



# **Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Drought Response in Ethiopia 2015 - 2018**

**Independent assessment of the collective humanitarian  
response of the IASC member organizations**

**November 2019**

## Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group



an IASC associated body

# Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Drought Response in Ethiopia

**Final version, November 2019**

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**Cover Photo:** Women weather the microburst in Ber'aano Woreda in Somali region of Ethiopia.

**Credit:** UNICEF

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# Executive Summary

## About the 2019 Ethiopia Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation

- 1 **Scope.** This report presents the results of an Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) of the drought response in Ethiopia between 2015 and 2018; primarily the El Niño drought starting in 2015, and the Indian Ocean Dipole drought in 2017. It is an independent assessment of the collective humanitarian response of Inter-Agency Standing Committee member organizations. It focuses on contributions of the international system and does not aim to evaluate the response of the Government of Ethiopia.
- 2 **Evaluation questions (EQ).** The evaluation sought to answer the following main questions: (1) Relevance: Do the planning documents reflect the needs and priorities of people affected by the droughts? (2) Effectiveness: Did the response reach its intended results? (3) Sustainability: Did the response help build resilience? (4) Partnerships & Localization: Did the response adequately build partnerships and involve local capacities? (5) Coordination: Was the response well coordinated?
- 3 **Use.** The evaluation provides country-level as well as global and systemic recommendations. At the country level, the Humanitarian Coordinator leads the development of a formal management response plan, which is monitored on an annual basis. At the global level, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals seek to ensure that global and systemic recommendations are addressed and that follow-up is monitored.
- 4 **Methods.** The evaluation used mixed qualitative and quantitative research methods to triangulate results derived from different sources, including aid workers, government officials, donors, and affected people: Key stakeholder interviews, a survey and focus group discussions with affected people, quantitative analysis, document analysis, and an aid worker and donor survey. The evaluation was conducted between December 2018 and October 2019. The evaluation team considered gender issues throughout the evaluation process, and sought to implement the evaluation in a conflict-sensitive way.

## Evaluation Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations

### The Humanitarian System in Ethiopia Failed to Learn Some Critical Lessons

- 5 Evaluation findings relating to the key evaluation questions (summarized below) show that the Ethiopian drought response were successful in many respects. However, it is striking that most of the critical issues this evaluation identifies have been raised before. Of 14 key issues, 11 had come up during a mission of the Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team in 2016, and 10 were discussed by an inter-agency real-time evaluation conducted in 2012 (see Figure 47). The majority of affected people surveyed also saw little evidence of learning. 78 percent felt that the current or most recent response was not better than the response before that. Reasons for not learning lessons include factors relating to the difficult operating context in Ethiopia, problems of the funding architecture, and the focus of many reform efforts on policy, rather than implementation. EQ  
1.3
- 6 Some lessons were learned. The quality of assessments improved, protection coordination was strengthened, and disconnects between humanitarian food assistance and the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) started to be addressed. Nevertheless, the evaluation concludes that it is crucial that the humanitarian community focus on implementing reforms and addressing barriers to learning.

#### Recommendation: Ensure Lessons Are Learned and Reforms Implemented

To address the structural factors which prevent lessons from being learned and reform efforts from being implemented, the Humanitarian Coordinator in Ethiopia, together with the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team and the Emergency Directors Group, should inform affected communities about planned changes and regularly report on progress made in addressing the recommendations of this evaluation. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee should dedicate its full attention to understanding and addressing the reasons why past reform efforts have failed and shift resources and attention away from developing policies and towards analyzing and addressing obstacles to change. →  
Rec 1

## The Response Was Well Coordinated, But Some Space for Improvement Remains

- 7 **Strategic coordination.** The introduction of the cluster system in 2015 strengthened international response coordination. However, attempts to turn the Humanitarian Country Team into a strategic decision-making body have had limited success, as the forum is large and donor presence hinders open discussions. The coordination structure in Addis Ababa is perceived as too onerous, in part because of overlaps and duplications between different fora. Coordination at regional level was perceived as more efficient, but lacked sufficient decision-making power (except for the Somali region). EQ 5.1
- 8 **Cluster coordination.** Investments in dedicated cluster coordinators and information management capacities have improved coordination. Within clusters, there are examples of gaps and duplications that were successfully avoided. Performance varied between clusters, depending in large part on each coordinator's capacity and length of deployment, as well as the level of trust and participation of NGOs. EQ 5.1
- 9 **Inter-cluster coordination.** Inter-cluster coordination was effective for specific and geographically contained emergencies. For the overall drought response, gaps between the food, nutrition, health, and water responses persisted, and uncoordinated minimum standards and cash-for-work rates had a negative impact on agencies' capacity to operate effectively. Efforts to address these gaps were not successful due to misaligned funding priorities among donors, competition between humanitarian organizations, and a lack of follow-up to global missions. EQs 5.1 5.2
- 10 **Involvement of national NGOs.** In a restrictive regulatory environment, few national NGOs were active in the drought response in Ethiopia and mostly acted as subcontractors for international organizations. Some efforts to strengthen capacities in the wake of the Grand Bargain had lasting effects on a limited number of national NGOs. However, most capacity-building efforts were short-lived. Only three national NGOs accessed funding from the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF). While generally recognized as very useful, interviewees also criticized the short-term focus of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund and its tendency to support sector-focused responses. EQs 4.2 4.3

### Recommendation: Further Enhance Coordination and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund

To fill the few remaining gaps in coordination, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team should regularly dedicate meetings to a more self-critical analysis of collective response gaps (with representatives of regional coordination, but without donors present) and agree upon and monitor action points. An inter-cluster review process should help ensure that multi-sector projects are included in the Humanitarian Response Plan. The Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund should aim to allocate 50 percent of its funding and other donors should significantly increase their share of funding for multi-sector projects. The Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund should also lower the bar for national NGOs to access funding and extend the typical duration of projects it supports to one year. → Rec 5

## Early Warning Information Did Not Lead to Enough Early Action. Collective Resource Mobilization Was More Successful in 2015/16 than in 17/18

- 11 **Timeliness of the response.** 41 percent of affected people surveyed had to wait for more than five months after the beginning of the drought until they received assistance. The response was timely enough to prevent many drought-related deaths, but not sufficiently timely to prevent sharp increases in severe acute malnutrition (especially in Afar and the Somali region) and in school dropout rates. They also did not manage to prevent many illnesses and a sharp erosion of assets. EQ 5.3
- 12 **Early warning and early action.** Early warning systems for humanitarians were sufficient to predict the severity of the different droughts, though reports were not suitable for warning affected people. Humanitarian organizations and donors reacted late to available warnings. This was due to lengthy assessment and government approval processes; late government recognition of the emergency; absence of emergency departments in critical line ministries; intervening political dynamics; slow funding decisions and processes; and competing humanitarian priorities. EQ 5.3
- 13 **Resource mobilization.** A strong, collective resource mobilization effort for the El Niño drought in 2015 resulted in funding arriving late but at a high level in 2016. Resource mobilization efforts for the Indian Ocean Dipole in 2017 were less successful, mainly due to underestimated needs and competing, conflict-related priorities. Among funding instruments, aid workers recognized internal emergency funds EQ 5.3

of humanitarian organizations, crisis modifiers<sup>1</sup> of development programs, and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund as enabling a timely response and filling gaps. Various bilateral funding instruments were criticized as unpredictable, heavily earmarked, and not always aligned with the priorities set by the humanitarian community.

### Recommendation: Strengthen Early Action

→  
Rec 3

To strengthen anticipatory and early action, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team should dedicate a meeting with the participation of representatives of regional coordination fora to analyzing drought (early) warning information when such information is published. In that meeting, the team should define immediate priorities for early action, assign clear responsibilities for follow-up, and recommend what share of resources of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund should be allocated to anticipatory action. Capacity-building organizations should prioritize the establishment or strengthening of emergency units within relevant line ministries and regional emergency operations centres of the Ethiopian government. Donors should speed up their shift to anticipatory, unearmarked, multi-year funding for drought responses, and UN organizations urgently need to pass on existing flexibility to their implementing partners. Donors and development organizations should make crisis modifiers a standard in development programs in areas prone to drought, and ensure that related decision-making processes allow for flexibility to focus on areas most acutely affected by the crisis.

### A Majority of People Got What They Needed Most, but There Were Important Gaps in Needs Assessment, Planning, and Accountability to Affected People

- 14 **Relevance.** A clear majority of 64 percent of affected people surveyed for this evaluation felt that the response was relevant and included what they needed most. However, over one third stated that the response did not provide what they needed most, including a majority of respondents in Tigray. EQ 1.2
- 15 **Needs assessments.** The credibility of collective needs assessments in Ethiopia is highly contested. The quality of needs assessments processes was poor, results were politically influenced, and planning documents did not always reflect assessment results. The recently introduced International Phase Classification system and the household economy approach have the potential to improve data quality. EQ 1.1
- 16 **Accountability to affected people.** While a strong majority of affected people (74 percent) felt treated with respect, formal mechanisms for creating accountability to affected people were often weak. Between one third and half of the people consulted did not know what assistance they would receive or when, what the selection criteria were, or how they could complain. Statistically, whether or not affected people were consulted on their needs and priorities had a strong effect on how useful they found the assistance in the longer-term. Inter-agency processes aiming to strengthen accountability to affected people have not produced tangible outcomes so far. EQ 1.2
- 17 **Planning and prioritization.** While the official prioritization of geographic areas largely matched observed drought patterns, the prioritization had only a limited influence on the allocation of assistance. Additional, collective prioritization exercises and assessments conducted by individual organizations were useful for targeting interventions. A recurrent controversy was whether humanitarian assistance should only target those facing recent shocks, or whether assistance should extend to those who have not yet recovered. EQs 2.3 1.2
- 18 **Sector priorities.** The drought response focused heavily on food. While affected people confirmed food as something they needed urgently in the short-term, this only partially covered what affected people would have prioritized. Livelihood assistance was a major gap, with agriculture underfunded throughout. Other critical sectors (nutrition, WASH, health) were also massively underfunded in some years. → See Rec 2 below

<sup>1</sup> The terms “crisis modifiers” is used here to refer to a mechanism that enables the quick allocation of development funds for humanitarian activities in the event of a crisis. In some models, a crisis modifier re-allocates a share of existing funding of a development project to humanitarian activities. In others, additional “top-up” funds or dedicated contingency funds are used. See Katie Peters and Florence Pichon. 2017. *Crisis Modifiers. A Solution for a More Flexible Development-Humanitarian System?* ODI.

