



IN NUMBERS



10.2 million

People food insecure
(2016 Humanitarian Requirements
Document)



>1.7 million

Households need emergency
seed support



654 000

Households require livestock feed
assistance



USD 50 million

needed for the
implementation of FAO's
El Niño Response Plan

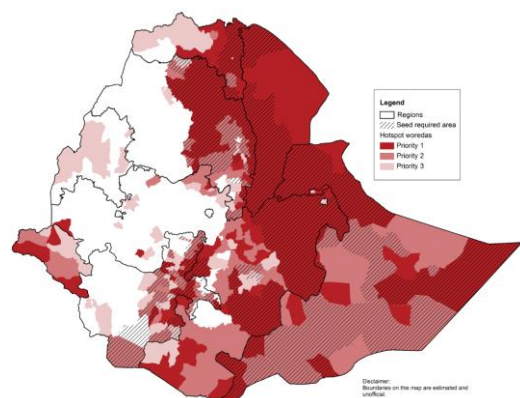
KEY MESSAGES

- **Humanitarian needs in Ethiopia have tripled since the beginning of 2015** as one of the strongest El Niño events on record has caused severe drought, leading to successive crop failures and widespread livestock deaths.
- **Food insecurity and malnutrition rates remain high.** Insufficient access to and availability of food has caused humanitarian needs to increase. The current situation requires simultaneous and immediate scaling up of multi-sectoral lifesaving and livelihood support along with investment in resilience building efforts in the most affected and at-risk areas.
- **Escalating needs require scaled up response.** With extremely limited means of production for the upcoming planting season, farming communities will remain vulnerable and increasingly unable to access food.
- **The El Niño-induced drought is not just a food crisis – above all, it is a livelihood crisis.** Over 80 percent of the population depends on agriculture for their food and income – significant production losses have severely diminished households' food security and purchasing power, forcing many to sell their remaining agricultural assets and abandon their livelihoods.

MAP

HOTSPOT CLASSIFICATION AND SEED INSECURITY

(Source: Government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners, April 2016)



Hotspot *woreda* classification has been derived using six multisector indicators, including agriculture and nutrition, agreed at zonal, regional, federal levels. A hotspot matrix is often used as a proxy for the Integrated Phase Food Security Classification (IPC).

Seed insecurity was determined at *woreda* level and reviewed by regional Bureaus of Agriculture.

BACKGROUND

Ethiopia is experiencing one of the most severe droughts in half a century due to the effects of El Niño. Significant rainfall deficits – up to 50 percent below average – have severely impacted the lives and livelihoods of farmers and herders throughout the country. Following two consecutive poor rainy seasons – *belg* (February to May) and *kiremt* (June to September) – harvests were well below average, with some regions experiencing between 50 and 90 percent crop loss. The livestock sector has seen high mortality and morbidity rates and abnormal migration in search of pasture and water; with insufficient access to feed and water sources, livestock will become increasingly weak unless normal rains resume. Many families dependent on agriculture have become indebted and dependent on external assistance.

The agriculture sector in Ethiopia typically supplies up to 85 percent of the country's food supplies and employs more than 80 percent of the labour force. With insecure sources of food and income as a result of the drought, vulnerable rural households face widespread hunger and malnutrition, huge economic losses and long-term environmental damage. In late 2015, a Government-led multi-agency *meher* assessment found that 10.2 million people were food insecure, while 2 million required agricultural input support to resume food production. Malnutrition rates are staggering, with over one-third of Ethiopia's *woredas* now officially classified as facing a food security and nutrition crisis. These figures are increasing as the effects of drought continue to grip the country. The recent revision of hotspot *woreda* classification data conducted in April indicates that 15–20 percent of *woredas* identified as Priority 2 or 3 in December 2015 have slipped into Priority 1 or 2, respectively.

CHALLENGES FACING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The ongoing *belg* rains arrived late, impacting planting especially in the north. While the season contributes to only about 10 percent of national annual crop production, the spring rains are extremely important for crops in the northeast and south, the establishment of long-cycle crops in the west (making up 45–50 percent of annual cereal production). In pastoral areas, the extended dry spell is delaying long-awaited recovery and threatening food and income security. If the *belg* harvest is below average, this is likely to further increase humanitarian requirements beyond the current scale.

