

A photo-essay showing how ten UN agencies, International and National Non Governmental Organisations are working with the Government of Eritrea to provide relief and assistance.

Prelude To A Launch: Eritrea, A Nation Facing Severe Drought

On Tuesday, June 10, 2003, The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) will launch the Mid-Year Review (MYR) of the Inter Agency Consolidated Appeal in Asmara. The report details the ongoing humanitarian projects that are being carried out by the ten UN Agencies (FAO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNMAS, WFP, WHO, OCHA) based in Eritrea and working jointly with the Government of Eritrea and 47 Non Governmental Organisations.

The MYR report provides an up-date of the international donor community response to the appeal for emergency humanitarian assistance to Eritrea, launched in November 2002. The MYR reports on the progress made towards objectives stated in the 2003 Consolidated Appeal, and the impact of implemented programmes. The MYR report also provides an assessment of the present humanitarian situation and forecast priority needs for the remainder of 2003.

The UN Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, OCHA, New York, Ms Carolyn M. McAskie, will be in Eritrea on a two-day visit and will participate in the launch of the report. As a prelude to that event, OCHA presents a photo essay illustrating humanitarian activities, the beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance in Eritrea and some of the critical and immediate needs of a nation facing a severe drought.

Melite Tesega is a 45 year old mother of 8 children who lives in the Debub Zoba of Eritrea. Melite is a farmer but because of severe drought she and her children presently receive food aid provided by the UN and distributed by the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) of the Government of Eritrea .

At present, two thirds of the population of Eritrea are facing food and water shortages due to the most severe drought experienced in Eritrea in a decade.

Populations currently at immediate risk of famine include: drought affected farmers and pastoralists, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Expellees in camps, Returnee Refugees, Returnee IPDs in war and drought devastated areas of the Temporary Security Zone bordering Ethiopia, host communities and the urban destitute. At present only 60 % of the needy are being reached with food that has been reduced to 60 % of the normal ration.

Since the launch of the appeal in November 2002, the international donor community has pledged a total of US \$69 million. In order to adequately meet Eritrea's national emergency humanitarian needs a further US \$90.7 million is required.



PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT : OCHA/ADRIENNE GILL

More Children Suffering Severe Malnutrition



Photographs of severely malnourished children receiving therapeutic feeding in hospital.

Since 2000, the number of malnourished women and children has risen throughout Eritrea. The government of Eritrea working with UN agencies have established a limited number of therapeutic feeding centers treating up to 500 malnourished children a month so as to contain child mortality. However, between 15 and 20 per cent of Eritrean children under five are estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition. In some areas the figure is as high as 30 per cent.



PHOTO CREDITS : OCHA/ADRIENNE GILL

People And Projects On The Ground

These photographs are an example of some of the projects supported by the ten UN Agencies and 47 International and National Non Governmental Organisations working in Eritrea.

These projects include, but are not limited to, supplementary feeding programmes of one wet meal a day to primary and elementary school children in food insecure areas, rehabilitation of vitally needed veterinary centers, provision of water trucks and water systems, provision of temporary shelter and rehabilitation of health care facilities.

Since March, 2003 food aid has been distributed to 1.4 million, out of the 2 million people in need, at reduced rations (60% of the standard ration). Eritrea now has a critical and immediate need for over 250,000 MT of food aid. That includes provision of general food for over 2 million people and supplementary food for 400,000 children and women.



PHOTO CREDITS: UNGER/TELLA BLACKLING, OCHA ADRIENNE GILL.



The Challenge of Accessing Water For Humans And Livestock

Recently, over 8,700 Eritreans expelled from Ethiopia were resettled at Gherenfit in Gash Barka.

Their new settlements were provided with safe, easily accessible, drinking water through the coordinated efforts of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) / Post-War Eritrean Recovery Programme and the Government of Eritrea. Funding for the project was provided by UNDP and the Governments of Italy and the Netherlands.

Elsewhere, UN Agencies and International Non Governmental Organisations working with the government of Eritrea, have provided water trucking and other water systems to drought and war affected people. They have also installed boreholes and hand pumps.

However, as a result of severe drought in 2002 and 2003, 70 per cent of villages in Eritrea require assistance in the provision of water systems and supplies.

In some communities, people are having to walk three to five hours to obtain water. There is increased water contamination with humans and animals sharing the same water sources, and greater risk of diseases.



PHOTO CREDITS : OCHA/ADRIENNE GILL, UNICEF/LEILA BLACKLING

The Hope of Self Sufficiency with the Provision of Agricultural Inputs

The humanitarian community in Eritrea including, the United Nations Agencies and over ten Non Governmental Organisations, and the International Committee of the Red Cross are distributing seeds and providing support to farmers. Eritrea presently faces a shortfall of agricultural inputs for the 2003 planting season, which includes tools and 5,000 MT of seeds.



PHOTOGRAPHS CREDIT : OCHA/ADRIENNE GILL, UNICEF, LEILA BLACKLING

Providing Shelter For Internally Displaced People , Returnees And Refugees In Camps

PHOTOGRAPHS CREDIT : OCHA/ADRIENNE GILL



Worn-out tents in camps for internally displaced persons and Expellees are being replaced by the International Committee of the Red Cross, although current stocks are inadequate to meet the demand.

12,500 tents and building materials for 7,500 households of internally displaced persons and expellees are needed -

