

Key Issues

- Partners encouraged to re-prioritize water trucking amidst improving rains in drought-affected areas
- Government and partners coordinating response to malaria outbreak and flooding in Gambella region.
- PM calls on irregular Ethiopian migrants in Saudi Arabia to return home within amnesty

Following poor performing spring rains, the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance has increased from 5.6 million to 7.78 million in the first quarter of the year, and is expected to heighten further in the second half of the year. Increased funding is needed urgently, in particular to address immediate requirements for clean drinking water, much of which is being delivered long distances by truck as regular wells have dried up.

Partners encouraged to re-prioritize water trucking amidst improving rains in drought-affected areas

Despite the late and erratic onset of the spring rains, the rainfall performance has shown significant improvement since late April in many drought-affected areas. The demand for water trucking has decreased as a result. However, considering the on-going acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) outbreak, the WaSH Cluster agreed to continue water trucking operations with special focus on case treatment centers (CTCs) and in AWD-affected communities in Somali region. At present, Government and partners are trucking water in 157 *woredas* using 323 trucks, of the total requirement of 541 trucks.

Meanwhile, in-line with the plans laid-out in the 2017 Humanitarian Requirements Document, the WaSH Cluster is advocating for a strengthened linkage between emergency WaSH and development water programs to accelerate drilling of drought-resilient deep boreholes in lowland areas where chronic water shortage is prevalent.

Government and partners coordinating response to malaria outbreak and flooding in Gambella region

On 18 May 2017, the Gambella Regional Health Bureau (RHB) declared a malaria outbreak in the region with 552 reported cases. The outbreak particularly affected Godere Mission, Miwi, Zangeh and Dofa kebeles of Mengeshi *Woreda* in Majeng Zone. No death has been reported since the outbreak. Children aged 5-14 are reported to be the most affected. The RHB has deployed a health team to conduct further investigations and called an emergency health cluster meeting to develop a coordinated response plan and identify gaps.

Meanwhile heavy rainfall recorded in most parts of the region has caused flooding in the regional capital, Gambella, on May 18 2017. The flooding has affected some 600 households and killed a five-year-old child in 05 kebele of the town. Kebeles 01,03 and 05 are the most affected by the flood. Poor sewerage system is reported to have aggravated the effect of the flooding. The Regional Disaster Prevention and Food Security Agency (DPFSA) together with the city administration and humanitarian partners have assessed the situation and are coordinating assistance.

PM calls on irregular Ethiopian migrants in Saudi Arabia to return home within amnesty

Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn called on undocumented Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia to leave the country before the amnesty deadline of June 29, 2017. In a press conference he gave on 19 May in China Premier urged Ethiopian repatriates to use the given time to leave that country for their safe return otherwise it would be unreachable for the government to protect any possible danger during forceful deportation. The National Task Force for Saudi Returnees chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is doing its level best with pertinent bodies for the safe return of undocumented citizens from Saudi Arabia before amnesty period expires in June 29, 2017. For more on this: <http://bit.ly/2rGWayH>

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), some 8,493 irregular Ethiopian migrants returned from KSA as of 14 May. With 43 days left before the amnesty period expires, irregular migrants, including an estimated 750,000 Ethiopians, are increasingly at risk of being imprisoned, fined and forcefully deported. The Government of Ethiopia has requested IOM's support for the provision of free and organized transportation for the returnees; post-arrival assistance and onward transportation of the most vulnerable migrants to their respective communities. At present, IOM is working with the Ethiopian Embassy in KSA to ensure that all irregular migrants have the necessary information for an informed decision-making.

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