



EECMY-DASSC

(An assessment report from DASSC Director - Deed Jaldessa, after a short visit to drought stricken areas in the southern rangelands)

### Near catastrophe humanitarian situation in the southern Ethiopian rangelands

The Ethiopian southern rangelands inhabited by the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists are currently in acute crises where human lives are most at risk. These areas which include the Borena and gudji zones of oromia and Filtu zone of Somali extending further across the borders are on the look out for those who can come forward to save lives.

The critical areas of these humanitarian crises include, Teltelle, Moyale, Dire, Arrero, Yabello and parts of Galana and Bule Hora districts (Woredas). Deaths of livestock in masses has continued over the last few months as the rangeland production (mainly pasture and water) has collapsed due to failure of the short rainy season (October/November 2005) in southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya, triggering mass

# Emergency Alert!



Dire Woreda: Dead cow corpse (no grass for grazing and no

migration into better areas surrounding the traditional water wells, resulting massive overgrazing and depletion of water sources.

Latest data are still expected from the field but it is estimated that more than 340,000 people are in an urgent need of humanitarian assistance (food, water and medical care). In addition, without an input of fodder rationing to the livestock it is feared that the mere existence of the zebu cattle species in these areas is at threat. The loss of cattle across the different pockets of the rangeland varies; greatest in parts of Teltelle, Dire and Moyale districts. A

very rough estimate by the local people in percentage of cattle holding is in the range of: 30-40% for Dire district and 35-50% for Teltelle, and Moyale districts and is in a rapid increase. Acute cases of malnutrition are being reported in parts of these districts where intensive feeding and medical care may be the priority for a large number of children trapped in this crises.

Information from sources in the area indicates that in Teltelle alone 17 rural schools are closed mainly due to lack of water. It also indicates that from 70 health institutions in Teltelle and Yabello districts, only 32 are

operational due to lack of health staff and even those which are functional are said to be understaffed by close to 50%. However, the details are subject to verification, the capacity to handle the crises at hand needs a substantial support from all corners. In short, what we are witnessing here is a disaster awaiting declaration and immediate action to save endangered lives. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development and Social Services Commission are following the situation and will come up with more updates as soon as they are available to us. **But, the message we are trying to put across should be clear enough that any little time segment that passes by without our live saving action will take away precious lives that need a future which can be provided by your immediate intervention.**

**Your immediate action will surely save lives of the most vulnerable citizens of this nation - the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. Internally displaced people due to local conflicts and drought induced migration appear to have created an additional highly vulnerable group in some of these emergency areas.**



Hid Lola Woreda (district), Gombisa: dead calf



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Dire Woreda (District), Melbena: dying cattle