

## HIGHLIGHTS

- On 30 September and on 3 October 2019, the inter-agency humanitarian evaluation steering group presented its evaluation findings on the drought response in Ethiopia (2015-2018) to members of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT).
- Based on the survey findings, the group put forth five key recommendations.



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## The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group Presented its Evaluation Findings on the 2015-2018 Drought Response in Ethiopia

On 30 September and on 3 October 2019, the inter-agency humanitarian evaluation steering group presented its evaluation findings on the drought response in Ethiopia (2015-2018) to members of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT).

Some of the major findings of the survey include, 1) while the drought responses were effective in many respects, key lessons from past similar surveys were not learnt and implemented. Hence, findings and recommendations continued to be similar over the years; 2) the needs assessments were weak and there was weak formal accountability to affected population; 3) there was sufficient early warning information available, but it did not lead to enough early action in terms of preventing negative effects of the droughts such as on livelihood; 4) there was little success in restoring livelihoods and strengthening resilience; 5) the responses were well coordinated, with some remaining space for improvement, including the fact that there were few national NGOs accessing funding and partaking in the responses and the need for improvement in the coordination between clusters and for enhanced strategic decision making in the EHCT forums.

Based on the evaluation findings, the group put forth five key recommendations, including 1) ensuring that lessons from surveys are learnt and reforms are implemented; 2) making the response more accountable, including through defining response priorities based on the severity of needs rather than status, type of shock or how recently people experienced it; 3) strengthening early action based on early warning, including through building Government capacity on emergency units in line ministries and anticipatory, un-earmarked, multi-year funding from donors; 4) prioritizing resilience and support alternative livelihoods for pastoralists; and 5) further enhancing coordination and the OCHA-managed Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF).

Participants brainstormed on ways to operationalize the recommendations forwarded by the evaluation team. Moving forward, the team will present the evaluation findings to the Inter-

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- The Gambella Town Administration requested the support of partners, to provide two-months food rations and non-food items for the displaced people, as well as for the sustainable rehabilitation of the affected population.
- Preliminary reports indicate that 2,285 households (13,710 people) were affected and 853 households displaced in Somali region. The majority of the displaced (800 households) are in Dolo Ado Town, while the remaining 53 households are in Cherati Town.

Agency Standing Committee<sup>1</sup> (IASC) results groups and to selected donors in October/November; as well as to the IASC OPAG, Emergency Directors, and ERC.

## Heavy Rains Cause Flooding in Somali and Gambella Regions

### Areas along the Baro River bed flooded following heavy rains, 353 households displaced

On 2 October, heavy rainfall in Gambella Town has led to the overflow of Baro River, flooding areas along the river bed. Heavy rains and flooding are common during the major rainy season (July-August), but it is not a common occurrence during the months of September and October. The flood was reportedly more severe compared to previous years.

The Gambella Region Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Food Security Agency, in collaboration with international partners, conducted an assessment on 3 October to identify humanitarian needs. According to the assessment team, at least 353 households (1,405 people) were displaced across five *kebeles*, and their houses were fully flooded, and their livelihoods destroyed. The Gambella Town Administration requested the support of partners, to provide two-months food rations and non-food items for the displaced people, as well as for the sustainable rehabilitation of the affected population.

### 2,285 households affected and 853 households displaced following floods in Somali region

Heavy rains in parts of Somali region and neighboring highlands caused flooding in Kalafo, Mustahil and Bercano *woredas* (Shabelle zone); Dolo Ado *woreda* in Liban zone and Cherati *woreda* in Afder zone. Flash floods also occurred in Babile (Fafan zone) and Elweyne (Nogob zone).

Preliminary reports indicate that 2,285 households (13,710 people) were affected and 853 households displaced. The majority of the displaced (800 households) are in Dolo Ado Town, while the remaining 53 households are in Cherati Town. Homes were destroyed; 1,041 hectares of cropland flooded and 987 heads of livestock killed from the floods.

The Somali Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (DPPB) has already dispatched four trucks of food and non-food items to Shabelle zone, including 600 quintals of rice, ES/NFIs for 500 households, 600 quintals of maize and 20 bundles of clothing. Urgent additional supplies are in need particularly in the ES/NFI, Food and WaSH sectors.

Meanwhile, the Shabelle River level had reached a high of 11.5 meters as of 7 October, pausing a risk of further flooding in the lower Shabelle areas; requiring swifter prevention and preparedness measures. The Regional DPPB is preparing to establish an Emergency Operation Center (EOC) in Gode to coordinate the flood prevention and preparedness efforts for the southern zones; while a zonal-level Flood Taskforce will be reactivated in Dolo Ado. The regional taskforce in Jijiga will oversee overall coordination and resource mobilization.