## The Drought Response Managed to Save Lives, but Was Less Successful in Restoring Livelihoods and Did Not Increase Resilience

- 19 **Monitoring data.** The humanitarian community in Ethiopia is unable to track the collective effectiveness of its drought response due to a lack of outcome monitoring and sufficiently disaggregated information and analysis on outputs. EQ 2
- 20 **Saving lives.** Despite issues with data availability, this evaluation found evidence that lives were saved. 58 percent of the affected people surveyed suspected that (more) family members would have died without assistance, treatment of severe acute malnutrition met international standards, and there are reports that food assistance had a positive effect on food consumption scores. EQ 2.1
- 21 **Delays, quality issues, and gaps.** The humanitarian community could have saved more lives with timelier and better quality assistance. The arrival and distribution of food and supplementary feeding at the district level was at times heavily delayed, and drought-affected people pointed to quality issues with food assistance. Insufficient quantities of assistance were delivered, and there were gaps in the services provided. EQ 2.1
- 22 **Impartiality.** The geographic prioritization of the response largely matched the level of need. Affected people surveyed were clearly more satisfied with the response in Afar and the Somali region than in Oromia. By contrast, interviewed aid workers perceived regional imbalances as particularly affecting Afar. Within geographic areas, the majority of affected people perceived the assistance provided as fair, as not leaving anybody out, and as reaching those who needed it most. However, weak targeting systems meant that humanitarian assistance did not always target the poorest segments of society. Planning processes also did not give much consideration to different vulnerable groups, and interviewees provided several examples of situations in which the response was not adapted to specific needs. On the whole, women rated the response more positively than men. In contrast, people with disabilities and elderly people perceived the response more negatively. EQ 2.3  
EQ 2.4
- 23 **Livelihoods and resilience.** The drought response was only partially successful in restoring affected people's livelihoods and was often not able to prevent affected people from becoming less resilient to droughts and other crises over time. This is due to the rapid succession of several droughts; a response that did not sufficiently focus on livelihood interventions, especially in agriculture and WASH; a lack of funding for livelihoods and resilience interventions; and a lack of consultation of affected people. EQs 2.2  
3.2
- 24 **Links with development interventions.** The use of crisis modifiers helped to link humanitarian and development interventions. Some clusters also managed to attract funding from development budgets for emergency interventions. However, effective links to development interventions were missing in many areas. This remains a major concern, despite repeated discussions, policy initiatives, and advocacy efforts to address this issue. Thus, development and humanitarian interventions were not coherent in several of the examples analyzed for this evaluation. The ability to create links between programs was also limited by the fact that important development programs did not focus on areas most affected by droughts. EQ 3.3
- 25 **Unintended effects.** 94 percent of the affected people surveyed did not see any unintended, negative effects of the drought response. However, aid workers and communities recognized that growing dependency on aid was a major issue. Individual examples of other unintended, negative effects on women, the private sector, and the environment were mentioned. EQ 2.5

### Recommendation: Prioritize Resilience and Support Alternative Livelihoods

Efforts from both, humanitarian and development actors, are needed to strengthen resilience and livelihoods. Development actors, in cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia, should increase their investment in resilience and livelihoods; ensure that relevant development programs focus on geographic areas prone to drought; and align development planning instruments such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework with the forthcoming resilience strategy. The humanitarian community should ensure that the 2020–2025 multi-year strategy for resilience and durable solutions includes concrete, joint humanitarian and development programs focused on reducing drought risk – and does not stop at defining overarching goals or delineating responsibilities. Agencies should support drought-affected pastoralists in particular in developing alternative livelihoods and strengthening systems for those who remain pastoralists. The emergency capacity and footprint of the

→  
Rec 4

UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and of other agriculture cluster members in Ethiopia should be strengthened to make better use of their expertise on livelihoods and the resilience of agricultural and pastoralist communities. At the same time, the humanitarian system should replace food distributions with cash wherever possible to reduce dependency and enable market growth.

### The Close Partnership with the Government of Ethiopia Enabled a Successful Response

- 26 **Operational partnership.** Global humanitarian action is often criticized for creating parallel structures and undermining existing systems. The international response in Ethiopia avoided this common pitfall because the Government of Ethiopia actively assumed and defended its leadership role. The close integration of the international humanitarian and government response was widely seen as key to explaining successes of the drought response since 2015. There was also some evidence that the close cooperation strengthened government response capacities in some areas, for example in logistics, health, and nutrition. Critical gaps at the point of delivery remain, especially with regard to targeting and food distribution due to the high turnover of trained staff and a limited focus on advocacy and capacity building at the sub-national level.

EQs  
3.1  
4.2  
4.3

### The Current Lack of Accountability is Unacceptable

- 27 **Accountability.** The strong reliance on Ethiopia's national systems came at a high price. National data and accountability systems (while not the focus of this evaluation) had obvious and broadly acknowledged limitations. Despite this fact, the humanitarian community in Ethiopia failed to develop a strong, independent monitoring system. As a result, government and international actors often did not know who was receiving assistance, let alone what effects the assistance was having. Local communities were also not in a position to hold those who delivered assistance to account as they had little information about the planned response. The evaluation concludes that this lack of accountability is unacceptable considering the scale of the international response.

EQ  
4.1

### Recommendation: Make the Response More Accountable

As long as credible, government-led accountability mechanisms are not in place, the humanitarian community in Ethiopia needs to put in place strong measures to make the response more accountable. This involves continuing to strengthen needs assessments by systematically including consultations with drought-affected people (independently of local officials); fully implementing and regularizing the International Phase Classification and the Humanitarian Needs Overview systems; regularly conducting disaggregated analyses of available data by geographic area and by potentially vulnerable group; and more actively triangulating overall results by participants in joint needs assessments. The humanitarian community should strengthen accountability to affected people and response monitoring by providing affected communities and their leaders with accurate and up-to-date information on what and how much assistance is expected to be delivered when; which selection criteria will be used; and where to complain if necessary. OCHA and NDRMC should commission an annual survey of affected people and offer a phone-based, inter-agency complaints mechanisms.

→  
Rec 2

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Scope of the Evaluation

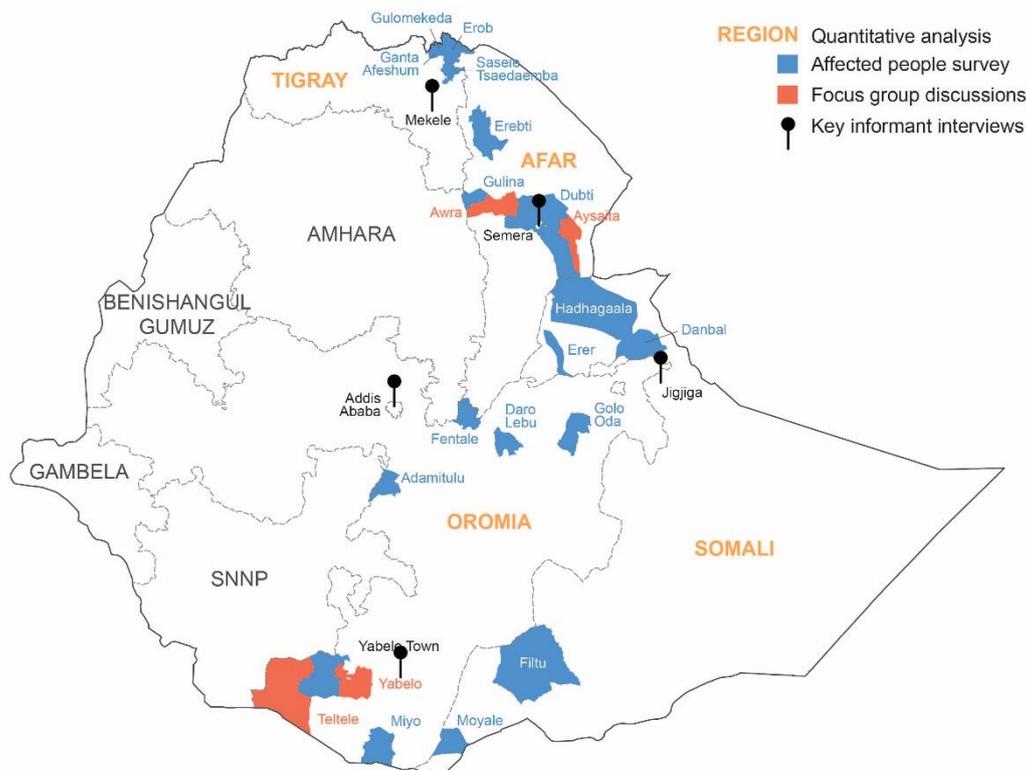
- 28 **IAHE.** This report presents the results of an Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) of the drought response in Ethiopia between 2015 and 2018. An IAHE is an independent assessment of the collective humanitarian response of Inter-Agency Standing Committee member organizations to a specific crisis or theme.<sup>2</sup> The global IAHE Steering Group identified the drought response in Ethiopia as a priority, and the Emergency Relief Coordinator formally launched the evaluation in late 2018. Ethiopia was selected as the focus of the IAHE because the humanitarian system has made a large-scale contribution to the government-led response to successive droughts in the country since 2015. It is the first IAHE to assess the response to a slow-onset, recurrent natural disaster.
- 29 **Objectives.** IAHEs were introduced to strengthen learning and promote accountability to affected people, national governments, donors, and the public. They aim to improve the effectiveness of the humanitarian system and to ensure that coordinated and accountable humanitarian action helps address the most urgent needs of people affected by crises. The specific goals of the IAHE of the drought response in Ethiopia are to provide an independent assessment of the extent to which planned collective objectives were met and to assess the quality of the response. The evaluation is intended to provide opportunities to identify lessons and good practices to improve preparedness and future responses to droughts in Ethiopia, as well as to similar crises elsewhere.
- 30 **Scope.** The evaluation covers the collective response of Inter-Agency Standing Committee member organizations to recurring droughts in Ethiopia since 2015, including ongoing food insecurity in 2018. The response to humanitarian needs resulting from conflict is excluded from the scope of this evaluation. The evaluation focuses on the contributions of the international system and does not aim to evaluate the response of the Ethiopian Government. Geographically, the evaluation considers all the drought-affected areas in Ethiopia. Four regions – Afar, Oromia, Tigray, and the Somali region – were assessed in greater depth (see Figure 1). This sample includes areas that were strongly affected by one or more of the droughts, covers both agricultural and pastoralist livelihood zones, and includes areas that were perceived as receiving different levels of humanitarian assistance as well as regions with different levels of administrative capacity.
- 31 **Evaluation questions.** The evaluation sought to answer the following main questions: (1) Relevance: Do the planning documents reflect the needs and priorities of people affected by the droughts? (2) Effectiveness: Did the response reach its intended results? (3) Sustainability: Did the response help build resilience? (4) Partnerships & Localization: Did the response adequately build partnerships and involve local capacities? (5) Coordination: Was the response well coordinated? The evaluation report addresses all evaluation questions, but at times changes their order of presentation and groups certain findings together to ensure a more reader-friendly presentation. An overview of findings per evaluation question can be found in Annex 1.
- 32 **Use.** The evaluation provides country-level as well as global and systemic recommendations. At the country level, the Humanitarian Coordinator leads the development of a formal management response plan, which is monitored on an annual basis. The Humanitarian Coordinator is supported in this task by the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team, the evaluation Advisory Group, and the country office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The response plan is endorsed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and becomes part of the compact between the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Humanitarian Coordinator. The evaluation is also intended to inform the Ethiopian government and the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) concerning their policies and protocols for crisis responses involving international actors. The evaluation team will inform drought-affected people about the outcomes of the evaluation.
- 33 At the global level, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals seek to ensure that global and systemic recommendations are addressed and that follow-up is monitored. The evaluation is intended to inform decisions on future humanitarian action, policy development, and reform made by the Inter-

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<sup>2</sup> For more detailed guidance about IAHEs, see IAHE Steering Group. 2018. *Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations: Process Guidelines*.

Agency Standing Committee, its individual member organizations, and the Emergency Directors Group. The evaluation also provides evidence regarding the collective response effort to the member states of international organizations, to donors, to learning and evaluation networks, and to the general public in order to support both learning and accountability.

Figure 1: Areas assessed in greater depth by the evaluation

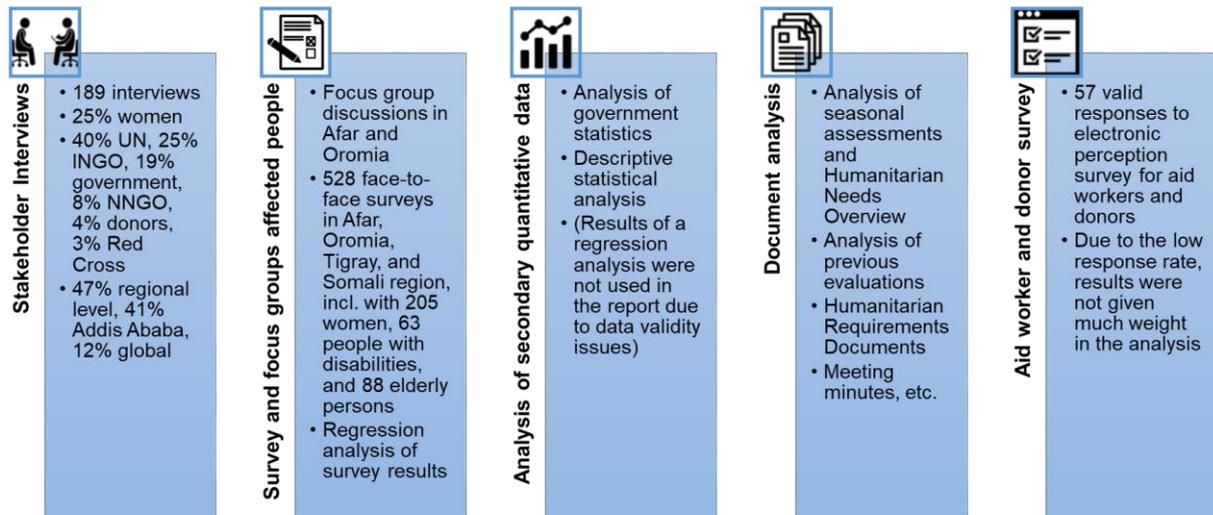


Source: Evaluation team

## 1.2 Methodology

- 34 **Mixed methods.** The evaluation used mixed qualitative and quantitative research methods. Figure 2 provides a methods overview. The mixed methods employed allowed the team to triangulate results derived from different sources, including aid workers, government officials, donors, and affected people. It also allowed the team to triangulate the results generated through different methods, for example in focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, structured in-person surveys, and data analysis. In some cases, the mixed methods were also used to collect complementary data. Significantly more documentation and analysis was available for the 2015/2016 drought response as compared to later phases of the humanitarian response. Therefore the evidence drawn from document analysis tends to focus more on the earlier phase of the response, whereas evidence drawn from interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions tends to focus more on the later phase of the response. The report presents evidence points which draw on different sources and/or methods for each finding. The annexes provide more detailed information on the different methods used, including data collection tools. Where applicable, they also present the findings in greater detail.

