



Dengego IDPs' and host  
community's children, Somali region

## Protection Cluster in Ethiopia

# Protection Response to the Drought Advocacy Note

## 1. Background

Ethiopia, one of the world's fastest growing countries, continues to be affected by various natural disasters which impact its economic progress. The recent El Nino induced drought has affected the lives and livelihoods of many Ethiopians causing food insecurity, malnutrition and water shortages in the affected areas, forcing some into displacement. The consequent humanitarian needs have been documented in the 2016 Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD), jointly prepared by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and humanitarian partners.

The Protection Chapter in the HRD addresses issues of child protection (CP), Gender Based Violence (GBV) and the necessity for protection mainstreaming, in line with the 2013 Interagency Standing Committee's Principals' statement on the "Centrality of Protection" in humanitarian interventions. The 2013 National Policy and Strategy on Disaster Risk Management also recognizes that disaster risk management activities should be implemented in a way that provides due attention to social protection and reduction of vulnerabilities.

The Child Protection Rapid Assessment (CPRA), jointly undertaken by the Regional Bureaus of Women and Children Affairs (BOWCA) in Afar, Somali, Amhara and Oromiya regions and the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs in Tigray region (BOLSA), supported by UNICEF and UNFPA, was endorsed by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) on February 2016. The CPRA informs the Protection Cluster/CP & GBV Sub-Cluster Operational Plan and prioritizes the minimum package of services for CP and GBV in emergencies as well as general protection interventions, as per global standards, with a minimum total budget amounting to 11.9 million USD.

This note has been prepared with a view to providing information about the current protection response to the drought and raising awareness about the protection considerations linked to it, as well as advocating for additional resources for much needed protection interventions.

## 2. Protection Needs

The HRD indicates that protection concerns have dramatically increased as a result of the current drought. According to the recent CPRA, families are adopting negative survival strategies such as child labour and child migration as a result of loss of livelihoods, which has also resulted in the increased psychosocial distress of children and caregivers, increased family separation and increased risks of sexual violence and forced/early marriage, which require immediate and lifesaving protection intervention. The assessment has also indicated increased risk of GBV while women and girls travel long distances to collect firewood and fetch water in drought ridden areas. Domestic violence has also been reported as one of the safety and security concerns that women face in their community.

In addition to the aforementioned identified needs, an increase in incidental general protection issues such as land security is reported which is linked to land ownership resulting from competition over limited resources because of the drought.

There are currently many gaps in protection service provision. As revealed by the various assessments, there is limited availability of lifesaving services for GBV survivors and a lack of an established GBV and CP referral pathway. Moreover, although there is a Protection Cluster based in Addis Ababa, there are no functional regional Protection Cluster counterparts that can assist to identify and coordinate ongoing and emerging general protection needs in the regions. The Protection Cluster therefore deems it necessary to forge partnerships with new partners and build the capacity of new as well as existing partners for better coordination and effective responses.

The fact that protection is a sensitive matter has also contributed to the lack of sufficient information on general protection concerns both within the context of the drought as well as in other situations, including conflict.



Focus Group Discussion with IDPs and members of the host community in Gebagebo Kebele of Tuliguled Wereda, Somali Region

## 3. Emerging Protection Needs

It is projected that 821,472 individuals will be internally displaced in Ethiopia by the end of 2016. Protection issues attributed to the drought within the displaced community as well as the host communities will continue to arise, with immediate and life threatening consequences. Resources are

therefore needed to conduct assessments to identify emergency protection issues relating to access to services, land security, gender based violence, child protection and protection of other vulnerable groups, to ensure timely and appropriate interventions.