<sup>1</sup> The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is an inter-agency forum of UN and non-UN humanitarian partners founded in 1992, to strengthen humanitarian assistance. The overall objective of the IASC is to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected populations.

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- “The rapidly disappearing arable land and the trees scattered across the mountain [due to climate change] face are a bittersweet reminder of what they have lost, and also a strong warning of what is to come.”
- “Following consecutive droughts in recent years, the scale of migration is nothing I have seen before; everyone is going without knowing if they will return.”

# Fighting Climate Change: Helping Ethiopian Farmers Adapt to Drought and Flooding

**Story: Courtesy of IOM Ethiopia**

Nestled deep in Ethiopia’s highlands, in the Amhara region, Habru *woreda*, some 500 kilometers from the country’s capital Addis Ababa, the small village of Berebeyu is grappling with the realities of climate change, with hundreds of its inhabitants reeling from land losses and poor harvests, or no harvests at all.

Berebeyu lies at the confluence of tributary rivers that flow from the adjacent mountain. The village is highly vulnerable to droughts, seasonal flooding, and mudslides. In 2011 a mudslide killed at least five people and forced dozens from their homes.

Small herds of roaming camels, donkeys, goats, sheep and cows trample through the village. Dead trees, gullies, bare soils and rocks exposed by flood waters are a typical sight in Berebeyu, which for generations has been home to a minority Muslim community of around 500 households.

The rapidly disappearing arable land and the trees scattered across the mountain face are a bittersweet reminder of what they have lost, and also a strong warning of what is to come. A prolonged drought has seen many residents migrating abroad to seek alternative livelihood opportunities. Ironically, this is not always an effective coping strategy, as many are deported and forced to return to the same harsh environment that spurred their migration.

“It’s very difficult to live here; the drought is increasing in this area,” says 40-year-old Ahmed Shifare. He explains that many young men have fled to the Gulf countries, including his 16-year-old son. “For the older generation, even though the threats of drought are killing us, we have no other land to go to. Each household has at least one family member who has migrated to the Middle East; this is our way of coping with the drought,” he states.

Migration is a common adaptation strategy in Berebeyu. Older residents have long leaned on seasonal migration to complement farming. During the drought of 1984, many elders, including Shifare’s family sought employment in the city and, just like contemporary migrants they undertook all types of work, returning home to restart their farms after the drought. But Shifare says, “Following consecutive droughts in recent years, the scale of migration is nothing I have seen before; everyone is going without knowing if they will return.”

Yet, Berebeyu has demonstrated incredible resilience. Its residents have been living in the village for centuries overcoming many different challenges. But climate change and land degradation is proving to be more difficult than anything they have experienced before. Arable land has become a scarce resource. Each household is entitled to half a hectare for agricultural purposes, but demand has outstripped supply to the extent that even steep slopes are now being ploughed. The result has been an erosion of fertile soils which, combined with perennial droughts, has adversely affected crop production.

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- “To mitigate the effects of drought, water conservation facilities will be constructed to harvest rainwater at the foot of the mountain overlooking the village, where water usually races down. Instead of the water wasted as runoff, it will be collected, stored and used for watering the nursery and crops, especially during the dry season. Trapping the runoff will further reduce the risk of flooding and land degradation.”

Eighty-year-old Sheik Yimam Shikuru, who lost his farm to erosion says, “All my children left me because my farm does not produce anything anymore — they went to look for



Figure 1 Rocks are washed down by the floods, destroying crops and arable land. Photo: IOM 2019/Ivyne Mabaso

better opportunities. It’s getting hot here, and when it rains, the water brings rocks and debris to my farm, killing all my crops.”

Shikuru has been living in Berebeyu for his whole life and the expression on his tired face clearly shows that he has seen better days. Four of Shikuru’s children migrated abroad to look for work, yet so far they have not been able to secure regular employment due to their inability to obtain work permits and are unable to help their father. Now older, more vulnerable and with no other livelihood opportunities, Shikuru is entirely dependent on his small, rocky and degraded farm.

While climate change is not the only push factor for migration out of the village, it acts as a ‘threat multiplier,’ worsening existing insecurities.

“I am landless, the land I am currently using is rented to me and it is very small. Now imagine what the drought will do?” says Ayalew Asifaw, a 33-year-old father. “If the land was big, I would grow a greater variety and quantity of crops — that way I could mitigate some losses, but with the size of my farm when the drought comes, what few crops I have are lost. If I get a chance today, I will leave because I will not sit and watch the drought destroy my family.”

Asifaw is no stranger to irregular migration. On three occasions he has sought to reach Saudi Arabia. He failed on the first two attempts, while during the third he managed to stay only for 18 days before being arrested by Saudi authorities and deported back to Ethiopia. It is now two years since he has been back in Berebeyu, but the prospect of staying permanently is fading. He has not ruled out the possibility of attempting to migrate a fourth time, despite the high cost involved and his increasing vulnerability upon each return.