Figure 2: Methods Overview



Source: Evaluation team

35 **Limitations.** The evaluation encountered several limitations. From the evaluation team's perspective, these limitations do not undermine the credibility of the findings and conclusions presented in this report. However, they did limit the evaluation team's ability to answer certain sub questions – for example, on the extent to which individual clusters managed to achieve their stated objectives, or on potential regional imbalances in the provision of assistance.

- No data were available on a number of important indicators, such as overall and maternal mortality rates, malnutrition rates, care and feeding practices, average number of livestock held, or agricultural productivity. In addition, no outcome monitoring data were available from the clusters. The evaluation team also found some of the available data to be of limited reliability – for example, the number of people in need, the number of beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance, and figures on different types of assistance provided per woreda (see sections 2.3 and 2.5). For these reasons, the team had to rely on a small number of broad proxy indicators to estimate the severity of the droughts' impact and the effectiveness of the response – for example, the number of children admitted with severe acute malnutrition, or school dropout rates. Because the evaluation team judged much of the available data on assistance provided as unreliable, results of the regression analysis of secondary quantitative data were not used.
- Some data collection processes, particularly the affected people survey, were significantly delayed. The evaluation team was therefore unable to sequence data collection processes as originally planned. Focus group discussions with affected people, for example, could not be used to validate survey findings, but were used as a separate data collection tool instead. Similarly, it was not possible to draw on the early results of the quantitative analysis, the affected people survey, or the aid worker survey in the evaluation interviews. These delays also limited the opportunities for joint analysis within the team and shifted the focus to the review processes which occurred later in the process. Moreover, due to budgetary reasons the affected people survey covered only a selected sample of areas within the four regions chosen for in-depth analysis.
- Despite the OCHA country office's efforts to disseminate the electronic aid worker and donor survey as widely as possible, it received only a minimal response, with 57 completed surveys. Therefore the results of this survey were only used as additional evidence for a very limited number of findings, in cases in which survey results showed a very clear tendency.

- 36 **Gender.** In line with relevant guidance,<sup>3</sup> the evaluation team considered gender issues throughout the evaluation processes. Documents and earlier evaluations were analyzed to establish whether they include sex- and age-disaggregated data as well as relevant analysis and findings on gender. Interviews included questions on the integration of gender and other cross-cutting issues. The evaluation team largely succeeded in recruiting gender-balanced teams of enumerators to conduct surveys with affected people. A total of 188 participants in the affected people survey, amounting to 39 percent of all respondents, were women. Due to the lack of sex- and age-disaggregated data in most monitoring instruments as well as the lack of outcome-monitoring data, it was impossible to establish whether there were any gender-related differences in the level or effectiveness of the assistance provided.
- 37 **Conflict sensitivity.** During the implementation of the evaluation, several internal conflicts were ongoing in Ethiopia. To implement the evaluation in a conflict sensitive way, the evaluation team adopted strict, transparent protocols to ensure the informed consent of all the individuals who participated in the evaluation process and to protect data and information. Care was taken to ensure that both the members of the evaluation team and the enumerators hired to conduct the affected people survey were not exposed to undue risk – for example, by hiring enumerators from the same ethnic groups as the people surveyed, including conflict sensitivity in their training, and accepting additional costs for rerouting itineraries where this was necessary for security reasons. The evaluation also explored whether the drought response had any demonstrable effects on local conflict dynamics.

### 1.3 Implementation of the Evaluation

- 38 **Fieldwork.** The evaluation was conducted between December 2018 and October 2019. Fieldwork was conducted during three team visits to Ethiopia, including an inception visit (17–26 February 2019; Addis Ababa, the Somali region, and Tigray), an evaluation visit (12–24 May 2019; Addis Ababa, Oromia, and Afar), and a visit to conduct workshops and briefings (23–30 September 2019; Addis Ababa, Afar, the Somali region, and Tigray). Led by Ethiopian team members, the affected people survey was conducted between May and July 2019.
- 39 **Evaluation team.** The evaluation team consisted of the following five members: Dr. Julia Steets (team leader: Afar and the Somali region), Ms. Claudia Meier (deputy team leader: Tigray and Oromia), Ms. Doe-e Berhanu (evaluator: evaluation analysis, context analysis, affected people survey in the Somali region, inception mission Somali region, evaluation mission Oromia), Ms. Amleset Abreha Haile (evaluator: affected people survey, inception mission Tigray), and Dr. Solomon Tsehay (quantitative expert: quantitative analysis).
- 40 **Quality assurance.** The quality assurance process for this evaluation included workshops and briefings with members of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team, the in-country Advisory Group for the evaluation, and the IAHE Steering Group during the inception phase, at the end of the evaluation visit, and following the submission of the draft evaluation report. The evaluation manager and the Evaluation Management Group provided guidance and advice throughout the process. All the written products of the evaluation were reviewed by each team member, by a peer reviewer who was not part of the evaluation team (Urban Reichhold or Dr. Andrea Binder), by the Evaluation Management Group, and by the in-country Advisory Group as well as the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team.

### 1.4 Country Context

- 41 **Political context.** Since 1991, Ethiopia has been governed by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, which overthrew the previous Derg regime. The Front is a coalition of four political parties, representing the four leading regions of Ethiopia, and has historically been dominated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front. It has been criticized for imposing limitations on civil and political rights.<sup>4</sup> In 2012, after two decades in power, Meles Zenawi was succeeded as prime minister by Hailemariam Desalegn of the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement. The relative stability of the government was challenged when protests broke out in the regions of Oromia in 2014 and Amhara in mid-2016, with protestors demanding social and political reforms and calling for an end to

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). 2014. *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance*.

<sup>4</sup> DFID Ethiopia. 2012. *Operation Plan 2011-2015*. Updated June 2012.

human rights abuses. In response, the government imposed a state of emergency in October 2016 and, by its own account, detained 11,607 people within the first month.<sup>5</sup> Hailemariam Desalegn announced his resignation in February 2018. After long deliberations within the ruling coalition, he was succeeded in April 2018 by Abiy Ahmed of the Oromo People's Democratic Organization, and the most recent state of emergency was lifted in June 2018.

- 42 Prime Minister Abiy's government has initiated radical political and economic reforms. These include allowing exiled opposition groups to return, releasing political prisoners, promising that the upcoming elections in 2020 will be genuinely free and fair, making peace and restoring diplomatic ties with Eritrea, relaxing restrictions on civil society and NGOs, taking a strong stance against corruption, envisaging a greater role for the private sector as part of economic reform, and promoting gender equality within the government.
- 43 These reforms have garnered Prime Minister Abiy considerable support, both from within and from outside the country. At the same time, ethnic clashes have escalated in various parts of the country, leading to massive internal displacement. There are now approximately 3 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs), of which over 2.4 million were displaced by conflicts.<sup>6</sup> According to the government and to humanitarian partners, the conflicts have also disrupted basic public services and livelihoods, contributing to the deterioration of food security, health, and nutrition in affected areas.
- 44 **Government structure.** As set out in the constitution adopted in 1995, Ethiopia is governed on the basis of a system of ethnic federalism. Among the regions, Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region (SNNPR) are considered developed regions and account for the large majority of the country's population. Afar, the Somali region, Gambella, and Benishangul-Gumuz are considered emerging regions, with generally lower levels of administrative capacity. The administrative levels below the regional level are zones, *woredas* (districts), and *kebelles* (neighborhood administrations). While the regional states and the lower government structures enjoy a certain level of autonomy, the central government maintains strong ownership and leadership over policies and programs.
- 45 **Poverty and economic development.** Since 1991, Ethiopia has been following an ambitious strategy of economic development. The government is currently implementing the second phase of its Growth and Transformation Plan 2016–2020, which aims to achieve lower-middle income country status by 2025. The plan envisages modernizing the agricultural sector as well as rapidly increasing industrialization and exports.<sup>7</sup> The country has experienced strong growth for over a decade, averaging 10.3 percent a year from 2006/2007 to 2016/2017 according to the World Bank, making Ethiopia the fastest-growing economy in the region. However, this growth trend decelerated in 2017/2018, with real GDP growth registering at 7.7 percent.<sup>8</sup> This rapid growth has led to a significant decline in the percentage of people living in poverty.<sup>9</sup> Yet because of rapid population growth, the absolute number of people living in poverty and vulnerable to climatic shocks and seasonal food insecurity has largely remained constant and high since 2004/2005, at around 25 million.<sup>10</sup> Ethiopia remains one of the world's poorest countries, ranking 173<sup>rd</sup> out of 189 countries in the 2018 Human Development Index, with a purchasing parity adjusted per capita income of US\$1,719.<sup>11</sup>
- 46 Two-thirds of the population (three-quarters of the male population) live in rural areas and rely on rain-fed agriculture and animal husbandry for their livelihoods. Large sections of the population are therefore vulnerable to changes in rainfall patterns and exposed to food insecurity. Although there have been continuous improvements over the past two decades, Ethiopia still only ranks 93<sup>rd</sup> out of 119 countries

<sup>5</sup> International Crisis Group. 2019. *Managing Ethiopia's Unsettled Transition*.

<sup>6</sup> Government of Ethiopia. 2019. *Humanitarian Response Situation Report No. 20 (January 2019)*, A product of the Disaster Risk Management Technical Working Group (DRMTWG), for the period December 1, 2018 to January 31, 2019. The same report shows that one-third of the approximately 3 million IDPs were displaced in 2018. Inter-communal violence is cited as the primary cause of displacement, while other causes include protracted drought and seasonal flooding. The majority of IDPs reside with host communities (37 percent) or are settled in make-shift camp sites (33 percent).

<sup>7</sup> Government of Ethiopia. 2016. *Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) 2015/16-2019/20*. Volume I: Main Text. National Planning Commission, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia: Addis Ababa: May 2016.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank. 2019. *The World Bank in Ethiopia: Overview*.

<sup>9</sup> According to World Bank data, the poverty rate declined from 37.2 percent in 2004 to 27.3 percent in 2015. According to national statistics, it fell from 44 percent in 2004/2005 to 23.5 percent in 2015/2016 (NPC, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> WFP Office of Evaluation. 2019. *Ethiopia: An Evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2012-2017)*. Evaluation Report.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Development Program. 2018. *Human Development Indices and Indicators. 2018 Statistical Update*.

on the Global Hunger Index.<sup>12</sup> Malnutrition and child mortality continue to be critical issues: 1 in 14 children die before their fifth birthday, an estimated 38.4 percent of children under five are stunted, 9.9 percent are wasted, and one-fifth of reproductive-age women are classified as undernourished.<sup>13</sup>

- 47 **Gender.** Ethiopia has progressive policy and regulatory frameworks on gender. The constitution and the National Policy on Women provide guarantees on gender equality and the protection of women's rights. Ethiopia's development strategy includes a pillar on women's empowerment and mainstreams gender across its other pillars.<sup>14</sup> Several national laws endorse principles included in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. There have also been significant improvements in access to free education, healthcare, and other basic social services which have contributed to increasing net primary enrolment and reducing maternal and child mortality.<sup>15</sup> Under Prime Minister Abiy, Ethiopia has made significant strides in addressing gender inequality in government: 50 percent of ministerial positions are held by women, a woman former political prisoner was appointed to head the electoral commission, and both the president of the country and the president of the Federal Supreme Court are women.
- 48 However, despite these accomplishments, major challenges remain in closing the gender gap in Ethiopia. Despite its progress, Ethiopia ranks low (117<sup>th</sup> out of 149 countries) on the Global Gender Parity Index. Women in Ethiopia lag behind men in education as well as economic participation and opportunities.<sup>16</sup> Among all population groups, women are most negatively affected by macro- and micronutrient deficiencies, especially during their reproductive years.<sup>17</sup> They also tend to be more severely affected by droughts. Women are primarily responsible for securing food and water for the family. In the event of a drought, their workload increases, girls are more likely to drop out of school to help with chores or be married off, and women have fewer opportunities than men to engage in income-generating activities or migrate in search of seasonal employment opportunities.<sup>18</sup>
- 49 **Droughts.** Ethiopia has periodically suffered from severe droughts, leading to famines in 1973 and 1983–1985. The 1983–1985 drought, combined with civil war and government policies, is estimated to have killed between 400,000 and 500,000 people.<sup>19</sup>
- 50 The period covered by this evaluation began in 2015, an election year in which Ethiopia experienced one of its worst droughts in decades, linked to a global El Niño weather phenomenon. At the end of 2015, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS Net) predicted emergency conditions (IPC phase 4) in the Gabi, Sitti, and Hararghe zones and crisis conditions (IPC phase 3) throughout Afar, the eastern parts of Tigray and Amhara, as well as parts of Oromia and SNNPR. For the southern parts of Ethiopia, by contrast, it predicted better vegetation coverage than usual.<sup>20</sup> The *meher* rain assessment in late 2015 declared 8.2 million people in need of emergency food aid, and it later revised this figure to 10.2 million.<sup>21</sup>
- 51 In 2016, northern and western Ethiopia started to recover from the 2015 drought with relatively good *belg* and *meher* rains. The 2016 *meher* assessment put the number of people in need of emergency

<sup>12</sup> [Global Hunger Index](#) 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Central Statistical Agency & the DHS Program, ICF. 2017. *Ethiopia – Demographic and Health Survey 2016*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia & Rockville, Maryland, USA.

<sup>14</sup> Government of Ethiopia. 2016. *GTP II*.

<sup>15</sup> UN Women in Ethiopia. 2018. *Changing the Lives of Women and Girls*.

<sup>16</sup> World Economic Forum. 2018. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2018*.

<sup>17</sup> Oxfam. 2019. *Gender Inequality and Food Insecurity*. Oxfam Briefing Paper.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. 2009. *Gender and Climate Change: Women Matter*. Oxfam. 2016. *Consolidated Gender Analysis for the Ethiopian Drought Response*. Carmi. 2016. *The Gender Dimensions of Drought in Fedis Woreda District, Ethiopia*. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development project on Gender Dimensions of Food and Water Security in Dryland Areas. Working Paper 2016-8. Mersha & Van Laerhoven. 2016. *A Gender Approach to Understanding the Differentiated Impact of Barriers to Adaptation: Responses to Climate Change in Rural Ethiopia*. F. Reg Environ Change (2016) 16:1701. Kati Migiro. 2015. More child marriage in drought-hit Ethiopia with risk of "full-blown disaster", Reuters.

<sup>19</sup> Sasson. 2015. "Ethiopia, 1983–1985: Famine and the Paradoxes of Humanitarian Aid", in *Online Atlas on the History of Humanitarianism and Human Rights*, edited by Fabian Klose, Marc Palen, Johannes Paulmann, and Andrew Thompson.

<sup>20</sup> FEWS Net. 2015. *Ethiopia Special Report*. December 17, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC). 2016. *Ethiopia: Humanitarian Requirements Document 2016*, Addis Ababa. Joint Government and Humanitarian Partners' Document. National Disaster Risk Management Commission. 2017. *Ethiopia: Humanitarian Requirements Document 2017*, Addis Ababa. Joint Government and Humanitarian Partners' Document. These figures are in addition to people suffering from chronic food insecurity, who are covered by the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). Before its drought-related expansion, the PSNP had 7.9 million registered beneficiaries.

food aid at 5.6 million.<sup>22</sup> In 2017, the southern and south eastern areas suffered a drought induced by another weather system, the Indian Ocean Dipole. This drought particularly affected livestock-herding communities in lowland areas, especially in the eastern and northern Somali regions.<sup>23</sup> The 2017 *meher* assessment estimated that 7.8 million people were in need of emergency food assistance.<sup>24</sup> This figure was later revised to 9.35 million people, including 850,000 conflict IDPs from the Oromia and Somali regions.<sup>25</sup> While good rains led to good harvests in 2018, there was also flooding in Oromia, the Somali region, and SNNPR, which added to the number of IDPs and the number of people in need of food aid. In 2018, nearly 8 million people were estimated to be in need of food aid.<sup>26</sup>

- 52 **Other emergencies.** During these droughts, several outbreaks of infectious diseases were recorded, including scabies, measles, and “Acute Watery Diarrhoea” (AWD). The first outbreaks of AWD – now more openly acknowledged to be cholera – were recorded in Oromia and the Somali region in late 2015. Infections became widespread throughout the Somali region in 2016 and 2017, and also affected other regions. For 2017, the Periodic Monitoring Report indicates that almost 49,000 people received treatment for AWD.<sup>27</sup> The World Health Organization declared the AWD/cholera outbreak a grade 3 emergency in April 2017.<sup>28</sup>
- 53 In 2017, the flooding of several rivers as well as Lake Tana affected an estimated 300,000 people in Afar, Amhara, Gambella, Oromia, and the Somali region, of whom at least 100,000 were displaced.<sup>29</sup>
- 54 Ethiopia is the second-largest host of refugees in Africa, after Uganda. In 2018, it had over 905,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers, originating predominantly from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan.<sup>30</sup>
- 55 **International Assistance.** According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Ethiopia is the largest recipient of aid in Africa, receiving an average of US\$3.8 billion per year between 2015 and 2017. The most important donors were the World Bank, the United States, the United Kingdom, and European Union institutions.<sup>31</sup> As part of the development effort, a social safety net, the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), was set up in Ethiopia in 2005. It provides regular food or cash assistance to over 7 million clients and can expand in crisis situations. Around one-third of the total aid recorded by the OECD for 2016 and 2017 was humanitarian assistance. The Government of Ethiopia has been leading the response to the droughts, contributing significant resources to the emergency response and implementing important parts of the response directly.

<sup>22</sup> NDRMC. 2017. *Ethiopia: Humanitarian Requirements Document 2017*.

<sup>23</sup> FEWS Net. 2017. *Ethiopia Food Security Outlook February to September 2017*.

<sup>24</sup> NDRMC. 2017. *Ethiopia: Humanitarian Requirements Document 2017*.

<sup>25</sup> NDRMC. 2018. *Ethiopia: Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan*. Addis Ababa.

<sup>26</sup> NDRMC. 2018. *Ethiopia: Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan 2018, Mid-Year Review*. Addis Ababa: Joint Government and Humanitarian Partners' Document.

<sup>27</sup> Disaster Risk Management Technical Working Group. 2017. *Periodic Monitoring Report 2017*.

<sup>28</sup> World Health Organization. 2017. [Weekly Bulletin on Outbreaks and Other Emergencies. Week 16:15-21 April 2017](#).

<sup>29</sup> Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund. 2017. *Annual Report 2017*.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2018. [Infographics Ethiopia as of 31 August 2018](#).

<sup>31</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. 2019. [Development Aid at a Glance. Statistics by Region](#). Africa. 2019 Edition.

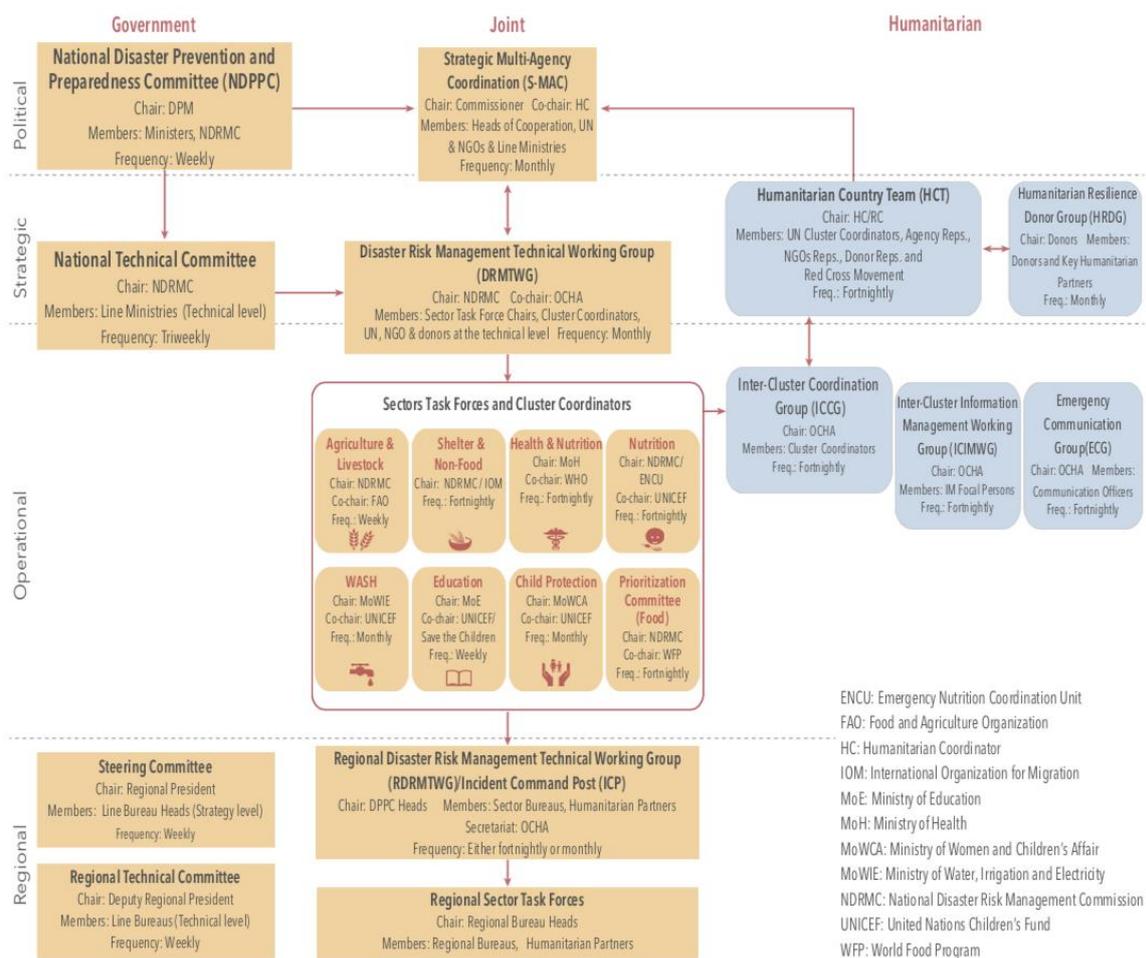
## 2 Evaluation Findings

56 This chapter presents findings and evidence in response to all the evaluation questions and sub questions. It is divided into different thematic sections. Each section first provides *background information in italics* and then presents relevant findings highlighted in blue, followed by supporting evidence and explanatory factors in black font.

### 2.1 Coordination: Was the Response Well Coordinated?

57 **Background.** Humanitarian coordination in Ethiopia is facilitated by government bodies, humanitarian coordination structures, and joint government-humanitarian fora, operating at the regional, operational, strategic, and political levels (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Humanitarian Coordination Structures in Ethiopia in 2017



Source: Ethiopia Humanitarian Requirements Document, 2017

58 At the federal level, the government's National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) leads coordination, with the support of OCHA. NDRMC and the Humanitarian Coordinator co-chair a Strategic Multi-Agency Coordination forum at the ambassador/ministerial level to ensure a strategic approach to response efforts, including resource mobilization and strengthening linkages between government bodies and the wider humanitarian community.

59 Sectoral government task forces work in tandem with humanitarian clusters at the federal level. While this is not shown in the organogram reproduced in figure 3, the logistics cluster was also activated

between 2016 and 2017. Similarly, a protection cluster was active and child protection was organized as a joint area of responsibility for child protection and gender-based violence, co-chaired by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In addition, OCHA manages an Inter-Cluster Coordination Group to ensure that response efforts are coherent and complement each other. The group identifies and recommends strategic action to the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT) – the principal policy- and decision-making body of the international humanitarian system in Ethiopia – which is chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator. Humanitarian donors and key humanitarian organizations develop more sustainable approaches to needs in the Humanitarian Resilience Donor Group. International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) coordinate among themselves within the Humanitarian INGO Forum, which has two representatives in the EHCT.

60 At the regional and zonal levels, Regional Disaster Risk Management offices coordinate the response. Other line bureaus are involved through steering committees, technical committees, and sector task forces. At the zonal level, general coordination meetings are called during peak emergency periods. In Afar, the regional government was also piloting area-based coordination in four woredas at the time of the evaluation. During the peak emergency periods considered in this evaluation, sub-regional incident command posts or emergency operations centres, led by the government and at times run together with OCHA, played an important role in several regions. In the Somali region, the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator oversaw regional coordination from mid-2017 to mid-2018 and reported to the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator.

61 **Strategic coordination.** Drought coordination improved between 2015 and 2018. The introduction of the cluster system in 2015 strengthened international response coordination as compared to earlier droughts. However, there is much room for improvement in strategic coordination. Repeated attempts to turn the Humanitarian Country Team from an information-sharing into a decision-making body have met with limited success. The coordination structure in Addis Ababa is also perceived as too onerous, whereas coordination fora at the regional level do not have sufficient decision-making power, except in the Somali region.

62 Most of the stakeholders interviewed felt that coordination was strong. These perceptions were echoed in the aid worker survey, where all but one respondent either strongly agreed (16 respondents) or agreed (18 respondents) that their organization's views and priorities were well represented in the coordination system. Previous studies reviewed for this evaluation concur that coordination between the Ethiopian government, UN agencies, and other humanitarian actors was significantly better in the 2015–2018 response than in previous drought responses.

63 Against this overall positive assessment, interviewees criticized the EHCT for remaining largely a forum for exchanging information rather than for making joint decisions. For example, meeting minutes show that concerns over water shortages in Amhara and potential *belg* rain failures were raised as early as March 2015.<sup>32</sup> In August 2015, OCHA presented an El Niño scenario, calling for a shift in how the EHCT goes about planning and responding to the expected level of needs.<sup>33</sup> On both occasions, however, the discussion did not go beyond identifying the problem. No collective action points or preparedness measures were agreed upon. EHCT members recognized this lack of strategic focus early on and attempted to address the issue twice: when a new Humanitarian Coordinator joined in late 2015, and following a lessons learned exercise in 2016. Action points were introduced, and the EHCT regularly developed common messages on key issues. Despite these improvements, however, many interviewees still felt that the EHCT was not sufficiently strategic or focused.

*“A clearer and more strategic direction from EHCT could have strengthened the overall [El Niño] response and action could have been taken earlier to respond in a more coordinated and predictable way.”*

*STAIT Mission 2016 – Ethiopia Lessons Learned from the El-Niño Drought, 2015–16*

64 Several factors explain the continued weaknesses of the EHCT. First, with up to 40 participants, the forum was too large for joint decision-making. Second, while donor participation helped when it came to passing on messages about funding priorities directly, their presence also hindered an open debate

<sup>32</sup> EHCT meeting minutes, March 2015.

<sup>33</sup> EHCT meeting minutes, August 2015. See also OCHA. 2015. *El Niño 2015–6 Risks and Vulnerabilities Based on a Desk review of 1997–8 and 2002–3*.

on weaknesses in the joint response because humanitarian organizations were eager to show their work in a positive light. Third, interviewees pointed to the need to improve the moderators' facilitation skills.

- 65 Several interviewees also found the coordination structures in Addis Ababa too onerous and pointed out duplications between different fora. Coordination across response sectors, for example, was addressed in the inter-cluster coordination group, in the EHCT, and in meetings between cluster lead agencies and the Humanitarian Coordinator. There were also duplications between humanitarian coordination fora and parallel meetings organized by donors, especially the weekly meetings organized at the US embassy in Addis Ababa. While these were generally seen as useful for information sharing, they added to the meeting burden.
- 66 Regional coordination, in turn, was seen as efficient because it focused on area-based priorities across sectors. At the same time, it is difficult for regional coordination to be fully effective because decision-making is heavily centralized in Addis Ababa. Interviewees recognized the Somali region, to which a Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator was deployed for approximately one year, as an exception.
- 67 **Cluster coordination.** Investments in a greater number of dedicated cluster coordinators and information management capacities improved coordination. Within clusters, some gaps and duplications could be avoided. Cluster performance still varied, however, and depended on each coordinator's capacity and length of deployment.
- 68 Interviewees reported that sector-level coordination was weak when the clusters were activated in 2015. Previous reviews and evaluations point out that coordination structures suffered because the UN system was overstretched by the scale of the crisis. Few clusters had dedicated coordinators initially, so lead agency priorities dominated cluster planning. In addition, NGOs were reluctant to engage with clusters because they suspected that the UN was complicit in keeping their operational space restricted. The participation of local NGOs in clusters remained very limited throughout the response.
- 69 OCHA used a mapping of cluster coordination capacity in 2016 to successfully advocate with lead agencies and global clusters for additional dedicated coordinators and information management capacity. Several interviewees also identified deployments from the Information Management and Mine Action Program (iMMAP) to several clusters and to OCHA as good practice.
- 70 Several interviewees pointed to examples where coordination avoided duplications and gaps at the regional level. Their assessment of the general performance of individual clusters varied, however. Nutrition and WASH were systematically mentioned as examples of effective clusters. By contrast, opinions varied on which clusters did not work well. According to interviewees, cluster performance depended primarily on cluster coordinators' length of deployment and proactive leadership. In addition, the level of trust NGOs had in the cluster lead or coordinator determined whether they engaged actively. The logistics cluster evaluation, for example, found that the clusters' "UN-centric" reputation deterred some partners from participating. Another important factor was the level of engagement on the part of the government line ministries co-leading the cluster. Those line ministries that did not have dedicated emergency capacity were least likely to fully engage.
- 71 **Inter-cluster coordination.** Inter-cluster coordination was effective for specific and geographically contained emergencies – for example, during disease outbreaks and at the regional level. For the overall drought response, however, critical gaps between clusters remained. Efforts to strengthen the integration of food, nutrition, health, and water responses have not been successful, and uncoordinated minimum standards and cash-for-work rates had a negative impact on agencies' capacity to operate effectively.
- 72 Interviewees agreed that coordination between clusters worked well for responses to specific disease outbreaks. The health and WASH clusters planned their responses to different scabies outbreaks together, with coordinators attending each other's coordination meetings. For acute cholera outbreaks, collaboration between health and nutrition clusters was also seen as effective. At the same time, however, there were examples of cholera treatment centres in the Somali region in which no water was available.
- 73 At the regional and zonal levels, weekly meetings of the disaster risk management authority in collaboration with OCHA supported inter-cluster coordination, because these meetings covered the

whole response in the area. Based on the gaps identified, NGOs then developed and implemented inter-sectoral projects.

- 74 For overall drought response, two out of the seven evaluations which commented on this issue perceived the inter-cluster coordination group as well organized. However, this evaluation also found several problematic gaps. First, supplementary food stocks which were intended to address moderate acute malnutrition continued to be stored with the local authorities responsible for food distributions, and health workers did not have access to them. The 2016 mission of the Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team (STAIT) had already identified this as problematic. Implementation of a subsequent agreement to stock these supplies directly in health centres was still pending three years later. Second, the question of who was responsible for WASH in schools and health centres remained unresolved. The 2017 Humanitarian Requirements Document, for example, identified water and sanitation in schools as a major response priority. Responsibility for this was assigned to the WASH cluster, but WASH in schools did not figure in the cluster planning for 2017.<sup>34</sup> As a result, WASH in schools remained a problem, for example in Tigray, where this was also a priority for the regional government. Third, food distribution points were not aligned with water points, but rather established along the main roads. People gathered close to where food was distributed, which resulted in increased water trucking needs. Fourth, harmonization efforts – for example, defining a “life-saving response package,” agreeing on a standard non-food item package for one zone, and attempting to harmonize cash-for-work standards – failed. The issue of competing cash-for-work rates had already been identified in the 2012 Real-Time Evaluation, but the problem persisted in Oromia in 2019. Some organizations paid US\$36 to clear one hectare of land, while others paid US\$120, alongside other differences in standards, and cash distributions ranged between US\$45 and US\$106.
- 75 The humanitarian community in Ethiopia made several attempts to address these disconnects between clusters. In 2017, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team devised a “bundle approach” for better multi-sector integration at the district level.<sup>35</sup> Subsequently, with the emergent nexus discussions, this then turned into a “bundle+ approach” – an attempt to link the different sectors and the development component as well. According to the few interviewees who commented on the bundle approach, it did not help to address the gaps between clusters. In 2018, the global food security, nutrition, and WASH clusters conducted a joint mission to Ethiopia to help the in-country clusters think through linkages between these three sectors. While this support was appreciated, it had a limited effect on the response.
- 76 Four factors explain why the gaps between clusters persisted despite efforts to reduce them. First, interviewees across all stakeholder groups pointed to misaligned geographic funding priorities – for example, when donors funded a health response in one area and a nutrition response in another. Given that only three donors – the US, the UK, and the European Union – provided up to 78 percent of bilateral funding every year, this lack of donor coordination is concerning. Second, competition between organizations hindered effective inter-cluster coordination. For example, organizations would pay higher cash-for-work rates to increase the number of people participating in their projects. Turf wars over what should be considered “life-saving” rendered an agreement on a joint approach impossible. Several interviewees also referred to situations in which clusters were not prepared to share response information with other clusters, thus undermining a basic minimum requirement for aligning interventions. Third, global support missions which did not include a dedicated follow-up did not have the intended effects. Both the STAIT mission and the global cluster mission identified ways forward, but implementation stalled. Finally, several interviewees felt that the effectiveness of inter-cluster coordination depended on the quality of the relationships between coordinators.
- 77 **Involvement of national NGOs.** Few national non-governmental organizations were active in the drought response in Ethiopia – and those that were mostly acted as subcontractors for international NGOs or UN organizations. In the wake of the Grand Bargain localization commitment, international NGOs implemented several capacity-building initiatives. While some had lasting effects on individual national NGOs, most efforts were short-lived. Only three national NGOs accessed funding from the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund.
- 78 The space for national NGOs in Ethiopia – and for rights-based civil society initiatives in particular – has been limited. Until the adoption of a new Organization of Civil Societies Proclamation in March 2019,

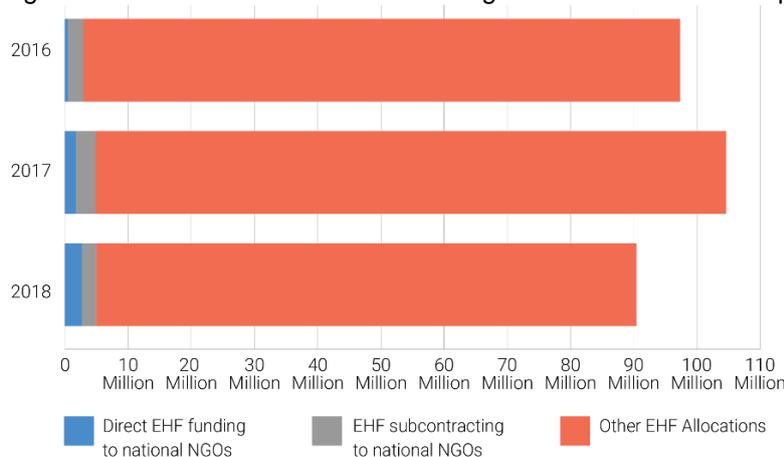
<sup>34</sup> Government of Ethiopia and Humanitarian Partners. 2017. *Ethiopia Humanitarian Requirements Document*, p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> EHCT meeting notes.

the regulatory environment for national NGOs was defined by the restrictive 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation.<sup>36</sup> This limited the engagement of national and local NGOs in several ways: All NGOs needed to obtain written approval before opening bank accounts or collecting funds. Most NGOs were barred from holding foreign currency accounts, which are often required when receiving international contributions. In addition, NGOs involved in human rights or advocacy work were not allowed to receive more than 10 percent of their overall funding from foreign sources. Finally, the law also capped funding for administrative activities at 30 percent of the overall budget, while defining administrative activities so broadly that this limited staff trainings, studies, and workshop participation, among other things. These factors have effectively prevented all but a very small number of national NGOs from taking on a more prominent role in the drought response.

- 79 There were several attempts to increase the capacity and involvement of national and local NGOs. National NGOs, for example, appreciated the “Shifting the Power” project, which was implemented by the Humanitarian INGO Forum between 2015 and 2017. One of the participating NGOs was able to access resources from the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund as a result. All four of the previous evaluations which discussed national NGO involvement also found that there was some successful collaboration between a few humanitarian organizations and well-positioned national NGOs, but that national NGO participation in the drought response was not at the level it should have been. International NGOs, for example, encouraged better coordination of national NGOs via the Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations. However, the initial idea to include a representative of this consortium in the EHCT did not materialize. Therefore national NGO participation in coordination remains limited – only two of the national organizations interviewed regularly participate in clusters, and most did not think that their organization was adequately represented in the coordination system.
- 80 According to the national NGO representatives interviewed, the 2016 Grand Bargain commitment to localize humanitarian responses temporarily increased the level of direct funding available to them. However, improvements were short-lived. Interviewees pointed out that increases in the funding to local NGOs increased in 2017, but stopped after that. While the global focus on localization thus triggered concrete changes on the ground, the effects on direct funding were temporary.
- 81 Unlike country-based pooled funds in other countries, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund did not play an active role in strengthening the role of national NGOs or in channelling resources to them.<sup>37</sup> The share of funding provided directly from the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund to national NGOs went up from 0.5 percent in 2016 to 3 percent in 2018 (Figure 4). While this is a positive development, the share remained very low compared to other pooled funds. In addition, all the direct funding went to only three national organizations: the Relief Society of Tigray, the Mothers and Children Multisectoral Development Organization, and SOS SAHEL Ethiopia. A total of 19 national NGOs received pooled fund resources indirectly through subcontracts. Two previous evaluations also criticized the fact that national NGOs in Ethiopia were treated as subcontractors rather than partners.

Figure 4: Direct and Indirect EHF Funding to National NGOs Compared to Other Allocations



Source: OCHA EHF Support for National NGOs (2016–2018) – Excel Sheet

<sup>36</sup> See International Center for Not-for-Profit Law. Undated. *Civic Freedom Monitor: Ethiopia*.

<sup>37</sup> See the forthcoming evaluation on country-based pooled funds.

## 2.2 Resource Mobilization and Timeliness: How Effective Were Efforts to Collectively Mobilize Resources and Enable a Timely Response?

- 82 **Background.** *The timeliness of a response largely depends on whether early warning signs are available and understood, whether they trigger early action, and whether sufficient funding is available at the right time. The timeline on pages 22-23 provides a month-by-month overview of drought developments, early warnings, political events, humanitarian milestones, and incoming funding.*
- 83 *The revised funding requirements for Ethiopia went up from US\$596 million in 2015 to US\$1.6 billion in 2016, and have remained at approximately the same level since then (Figure 5). Yearly requirements have been 60- to 68-percent funded in the period under review.*

Figure 5: Yearly Financial Requirements and Incoming Funding

Year	2015	2016	2017**	2018**
Original requirement	US\$386 million	US\$1.4 billion	US\$948 million	US\$1.7 billion
Revised requirement	US\$596 million	US\$1.6 billion	US\$1.4 billion	US\$1.5 billion
Total funded as % of revised requirement	US\$404 million (68%)	US\$1.1 billion (67%)	US\$957 million (68%)	US\$896 million (60%)

Sources: OCHA data, HRDs, and mid-year reviews (incoming funding only, not including annual carryover)

\*\* Funding for drought and conflict-related responses combined.

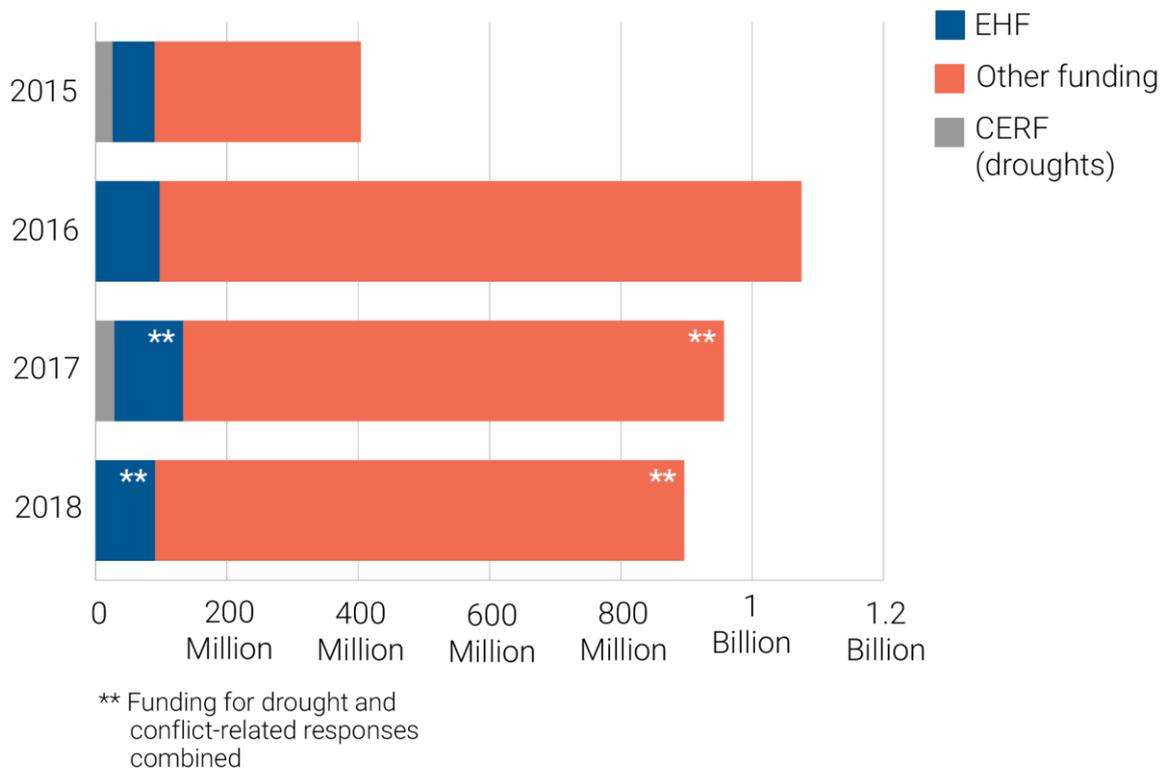
- 84 *While figures vary, there is broad agreement that the Ethiopian government made significant financial contributions to the drought response. For example, the 2016 Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD) reported a contribution of US\$119 million for 2015, while the 2017 HRD reported a contribution of US\$272 million, and other available documentation records US\$102.7 million for the same year. In 2015, a global drop in oil prices freed up government resources and enabled a significant contribution. Drought-response funding was not included in the government's regular budget. Nevertheless, reported contributions remained high in subsequent years, reaching a reported record of US\$342 million in 2018.<sup>38</sup>*
- 85 *The majority of international humanitarian funding was provided by three donors: the US, the UK, and ECHO. Their combined contributions amounted to between 58 and 78 percent of annual external funding in Ethiopia.<sup>39</sup> In addition to bilateral funding, the Ethiopian drought response was funded through a country-based pooled fund, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF), and contributions from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) (Figure 6). At between US\$64 and US\$105 million per year, the EHF was the fifth-largest country-based pooled fund between 2015 and 2018, and the second-largest in 2017.<sup>40</sup> To allocate funding, clusters make recommendations to OCHA, which then compiles recommendations on which the Humanitarian Coordinator decides. Figure 6 provides an overview of the total EHF and CERF contributions.*

<sup>38</sup> OCHA. 2019. *Situation Report No. 20* (January 2019).

<sup>39</sup> [Financial Tracking Service](#) (last accessed on 15 August 2019).

<sup>40</sup> [Country-Based Pooled Fund Grant Management System](#) (last accessed on 15 August 2019).

Figure 6: EHF and CERF Funding Compared to Total Humanitarian Funding

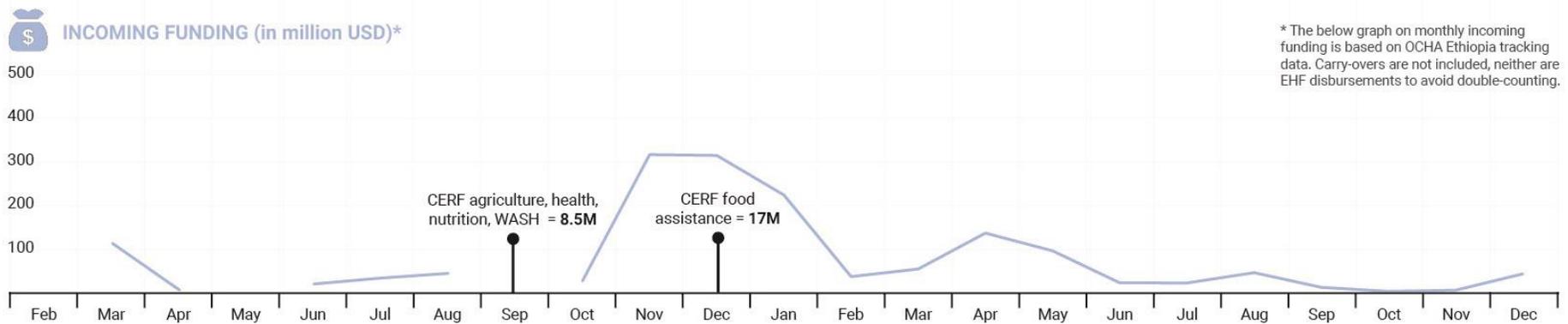
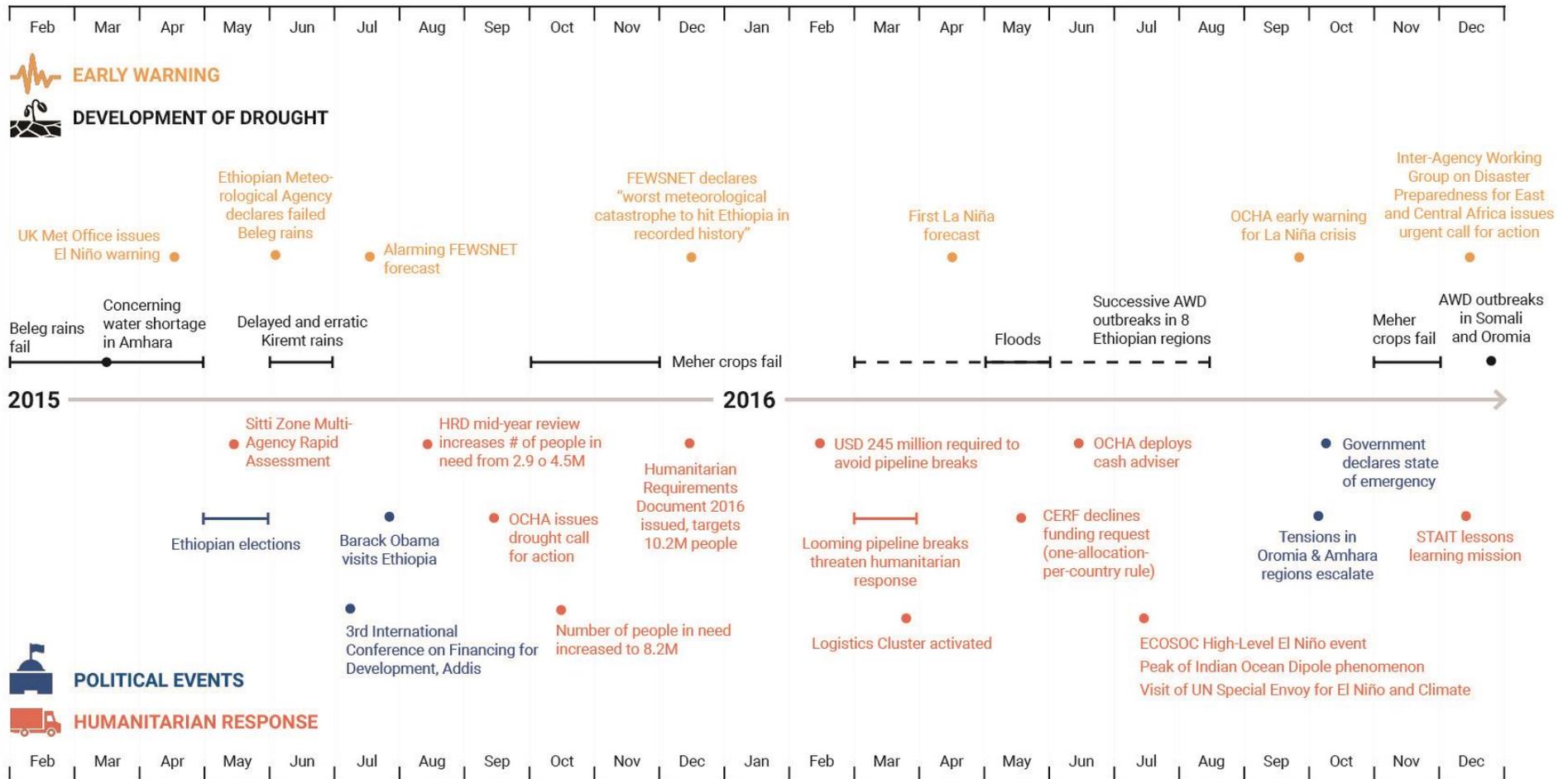


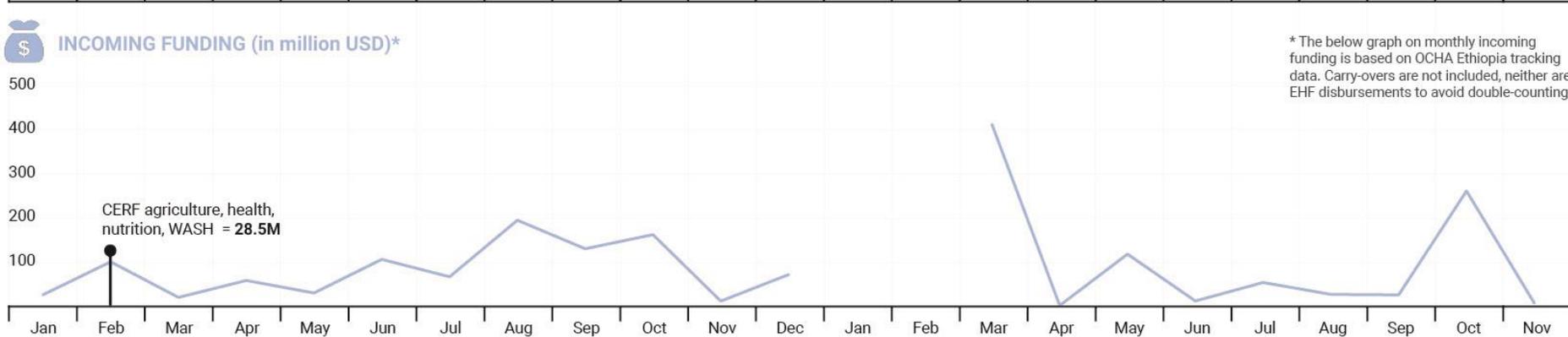
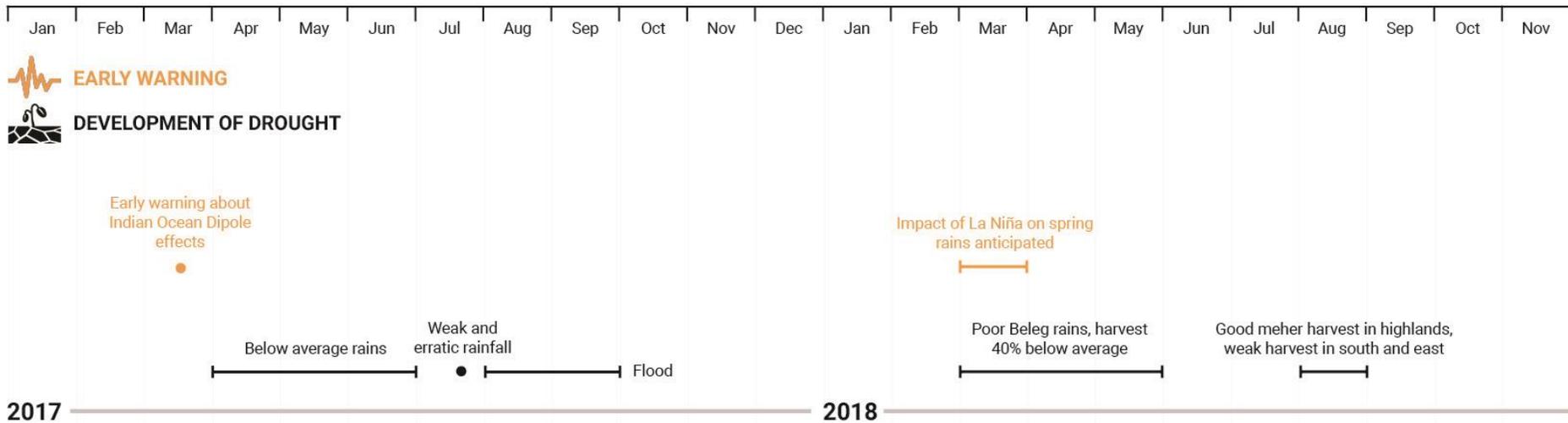
Source: Evaluation team, based on OCHA table and HRD

- 86 Each year between 2015 and 2018, Ethiopia received a significant contribution from the CERF. In 2015, Ethiopia was the third-largest CERF recipient. CERF contributions focused on various emergencies. In 2015, US\$25.5 million of a total contribution of over US\$27 million was allocated to the drought response. In 2016, an allocation of US\$20.5 million went to the response to South Sudanese refugees. In 2017, the US\$28.5 million contribution focused on the drought in the Somali region. In 2018, the US\$30.3 million contribution supported the response to conflict-related displacement.<sup>41</sup>

Figure 7: Timeline (on next two pages). Source: Evaluation team

<sup>41</sup> CERF Allocations by Country (last accessed on 15 August 2019).

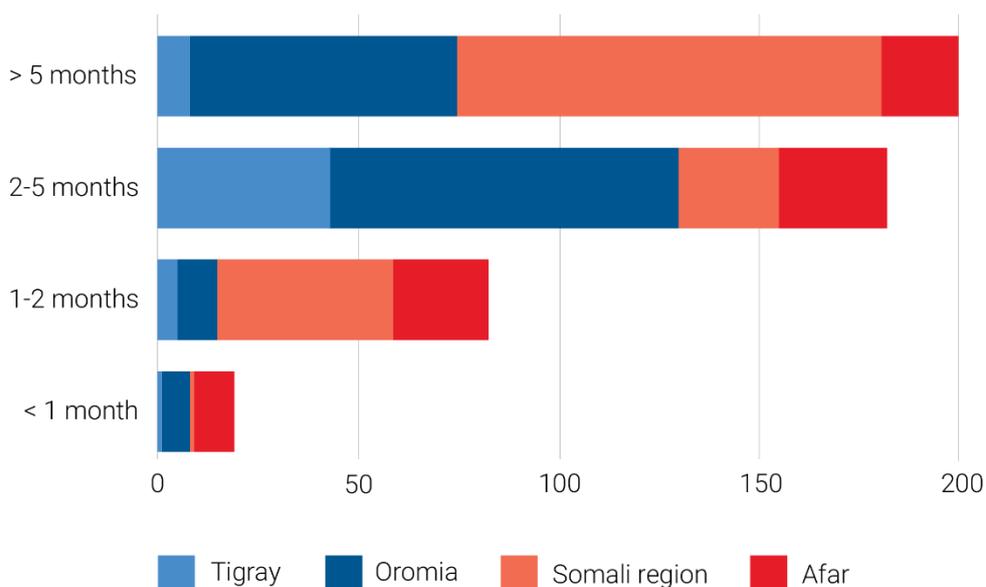




\* The below graph on monthly incoming funding is based on OCHA Ethiopia tracking data. Carry-overs are not included, neither are EHF disbursements to avoid double-counting.

- 87 **Timeliness of the response.** An overwhelming majority of 79 percent of the affected people surveyed for this evaluation received assistance more than two months after the start of the drought, and 41 percent had to wait for five months or more. While this response time was sufficient to prevent many deaths, it could not prevent an increase in the number of children admitted for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and dropping out from school, particularly in Afar and the Somali region.
- 88 The humanitarian community did not set any specific goals for itself regarding timeliness, either in 2015 or in 2017, or even in earlier responses, such as in 2011. As a result, there is no clear benchmark on what a “timely” response is and no monitoring data regarding timeliness were available. When the evaluation team asked open-ended questions, most interviewees raised the timeliness of the response as one of their main concerns. Aid workers, donors, and government officials alike thought that the response was late, particularly (but not only) in 2015/2016.
- 89 In the affected people survey, the largest number of respondents (41 percent) indicated that they had to wait more than five months before receiving assistance. Only 4 percent stated that they received assistance within one month of the beginning of the drought. As Figure 8 shows, there are important differences between the regions. Respondents in the Somali region indicated the longest waiting times, with 60 percent of respondents indicating that they had to wait for five months or longer until they received assistance, followed by Oromia (39 percent). The responses from Tigray were the most positive (with 14 percent waiting for five months or longer), followed by Afar (25 percent). There were no significant differences according to sex, age, or disability.

Figure 8: Survey Responses to: “How long after the drought started did you get the assistance?” N=484



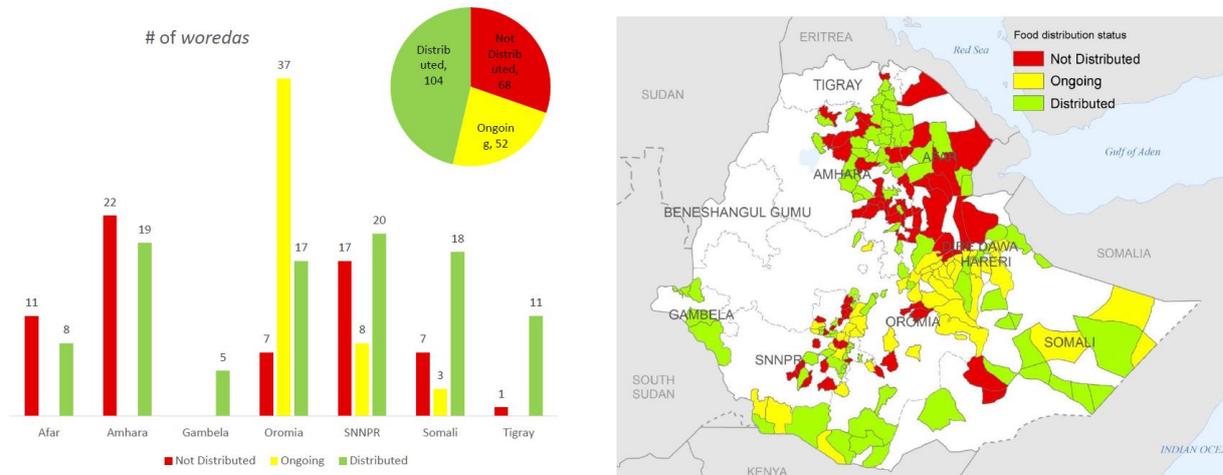
Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

- 90 For 2016, OCHA conducted a call-around monitoring to inquire about the progress of the response in priority areas. The results show important delays and gaps in the delivery and distribution of food assistance. In 30 percent of all the *woredas* surveyed, the most recent food delivery had not yet been distributed. Distribution of food that had arrived four to eight weeks prior had not yet been completed in 36 percent of *woredas* (all of which were in Afar, Oromia, and SNNPR).<sup>42</sup> In addition, 22 prioritized *woredas* did not receive food for three consecutive rounds in 2016 (see Figure 9).<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> OCHA Humanitarian Response Monitoring Ad Hoc Survey, 10–20 October 2016, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

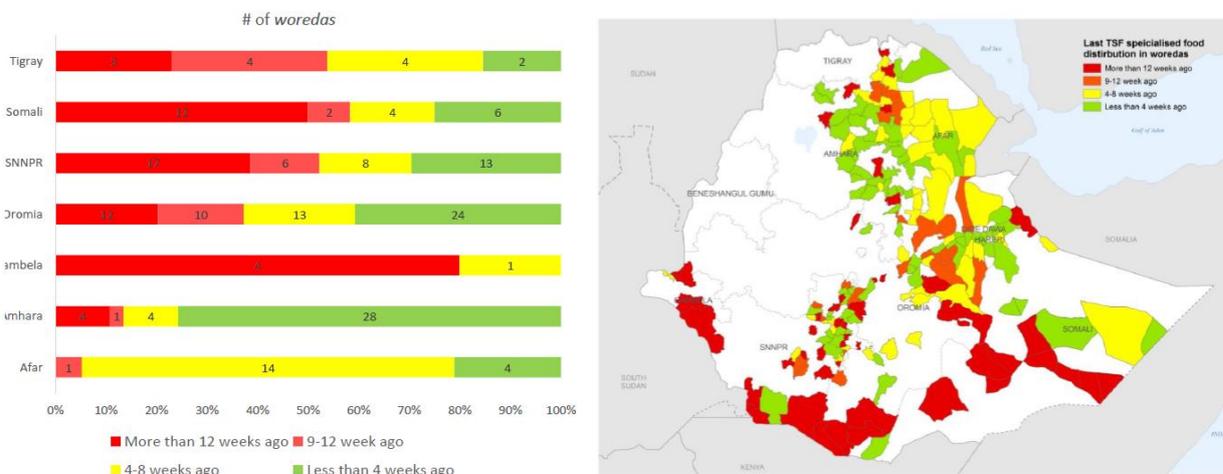
Figure 9: Call-Around Monitoring, 2016: “Has the most recent food to arrive in the woreda been distributed to people?”



Source: OCHA Humanitarian Response Monitoring Ad Hoc Survey, 10–20 October 2016

91 Similarly, some interviewees noted delays in the distribution of Targeted Supplementary Feeding (TSF) rations. The 2016 call-around monitoring found delays of at least nine weeks in half of the woredas in Tigray and in some woredas in Sitti, both of which were heavily affected by El Niño (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Call-Around Monitoring, 2016: “When was the last TSF specialised food delivery to the woreda?”



Source: OCHA Humanitarian Response Monitoring Ad Hoc Survey, 10–20 October 2016

92 Distribution delays were also apparent in other sectors. The Ethiopia Shelter/NFI Cluster Evaluation (2015–2016), for example, found that Non-Food Items (NFI) were stalled in warehouses for seven months after expedited delivery in May 2016 because the authorities did not have enough funding to organize distribution.<sup>44</sup>

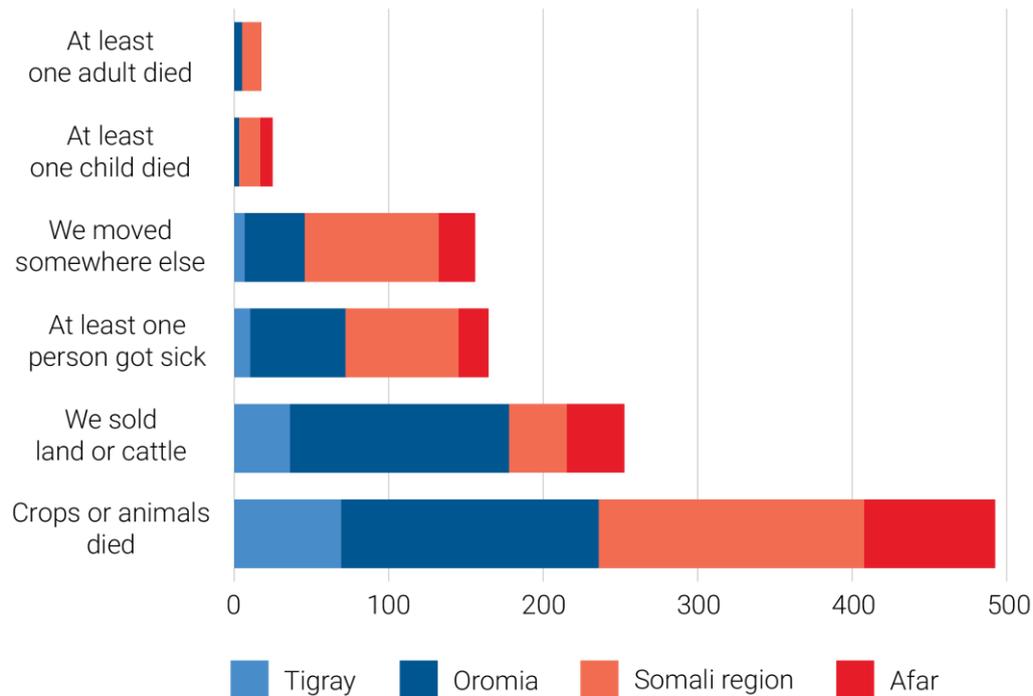
93 A timely response is intended to alleviate or prevent the worst effects of the crisis on affected people.<sup>45</sup> Available data points indicate that the Ethiopian response was successful in preventing the worst effects of the crisis (i.e. people dying), but less successful in preventing other negative effects:

<sup>44</sup> Shelter NFI cluster evaluation, p. 22.

<sup>45</sup> A study of one early response in Sitti and Harargeh did not find evidence that early response helped asset protection. See Simon Levine, Agata Kusnierek, and Lewis Sida. 2019. *Early Response and Resilience Investments: The Case of Drought in Eastern Ethiopia in 2015–16.*

- 5 percent of affected people surveyed for this evaluation indicated that a child had died in their family as a result of the drought and 3 percent reported that an adult had died. In light of the high recorded incidence of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) this figure is low. However, many reported other negative effects, such as family members getting sick (31 percent) or crops or animals dying (92 percent) (Figure 11).

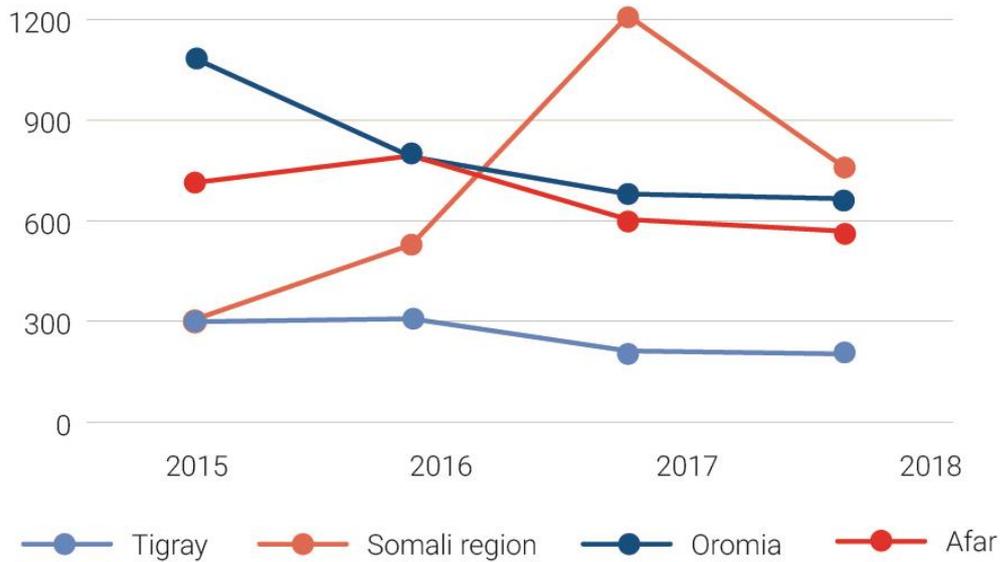
Figure 11: Drought Effects Reported by Affected People



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

- Available data on the number of children admitted for treatment of SAM suggest that the response was particularly late in Afar and the Somali region. While SAM admission numbers (calculated as the average number of admissions per *woreda*) continuously declined in Oromia and Tigray, they spiked significantly in Afar and the Somali region during or after the peak of the drought in each region (see Figure 12). Such significant spikes cannot be explained by an increasing number of available health posts, as the number of children admitted per health post also spiked, particularly in the Somali region.

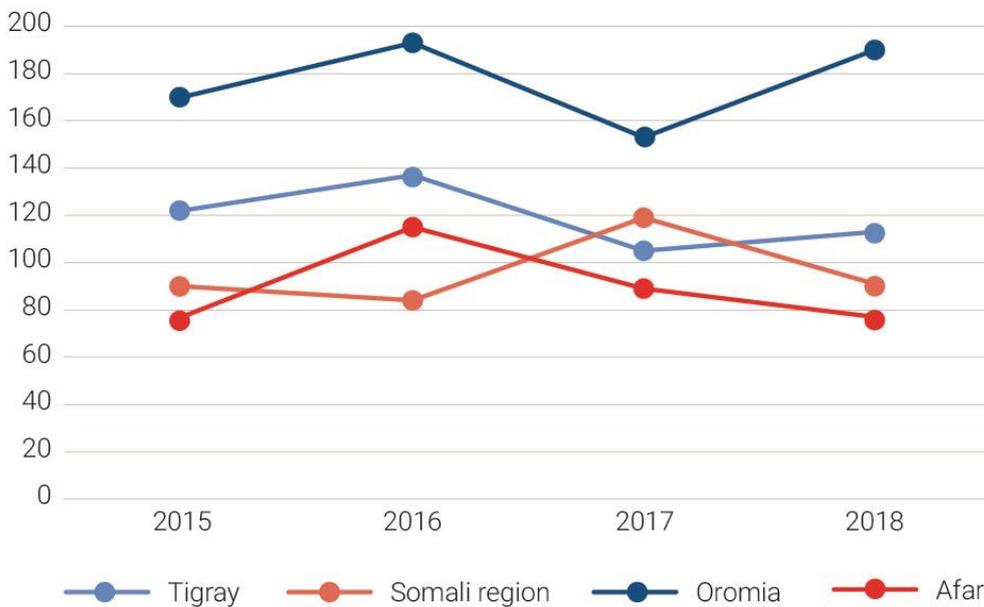
Figure 12: Average Number of Children per Woreda Admitted for SAM Treatment



Source: Evaluation team computation, based on UNICEF (2018)

- Primary school dropout figures – as another indicator that the response did not fully prevent communities from resorting to negative coping mechanisms – paint a similar picture. As Figure 13 shows, Oromia and Tigray experienced light spikes in primary school dropout rates following the 2015/2016 drought. Spikes in Afar following the 2015/2016 drought and in the Somali region during the 2017 drought were more severe.

Figure 13: Average Number of Children per Woreda Who Dropped Out of Primary School



Source: Evaluation team computation, based on Ministry of Education (2018)

- Eight previous evaluations specified that livestock support was only provided after a substantial number of animals had died, too late to avoid the erosion of assets. These observations raise the question to what extent a humanitarian response can be expected to prevent or reverse the crisis-related erosion of assets.

- 94 **Early warning.** Significant investment has gone into improving drought early warning systems in Ethiopia over the past several years. However, a few weaknesses remain. First and foremost, in their current form, early warning reports are not suitable for passing on warnings to people in drought-prone areas. Second, their focus on agricultural indicators delays the detection of droughts in pastoral areas. Despite these weaknesses, the available information was sufficient to predict the scope of the different droughts early on. However, the humanitarian community struggled to adequately process and act upon the information.
- 95 Early warning information was readily available to the humanitarian community for all the droughts reviewed in this evaluation. FewNet, the UK Met Office, and others publish regular analyses of indicators such as soil moisture and rain patterns. Most interviewees emphasized that important investment had gone into early warning systems and lauded the available products. Within this largely positive picture, however, interviewees also pointed to some weaknesses.
- 96 First, early warning information and reports were not useful in helping drought-affected people take their own precautions. