

# AFAR PASTORALIST DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION QAFAR DACARSITTO DADALIH EGLA

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## Drought situational update and development activities highlights:

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### 1. Rain update

Rain (short rainy season of March to April) that began in the last days of March has impacted on the region as follows:

Zone 1: All woredas barring Eli Daar have now had relief from thirst. In Eli Daar, while rain has fallen in the southern kebeles of Buldugum and Gamari, thirst in the far north is unrelieved particularly from Manda to Boore and from Hayyu to Paradizo. The riverbed in Eli Daar now has water from rain in the Harsaale district but the surrounds of Eli Daar remain parched. Similarly, water is flowing through Doobi, the result of rain in other districts.

Zone 2: Seven kebeles of Afdeera have had rain. The hilly, northern kebeles of Harsuuma and Daboore remain drought – stricken along with bordering kebeles in Eribiti. There are reports of a couple of storms in Aba'ala and western Eribiti and to date, no report of rain in Barahale, Dallol or Konnaba. The flooding Eribiti Roiver is mainly carrying water from the Tigray highlands.

Zone 3: Much of the woreda is now relatively well watered barring a couple of dry patches

Zone 4: All woredas now have fair to good rain. The Teeru central basin is well – flooded.

Zone 5: Much of Zone 5 has had scattered rain – relief

As of today, skies are clear again. It remains to see some further rain before drought districts are truly relieved of crisis since pastures require more rain soaking to properly rejuvenate.

### 2. Immediate effects on herds and movement

As a result of this rain, Afar families will travel distances to where rain has rejuvenated pasture. Those hundreds of families displaced in the highland regions will come back into the region. Immediately, the rains weaken and kill small poorly – nourished animals as they are unable to resist change in body temperature due to wet. Animal disease outbreaks remain of high concern since the herd is generally in poor condition. It remains to be seen if rains will be sufficient to rejuvenate pasture – certainly the situation in Eli Daar and the northern woredas of Zone 2 remains critical.

### 3. Pressure on the population

As recently reported, there is currently very little nourishment in the Afar household. Drinking dirty rainwater from shallow puddles along with malaria will again push on the weakest members of the family.

#### **4. Rivers in full – flood: Bayahele kebele in Dubte Woreda submerged**

As of March 10<sup>th</sup>, floodwaters reached roof –top level in the village of Orkombo, 12 kilometers from Dubte town. Raging flood waters fed by the Mille, Awash, Geega and Waranso River systems bringing collected waters from the highlands through Zones 3, 4, 5 and parts of 1 have descended on the farming basin of Tendaho surrounding Dubte as far as Data Barahi. The Woreda Head estimates 4,000 people are stranded on the last remaining high land in Bayahele Kebele. This, he added was an estimate as the situation of a further 7 kebeles was undetermined since they are all cut off. Youth are swimming bags of ready – prepared food – mix through the floodwaters to stranded people at enormous risk. The current situation calls for immediate helicopter support. APDA has video footage and can give daily update.

Those whose homes are submerged will need basic household goods and blankets. Too, as of the March 30<sup>th</sup> update, it remains to relieve thirst in northern Eli Daar, assist with animal medicines and vaccination, human nutrition and medicines, food for work to construct water catchments and school feeding as well as a particular consideration for districts without any rainfall.

#### **5. Meeting in Awash results in the launching of the Afar Pastoral Development Forum**

On April 4<sup>th</sup>, some 16 organizations as well as government and community representatives as observers of the process met in Awash and agreed on the mechanism to start a joint development forum in Afar Region. The forum itself is distributing meeting minutes and notice of ongoing activities. APDA was given the responsibility of facilitation with a forum office in APDA's field office, Logya.

#### **6. APDA facilitates strategic planning conference in Afdeera Woreda**

The woreda and APDA jointly led a 5 – day conference in the center of Afdeera Woreda wherein the community analyzed their response to development to date and the way forward. The woreda is potentially the most prosperous in the region having the salt resource of Lake Afdeera as well as a central water - shed basin where 5 rivers starting in the highlands provide ample water for high grass pasture and a plentiful underground water table at a depth of less than 10 meters. The woreda in fact, despite its intense heat, has proven farming potential. The Afdeera community has drawn up a plan of development mobilization aiming to utilize the full potential of the woreda including leaving harmful traditions of high marriage price and revenge killing that were identified as part of the reasons why the woreda was not going ahead. APDA has the task to write up their planning document and, with the woreda follow up the implementation of their recommendations.

#### **7. Afar education expanding**

Twenty people from Teeru Woreda are selected and are in their initial training to become community teachers in 10 of the 12 kebeles of the woreda. 44 new sites opened recently in Awra, Uwa, Dowwe and Gawaane Woredas are working well.