Seed reserves are severely depleted – nearly 1.7 million households do not have seed to plant in the *meher* agricultural season according to regional Bureaus of Agriculture. This is a doubling of the figure reported in January 2016 (838 000 households) and a near-quadrupling of the figure reported in the Humanitarian Requirements Document in December 2015 (477 000 households). The vast increase is a result of several factors, most notably increased availability and accuracy of information and the increasingly dire situation – for example, the ongoing lean season and related food insecurity, high food prices and constraining purchasing power have caused many households to consume their remaining seed stores as food.

High livestock mortality rates and worsening animal body conditions due to poor grazing resources, feed shortages and limited water availability have led to sharp declines in milk and meat production and increased incidence of disease and death. Current estimates indicate 654 000 livestock-dependent households require animal feed support. Access to pasture and water will continue to deteriorate until the expected peak of the ongoing rainy season in April.

FAO PRIORITIES, RESPONSE AND FUNDING

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

Crops



- Emergency seed support for *meher* season planting
- Quality drought-resilient seed production
- Backyard vegetable production initiatives
- Nutrition-rich and high-value root and tuber crop production support

Livestock



- Provision of survival feed to protect draught and core breeding animals
- Support fodder production
- Conduct animal health interventions
- Restore livelihoods through restocking with small ruminants
- Increase access to water for livestock

Building resilience

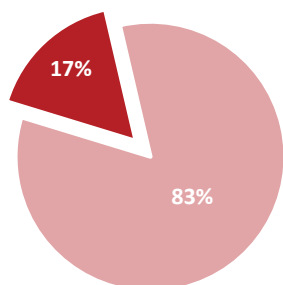


- Cash-for-work initiatives to improve critical infrastructure for water access
- Adoption of the *caisses de résilience* approach for better mitigation of future crises

ACTIONS TAKEN TO-DATE

- ✓ Crop seed interventions in the most nutritionally vulnerable districts, benefiting 90 000 households from January to April.
- ✓ Distribution of survival and supplementary livestock feed to 9 600 households is ongoing.
- ✓ Destocked 4 381 sheep and goats in Siti Zone, enhancing the income of 2 214 livestock sellers and improving the nutritional intake of 4 354 displaced households. Treated and/or vaccinated nearly 1.4 million animals belonging to 77 118 households.
- ✓ Improving access to water for livestock through the rehabilitation of 18 water points, benefiting 125 480 livestock owned by 12 783 households.
- ✓ Created two emergency working groups (focusing on seeds and livestock), to harmonize response to the crisis with government, NGO and resource partners.
- ✓ Developed guidelines for emergency agriculture support, including seed distribution, livestock water, feed, and slaughter destocking.
- ✓ Working closely with the Government of Ethiopia as co-chair of the Disaster Risk Management Agriculture Task Force to conduct seasonal assessments and develop preparedness and response plans.

FUNDING



- Funding to-date: USD 8.3 million
- Funding gap: USD 41.7 million

Donors: Belgium, CERF, European Union, Italy, Japan, FAO, Netherlands, OCHA, Spain and United States of America.

ASSESSMENTS

FAO recently conducted a rapid agricultural and food system assessment covering six of the most affected regions: Afar, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Somali and Tigray. Consulting concerned stakeholders, the survey explores themes related to agricultural livelihoods – crop production prospects, seed and livestock conditions, the status of markets and prices for key inputs, coping strategies and relief assistance, among others. The results will help to evaluate the impact of ongoing humanitarian interventions and identify potential gaps to avoid unnecessary food security-related problems commonly caused by lack of information.

FAO requires
USD 50 million

To assist
1.8 million people

CONTACT

Amadou Allahoury | FAO Representative | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | Amadou.Allahoury@fao.org

Dominique Burgeon | Strategic Programme Leader, Resilience and Director, Emergency and Rehabilitation Division | Rome, Italy | Dominique.Burgeon@fao.org