



## **Delivery of anticipatory actions to at-risk communities ahead of worsening drought conditions in Ethiopia**

### **Overview**

To mitigate the impacts of predictable hazards like droughts, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) is supporting the government in the Somali region of Ethiopia to develop skillful forecasts and early warning alerts that trigger anticipatory action plans (AAP) before a drought has occurred. This programme helps to avert and minimize loss and damage by reducing the impact of drought on food security and the livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations through scaled-up anticipatory actions. The project achieves this by strengthening national capacities and systems for climate risk management based on the generation, use and integration of tailored climate forecasts and triggers into AAPs for anticipatory action against drought. The AAPs serve to bolster national and international response capacities before and during drought shocks, and reduce the overall impact, recovery time and costs associated with responding to drought impacts on agriculture and food security. The activities aim to strengthen the government's capacities to support planning and decision-making at both national and sub-national levels for anticipatory action and better management of climate risks.

### **Programme development and design**

The implementation of this programme is coordinated under the auspices of the Somali Region Disaster Risk Management Bureau (DRMB), supported by the National Meteorological Authority (NMA), Mercy Corps, and the Somali Micro-Finance Institute (MFI) as the financial service provider.

Last year, anticipatory actions were implemented in the critical window of time between the prediction of a drought in July 2022, when a pre-agreed forecast threshold was reached, and the actual drought, which was the fifth consecutive season of below-average rainfall in the Somali region. The threshold that triggered these anticipatory actions was agreed upon in the Somali Region Technical Working Group (RTWG), in which WFP collaborates with national disaster management actors, such as the Ethiopian Meteorological Institute (EMI) and the Somali Region Disaster Risk Management Bureau (DRMB), to determine the magnitude of the drought and its impacts (high, moderate or low-level impacts).

When the threshold was reached, pre-arranged finance was then released. This pre-arranged funding for the delivery of anticipatory actions once a forecast trigger has been reached is different from the anticipatory action systems-building funds, which was used for the ongoing anticipatory action systems building in Ethiopia. In the case of Ethiopia, the funding in 2022 came from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

### **Impact and evaluation**

In 2022, ahead of a predicted drought, WFP and partners triggered the AAP in the Somali region of Ethiopia, which included the dissemination of early warning messages and advisories to



137,102 vulnerable people; rangeland enclosure and fodder production, supporting 45,220 people; and the provision of anticipatory cash to an estimated 25,200 people. These anticipatory actions were implemented in two districts, Danan and Horshagah, between September 2022 and January 2023.

These anticipatory actions protected lives and livelihoods from the impacts of deteriorating drought conditions. An endline assessment and after-action review are being conducted to generate more detailed evidence on the impact of these anticipatory actions.

### **Lessons learned**

Some practical lessons learned from past anticipatory action interventions include the need to:

- Improve the skill of forecasts to provide early warning information much earlier before the season starts;
- Increase the scale of anticipatory action provided to reach all individuals in need of support; and
- Enhance the structure and reach of the communication channels for early warning information, as some of the pastoral communities were too far away from the centers and markets for the information to reach them.

Building on these lessons learned in the future will further enhance efforts to avert and minimize climate-induced losses and damages.

WFP supports the sustainability of anticipatory action systems through close collaboration and capacity strengthening of national governments, including supporting the development of early warning systems. To scale-up the implementation of anticipatory action programmes, it is necessary to count on the expansion of flexible, coordinated, predictable and pre-arranged financing for anticipatory actions and early warning systems, as well as for capacity strengthening efforts and technical support. This would improve locally-led efforts and related evidence generation.