Introduction

Conflict driven displacement has become a major humanitarian concern in Ethiopia, as the country enters the fourth year of drought. Over 1.2 million are currently displaced by the conflict in Somali and Oromia regions. Faced with water shortages, livestock losses and conflict, Ethiopians in these regions are on the move. In the space of a year, over 100 000 refugees have entered Ethiopia, a majority from South Sudan. EU humanitarian aid is used to address needs resulting from drought, cholera epidemic, displacement (both drought and conflict) and refugee arrival.

What are the needs?

With around 100 million inhabitants, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa. Humanitarian assistance is needed for multiple reasons: droughts and other climate induced shocks, cholera and other epidemics, internal conflict and displacement and a large refugee population.

An estimated 7.88 million people are in need of emergency food assistance due to the drought. The drought also affects an additional 3.6 million people who will need food assistance in 2018, bringing the entire number of people needing food assistance to nearly 11.5 million. Food insecurity, acute malnutrition, water shortages and risks of epidemics (including cholera) in drought- and conflict-affected Somali and Oromia regions remain a humanitarian priority in 2018.

The drought and renewed internal conflicts have triggered the displacement of more than 1.7 million people within the country. Moreover, the political instability inside the country in March 2018 resulted in over 10 000 people crossing the border into Kenya seeking protection. It is expected that these will return to Ethiopia as the political situation is improving.
How are we helping?

The European Union allocated €91.5 million for the humanitarian response in Ethiopia in 2017. The focus in Ethiopia is on addressing the most urgent needs resulting from the continuing drought and the influx of refugees, and responding to conflict-related displacement.

The response to the drought concentrates on life-saving interventions such as the emergency supply of safe water through water trucking and well rehabilitation; distribution of cash and food aid; detection and treatment of acutely malnourished children and pregnant or lactating women; prevention of cholera infection by dispensing water treatment chemicals; distribution of animal feed and health services to prevent livestock losses; and the distribution of essential items such as jerry cans, tarps, and other household goods to the displaced populations.

The drought and ethnic conflict have caused massive displacement in the country, in particular in Somali and Oromia regions. The EU funds the displacement tracking matrix, a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. The tool has made it easier to identify the needs of displaced people and assist them in a more timely and efficient manner.

According to UNHCR, about 100,000 South Sudanese refugees sought safety in Ethiopia from January 2017 to February 2018. Due to this influx, most of the EU’s humanitarian assistance has focused on providing the refugees with shelter, water and sanitation facilities. Providing adequate protection to the most vulnerable refugees is also a priority. This is done by identifying those with special needs such as unaccompanied minors, distributing food assistance, and providing vital support to acutely malnourished children and pregnant or lactating women.

Education in emergencies is provided in the refugee camps through early childhood development care and primary schooling. In parallel, there is ongoing support to the more established camps with refugees who have been in Ethiopia longer, to ensure that basic needs and services are covered, and to complement initiatives that promote more durable solutions for the refugees.