Protection Cluster Meeting

## 4. Protection Response and its limits

The Protection Cluster has developed an Operational Plan, based on the 2016 HRD, to address the protection risks facing children, women and other vulnerable groups. The Plan was developed in coordination with the regional BOWCAs and endorsed by MOWCA. It was also informed on the need for protection mainstreaming across all services provided under specific sectors. Specifically, the Operational Plan proposes the following:

- Increasing protection coordination and information management capacity both at national level and in areas affected by the drought;
- Protection mainstreaming in other clusters;
- Strengthening community structures to provide minimum services (identify, prevent, monitor, refer/link and address child protection issues);
- Responding to child protection cases through strengthened case management services;
- Identification, Documentation, Tracing and Reunification of Unaccompanied and Separated Children;
- Prevention of child protection issues through community mobilization;
- Provision of psychosocial support to children through Child Friendly Spaces;
- Strengthening the technical capacity of MOWCA, BOLSA, BOWCAs, coordination mechanisms and frontline workers;
- Provision of life saving post-rape treatment kits to health facilities located in Priority One hotspot Woredas in Somali, Afar, Oromia, Tigray and Amhara regions;
- Provision of dignity kits to vulnerable women and adolescent girls to address their needs during menstrual periods;
- Provision of psychosocial support for vulnerable women and girls as well as awareness raising sessions on risk reduction of different forms of GBV through Women Friendly Spaces including in-kind support of basic items, whenever possible;
- Establishing and strengthening GBV referral pathways in priority one drought affected Woredas to link survivors of SGBV with multi-sectoral service providers;
- Provision of capacity building trainings for frontline service providers in Government institutions and other staff from humanitarian organizations to provide survivor-centred multi-sectoral response;
- Strengthening the coordination of the Protection/Child Protection and Gender Based Violence response at the Federal, Regional and Zonal levels.

With the increase of the protection response capacity in Ethiopia, progress has been made on many of these various fronts. Protection coordination at Addis Ababa level has increased, as well as in the regions most affected by the drought. Support to BOWCAs continue in the regions. Sensitization and trainings on protection for the limited partners who engage in protection activities are underway. Outreach to service providers, in Addis Ababa and the field, for meaningful access to services is also increasing. To ensure an appropriate protection

environment, advocacy for the ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa will continue as part of the multiyear strategy of the Protection Cluster.

Despite the above advances, limited operational capacity for protection partners, lack of lifesaving CP and GBV support, and limited funding remain challenges for Protection Cluster partners.

## 5. Consequences of Unmet Needs

The 2016 HRD launched on 11 December 2015 sets out the areas of emergency protection concern as well as a modest budgetary requirement of USD 11.9 million to meet the projected protection concerns of 800,000 vulnerable children and 1.3 million women and girls in 131 priority one Woredas across Ethiopia. However, Child Protection and GBV requirements have been adjusted based on the CPRA findings and CP and GBV HRD Operational Plans that are approved by the MOCWA, increasing the total budget requirement to USD 21,183,215.20 including the requirement for general protection. Accordingly, the total requirements are distributed as follows: USD 12.3 million for Child Protection (with only 8.6% funding received); USD 7.6 million for Gender Based Violence and USD 1.2 million for General Protection activities with no funding received so far.

The protection of women, boys and girls and other vulnerable groups should be placed at the centre of a coordinated drought response strategy to ensure that the lives of vulnerable groups are not jeopardised. This is recognized by the fact that protection concerns have been given a place, for the very first time, in the HRD 2016.

As a result of lack of funds however, there is currently an absence of protection considerations even though there is a demonstrated interest by partner organizations to carry out protection mainstreaming tasks by aligning activities with the Operational Plan and a general acknowledgement by Ethiopian government agencies, including the National Disaster Risk Management Coordination Commission (NDRMCC), that there is an urgent need to identify and respond to the protection concerns of vulnerable women and children.

Provision of the minimum of specialized protection services such as case management, psychosocial support and provision of life saving post-rape treatment kits and dignity kits as well as mainstreaming protection within the various intervention mechanisms are essential. But the incomplete and inadequate implementation of the Protection Cluster Operational Plan in the targeted locations as a result of shortage of funding and limited operational capacity, would put the lives and future of boys, girls and women at increased risks of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation and may also result in protection not being reflected in the next HRD.

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## For further information, please contact

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