

ETHIOPIA-CALL TO ACTION- JUNE 2023

Call for a coordinated response to mitigate the impact of acute malnutrition during the current lean season



PURPOSE

Despite ongoing humanitarian efforts, major constraints such as reduced humanitarian funding, the lean season (June-Sep), the suspension of general food distribution until further notice, the continued unmet humanitarian needs of people affected by prolonged drought and conflict, and hyperinflation and its impact on people living in affected areas are likely to increase the level and severity of food insecurity and hunger or acute malnutrition in Ethiopia. The economic burden of wasting, if the prevalence remains around 10%, is estimated to be between 152.1 million and 225.5 million USD. Therefore, this advocacy message from nutrition cluster members aims to raise awareness among key humanitarian actors, including nutrition partners and donors, to prioritize key interventions and response, to mobilize additional resources to mitigate the possible consequences and outcomes of an increase of burden of acute malnutrition and risk of death in the most affected areas, taking into account the constraints mentioned above, especially during the current lean season (June-Sep).

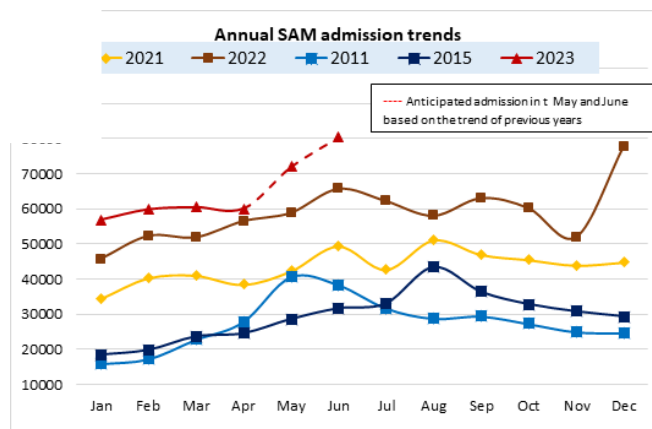
CURRENT NUTRITIONAL AND HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT:

The current political, economic and social situation in Ethiopia is the result of both natural and man-made disasters that have contributed to hunger and malnutrition among the most affected communities. Despite some progress, the prevalence of under-five malnutrition in Ethiopia remains high, with the national prevalence of stunting, underweight and wasting estimated at 39%, 22% and 11% respectively, highlighting the need to maximize efforts to achieve the 2025 WHA target. ([National Food and Nutrition Strategy baseline key findings, March 2023](#)). The country also suffers from internal displacement of population. At present, more than 20 million people are estimated to be in need of emergency food aid and humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia. Although 7.7 million people are identified as in need of nutrition assistance only about 4.9 million people were targeted for nutrition. ([HRP 2023](#)). The estimates of IDPs, as per HRP it is 4.5 million people.

GAM Prevalence by Season

Season		% MAM	% SAM	% GAM
Moderate n = 622	MUAC	8.8%	2.1%	10.9%
	WHZ	8.2%	2.1%	10.3%
	WAZ	26.7%	6.8%	33.4%
Lean n = 6,568	MUAC	9.9%	2.7%	12.6%
	WHZ	10.0%	2.6%	12.6%
	WAZ	21.2%	6.5%	27.7%
Post-Lean n = 15,498	MUAC	6.9%	1.6%	8.5%
	WHZ	9.1%	1.6%	10.7%
	WAZ	16.2%	4.4%	20.7%

According to an analysis conducted and built upon the past three years (2020-2022) SMART Nutrition survey data, the prevalence of global acute malnutrition is expected to increase in almost all regions during the lean season (Jun to Sept).



Data from the Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (on admissions) also shows that admissions to therapeutic feeding programmes for under five children increased by 10 per cent from January to April 2023 compared to the same period last year, signaling that acute malnutrition levels are likely to increase during the lean season ([ENCU dashboard](#)).

SMART PLUS FINDINGS:

A high prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition -GAM- was observed in the three SMART plus surveys conducted in February and March 2023 in the Borena-Guji Cattle Pastoralist (BGP) Livelihood Zone, Oromia Region, and in Dollo Lowland Hawd Pastoral (LHP) and the Afder Pastoralist (AFP) Livelihood Zone, Somali Region.

Summary of the survey findings:

Livelihood zone	GAM (WHZ/Edema)	Classification of public health significance
Dollo LHP	15.9% -(SAM 1.8% and MAM 14.1%).	Very high and above emergency threshold. (≥ 15%)
Borena BGP	13.7% (SAM 0.9% and MAM 12.8%).	High (10-< 15%) – Prevalence doubled as per compared to 2016 link NCA by AAH
Afder AFP	21.9% (SAM 2.1% and MAM 19.9%).	Very high and above emergency threshold. (≥ 15%)

*Note : ENCU SMART Plus reports.

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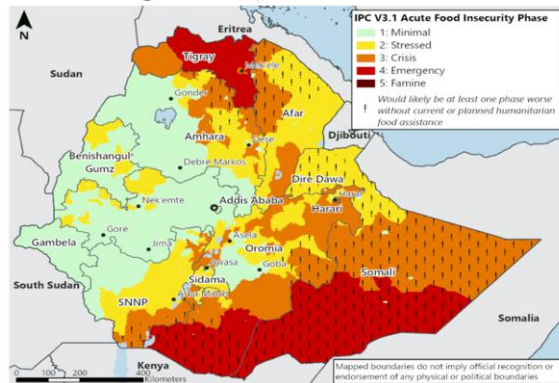


CURRENT FOOD SECURITY AND AID LANDSCAPE:

The recent announcement by [USAID](#) and the [World Food Programme](#) (WFP) to suspend food aid until further notice could worsen the humanitarian situation of population highly dependent of food assistance- *With little capacity for food autonomy and who have no means of subsistence, do not cultivate, do not have livestock and/or are displaced in places-*. Population in the areas affected are at risk of acute malnutrition, as food aid is the most important factor in preventing more extreme acute food insecurity. **The most vulnerable populations, such as children under five years of age, the pregnant and lactating women and the elderly, and others at risk of acute malnutrition.**

According to [FEWSNET may 2023 alert](#), acute food needs in Ethiopia remain an urgent concern despite end to the two years conflict in the northern part of the country, historic drought in the southern and southeastern areas. FEWSNET estimates national food assistance needs in Ethiopia in 2023 are at record-breaking levels for the second consecutive year, scarce resources to produce or purchase food and high levels of debt being the two major areas of concern among extreme erosion of pastoral livelihoods during the drought season and heavy rainfalls causing flash flooding led to further displacement, death of livestock, and impeded planting activities. It further highlights the suspension of food aid could worsening food security situation during the upcoming lean season.

Projected food security outcomes in Ethiopia from June to September 2023



INFLATION

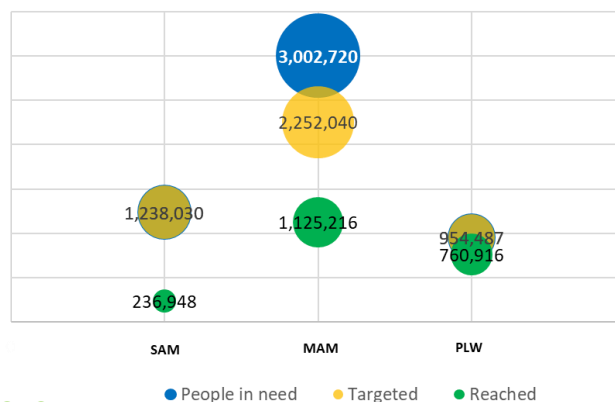
In recent years, a number of factors and drivers, including poor macroeconomic conditions, natural and man-made disasters and others, have led to high food price inflation in Ethiopia. As a result, communities are unable to afford nutritious and healthy food, leading them to adopt unsafe and unhealthy feeding practices as a coping mechanism. [According to the WFP market watch for March, 2023](#), headline inflation stood at 32.0% in February 2023, almost three times the Government of Ethiopia's (GoE) annual average inflation target of 11.9%. The level of inflation during 2023 was even higher for major staple crops such as teff and wheat. The price of teff rose sharply to record levels in March 2023. It sold for 67 percent more than a year ago and 123 percent more than the five-year average for the month. Similarly, as part of the gradual removal of subsidies on fuel prices, the price of fuel has been gradually on the rise since January 2023. An increase in the price of fuel can easily translate into a direct increase in inflation, as fuel and electricity account for 10 percent of the national Consumer Price Index (CPI).

