitating some existing spate irrigation facilities and supporting Government-led spate irrigation by providing forage seed and cuttings complemented with capacity building to bolster local feed supplies.

### *Animal health*

To safeguard livestock against morbidity and mortality – the risks of which have risen with deteriorating body conditions and increased transboundary movements – FAO plans to treat livestock against internal and external parasites and other infectious diseases. Following the rains, vaccination campaigns will be carried out. FAO also aims to build the capacity of community-based animal health workers.

## BOOST INCOME GENERATION FOR PASTORALISTS

### *Destocking*

FAO aims to purchase unproductive, non-core breeding stock directly from pastoral households for fair market prices, enabling them to quickly access immediate needs while discouraging stress sales of productive assets. Working closely with local livestock marketing cooperatives, traders and regional authorities, the unproductive livestock will be made available for slaughter and the meat distributed to the most vulnerable households in the community, thereby enhancing their nutritional status.

### *Cash-for-work*

By implementing cash-for-work interventions, FAO plans to not only offer income-generating opportunities to vulnerable pastoralists, but rehabilitate shared assets, such as water points and ground wells, to better prepare communities for future climatic shocks.

**Continued support will be required from December to June 2018 to prevent a reversal of gains made in protecting livestock assets.**



## SUPPORT TO CROP PRODUCTION

*Fall Armyworm (FAW) -affected households*



Immediate response • August – December 2017



USD 2.5 million

Despite average crop performance in 2016, farming households require livelihood support where production was below average, post-harvest management poor and recovery slow. In 2017, an outbreak of FAW affecting maize – a major cereal crop for Ethiopia – has been reported and is rapidly spreading and ravaging maize-growing areas. In just two weeks in July, the area infested by FAW rose by 83 percent. Currently, all 2.3 million hectares of maize growing areas have been planted and are at risk of damage. Fears are increasing that this pest will soon spread to the sorghum growing regions of the country, primarily located in Afar and Somali Regions.

### IMPROVE LIVELIHOOD RECOVERY

*Promote good practices and monitor threats*

In line with the Government's pledge to cover emergency seed requirements in 2017, FAO aims to provide technical support and capacity building to control the rapid spread of FAW through survey, rapid response, management and preventing further spread where it is not yet detected. In addition and wherever possible, FAO will seek to enhance pest and disease surveillance and control and promote climate-smart and conservation agriculture techniques as well as awareness raising and training, to benefit up to 10 million crop-producing households across the country. A nationwide FAW survey and a health and environmental impact assessment will be conducted. To conserve and optimize limited water resources, water harvesting and small-scale irrigation interventions will be conducted. FAO aims to establish community and school gardens to enhance knowledge on good agricultural practices.



## COORDINATION, INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

*At national and regional levels for efficient and effective response in the agriculture sector*



Immediate response • August – December 2017



USD 0.5 million

In support of the Government, FAO works with national-, regional- and zonal-level partners (including UN agencies, NGOs and community-based organizations) to ensure humanitarian agriculture response reach the populations most in need and in the best way feasible. In 2017, FAO will continue to support as co-lead of the DRM-ATF as well as through support to information gathering, mapping and sharing and conducting studies and assessments to aid decision-making.

### COORDINATION

As co-lead of the DRM-ATF and the Emergency Seed and Livestock Working Groups, FAO will continue to provide support to the coordination of humanitarian actions in the agriculture sector. FAO will especially focus on strengthening federal, regional and zonal coordination and linkages for harmonized emergency response and recovery, including through support to complementing coordination initiatives and ensuring two-way information flows, assessing gaps and strengthening stakeholder engagement.

### INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

FAO aims to enhance information availability through conducting and contributing support to various assessments to inform timely and effective decision-making. This will include support to regular information sharing platforms and mapping of interventions, technical studies, planning, preparedness and early warning, as well as food security, livelihood, seed, crop and livestock assessments.



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