Usmani Endris, a 29-year-old father of two, echoes the same frustrations, adding, “Land is limited here and this limited land is not productive because of climate change.” Endris is a migrant returnee; he worked in Saudi Arabia for a year prior to being deported in 2016. Since his return, he has twice sought to reach Saudi Arabia again through Bosaso in Somalia and Obock in Djibouti but was unsuccessful on both occasions.

The residents of Berebeyu are known to be positive and light-hearted people but concerns about their future survival in the face of climate change are increasingly dominating their conversations. But a seed of hope was planted in May 2019 when the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with a local implementing partner Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekansys Development and Social Service Commission, joined hands with the community to launch a project that is seeking to stem the tide of environmental degradation. The project aims to rehabilitate the environment while supporting the reintegration of migrant returnees by reducing land degradation in



selected watershed areas through afforestation and the integration of fruit tree cultivation to support livelihoods.

The project is taking place under the European Union (EU)-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration (the Joint Initiative) which facilitates safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration management through the development of rights-based and development-focused procedures and processes on protection and sustainable reintegration. The Joint Initiative, backed by the EU Trust Fund, has been set up in close cooperation with 26 African States.

Through the project, community members along with returnees will develop 50 hectares, which they will use to harvest rainwater and trap silt sediments; which in turn will improve soil fertility. Trees and grasses will be planted to restore lost vegetation cover. It is envisaged that community members and returnees will generate income from the sale of seedlings. In four years, it is expected that they will start selling the fruits. In addition, over 240 community members will participate in 'community conversations' on topics related to migration and land degradation.

To mitigate the effects of drought, water conservation facilities will be constructed to harvest rainwater at the foot of the mountain overlooking the village, where water usually races down. Instead of the water wasted as runoff, it will be collected, stored and used for watering the nursery and crops, especially during the dry season. Trapping the runoff will further reduce the risk of flooding and land degradation.

Speaking during a recent focus group meeting, the villagers expressed excitement, especially the prospect of beating drought and earning an income from selling fruits.

Abdu Hassen, a resident, said, "We know what to do with the land, we are experienced farmers but without water, we cannot do anything. All we need is water and land to cultivate, and if the degraded land can be useful again, that will bring joy to this village."

Another hopeful resident, Hassen Mohamed lauded the project saying, "This is one step to defeating climate change."

## Hope In The Midst of Crisis

No matter how hard life gets and no matter how dire the situation we are in is, human resilience helps us maintain hope and gives us the strength to bounce back on our feet.

The story of Mohamed and Samsam is one of hope and a bright future. At the time of this interview two months ago, Mohamed was an IDP in Fafan zone (Somali region) and Samsam was a member of the host community. The two young people met and fell in love and the community was busy with wedding preparations.

Although Samsam's dowry is 5,000 birr, they agreed that the groom would only pay a portion because conditions are



Figure 2 'soon to be married' young couple (IDP + host community) with their future house behind

- 2019 HRP 62.8 per cent funded as of 01 October 2019, including \$537 million in international donor funding and \$288 million in Government of Ethiopia funding.
- But critical, life-saving non-food sectors remain highly underfunded, least of which is the health sector (7 per cent).

difficult for IDPs, so some flexibility was accepted. Mohamed, a farmer, had fled with nothing but four of his cattles when conflict broke out back in his hometown and has been living in an IDP camp. Asked what they hoped for the future, the young couple intend to stay in the area until peace and security improves back in groom's hometown. The groom emphasized that he wishes to return and resume agricultural activities there to feed his family. Samsam said she is ready to follow her husband when the situation permits. "We ask the Government and the international community to work on peace and security and to facilitate the safe return of the IDPs," he said.

## Humanitarian funding update, as of 01 October 2019

The 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan of US\$1.3 billion was 62.8 per cent funded as of 01 October 2019, including \$537 million in international donor funding and \$288 million in Government of Ethiopia funding.

Looking at the sector funding breakdown, the food sector is the highest funded (93 per cent), also because the Government of Ethiopia funding went entirely to the food sector. The other critical, life-saving sectors remain highly underfunded, least of which is the health sector (7 per cent).



By Sector (US\$)				
Sector/Cluster	% Covered	Funding Received	Requirements	
Food	93%	556.9M	600.3M	
Nutrition	58%	117.8M	202.9M	
Health	7%	10.6M	143.0M	
WASH	17%	22.3M	133.7M	
ES/NFI	13%	14.6M	112.2M	
Agriculture	16%	10.2M	63.3M	
Education	19%	8.3M	44.6M	
Protection	59%	7.9M	13.4M	
Sector not specified	-	34.9M	-	
Multiple Sectors (break down not specified)	-	42.1M	-	

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