NUTRITION CURRENT RESPONSE

From January till April 2023:

- **19 percent** of targeted severe acute malnutrition cases in children under five years old admitted in nutrition centers
- **50 percent** of targeted moderate acute malnutrition cases in children under five years old have received assistance
- **80 percent** of pregnant and lactating women identified in need are receiving assistance

People in need- targeted- reached



NUTRITION SUPPLY CURRENT AVAILABILITY AND FORECAST


Commodity	July	August	September	October
RUSF	40% shortfall regular 100% shortfall northern Ethiopia	100% shortfall regular 100% shortfall northern Ethiopia	Arrivals expected cover until nearly end of year	
Super Cereal Plus	Available for northern Ethiopia and regular	Shortfall for regular Available for northern Ethiopia	Shortfall for regular Available for northern Ethiopia	Shortfall for both northern Ethiopia and regular
RUTF	Available	Available	Available	Available

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SCENARIO BASED INTERVENTION AND PROPOSITION

 Scenarios	LEAN SEASON (Sc1) Increase in needs (caseload) in nutrition response as per lean season period (June till Sept)	LIMITED RESPONSE IN LEAN SEASON (Sc2) Increase in needs in nutrition response as per lean season period (June till Sept) , inconsistent and insufficient response and need of tailored targeted response
Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather forecast i.e. June to September Kiremt rainfall season is expected to be below average and October to December 2023 Deyr/Hageya season in southern/southeastern areas will be well above average) FEWSNET assumptions in western surplus-producing areas, the 2023 Meher harvest starting in October is likely to be average. However, due to the anticipated below average Kiremt rain and limited access to agricultural inputs, it is expected that the 2023 Meher harvest will be below average in eastern half of the country. Average Belg crop production is anticipated due to the favorable Gu/Genna rainfall. Moreover, in the agropastoral areas of S/SE, for the Gu rained, average crop production is expected in June/July. Good harvests are also expected in flood recession areas of the Somali region in August. On the other hand, areas with conflict are likely to continue and areas with a shortage of improved seeds reported, the overall production is likely to decline due to an expected reduction in yield 	
Capacity	Coverage and nutrition response is not enough and somehow inconsistent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment of malnutrition. Needs and coverage by MAM insufficient including in IDP sites including supplementation for pregnant and lactating women Increase in cases of under 6 months children with SAM admitted in stabilization centers No blanket supplementary feeding ongoing No visibility of commodities for next months for MAM <i>*90 to 100% shortfall RUSF in July and August</i> 	Coverage and nutrition response is not enough and somehow inconsistent and It is anticipated that the distribution of humanitarian assistance in many areas of the country will be inconsistent and insufficient to meet the overall needs of the population. Additionally, the pause of nationwide humanitarian assistance is expected to have a significant impact on the households' food security situation particularly during the lean season from July to September
Assumptions	As per food aid diversion reported in the country, During the months preceding the suspension, not all people in need received food assistance (the % is difficult to know but the probability that the neediest did not receive it is quite high).	
Effect	Increased acute malnutrition cases and increased death rates.	
Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to urgently scale up prevention interventions to not wait for children to get malnourished before we act <i>*see UNICEF guidance</i> MAM targeting and prioritization based on CDC model <i>*See prioritization proposals, WFP</i> SAM program to ensure enough stock and timely availability focus on regions and woredas most affected and most reliant on conflict and seasonality 	Targeting & prioritization on zones with high need of food aid (under suspension) MAIN TARGET IDP SITES AND POPULATION 100-50% DEPENDANT OF FOOD ASSISTANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAM targeting based on CDC model with focus on IDP sites and areas highly dependent on food aid SAM prioritization. Preposition of commodities in areas to be highly affected Blanket feeding in areas most affected Prevention package
Monitoring and risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red flag monitoring with woredas with repeated increase in some indicators Robust assessments as SMART to be continued Over supply and increased risk of misuse / need of tracking till last mile. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAM admissions in IDP sites to be tracked on weekly basis Robust assessments as SMART to be continued Situation is also affecting population less than 50% dependent on food aid, and they are not prioritized
Advocacy	Call for action, need for more integrated and comprehensive response. Consistence of response. Addressing drivers of malnutrition <i>*other sectors</i>	Call for action, need of a tailored response. Individual prioritization for MAM cases (new guidelines). Identified areas and population with most risk and eventual need for blanket feeding for some high-risk population

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CALL TO ACTION

For stakeholders

1. A more **integrated, coordinated and multi-sectoral response** is urgently needed to mitigate the expected burden of undernutrition and its consequences. We are aware of the current situation, so we need to act to avoid future loss of lives.
2. We urge the government and nutrition partners to strengthen a **strong surveillance system and ensure evidence-based decision making** for resource allocation and prioritization of targets to reduce the risk of oversupply and manage the limited scaled-up response. We also urge the government and nutrition partners to recognize the need to make surveillance information available to all stakeholders/partners in the nutrition sector to enable a targeted and prioritized response.
3. Encourage **local civil society organizations to promote innovative local food-based solutions**, coordinate their efforts, ensure that public needs are prioritized, and work with government, media and research institutions to ensure a targeted response.
4. Encourage **donors to urgently engage in preventive** food and nutrition interventions based on national early warning systems and anticipatory action plans
5. Encourage the **private sector to fulfil its corporate social responsibility by making safe and nutritious food** available and accessible at a fair price to communities in drought and conflict affected areas.
6. Encourage the **media to provide the public with up-to-date information on the situation** on the ground and to advocate for the necessary action in a way that reflects the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.
7. Urge **government and nutrition partners to promote and implement small-scale community** and household gardening to counteract food shortages and market inflation and donors to fund similar interventions.
8. Government and humanitarian actors should **seek to ensure the availability of preventive health and nutrition interventions** (immunization, deworming, vitamin A supplementation, etc.) and supplies (supplementary and therapeutic foods).

For first responders and key for the next four months

- **Ensure the services for treatment and prevention of acute malnutrition cases** in children and pregnant and lactating women fully covered areas with people (*household economic analysis-HEA*) phase 4 and phase 5 and in severe food insecurity (as per EFSA), displaced population in IDP sites- without any stockout for the next 4 months. *Detail of population by region in annex.*
 - 3,8 million food insecure people to be prioritized for full nutrition intervention in 110 woredas in Amhara, Afar, SNNPR, Oromia and Somali regions.
 - 5,2 million food insecure people (including IDPs) to be prioritized for full nutrition intervention in 79 woredas in Tigray
- **Prioritizing and prepositioning nutrition stock** (*RUSF, Supercereal, RUTF, F100, F75, SC kits and drugs*) in the most affected areas including IDP sites, with population highly dependent on food assistance.
- **Close monitor of severe acute malnutrition new admissions** and death rates in nutrition centers, on weekly basis, mainly in areas deservng internal displaced population. Conduct more robust assessments as SMART Plus.
- **Advocate for blanket supplementary feeding response in areas at higher risk** as per change in admissions and or need explored.

For more information, contact ENCU SAG members

ENCU Nut cluster, encu.addis.advocacy@gmail.com or ilezama@unicef.org encu.addis@gmail.com
UNICEF, Rashid Abdulai, abdulai@unicef.org
WFP, Mufaro Chiriga, mufaro.chiriga@wfp.org
Action Against Hunger, Muluneh Girma Mekonnen MMekonnen@et-actionagainsthunger.org
Plan International, Tamirat Tafese; Tamirat.ketema@plan-international.org
ASDEPO, Tamere Adugna, tamere.adugna@asdepo.org
OWDA, Mohamud Mohamed, mahamudm@owdaeth.org

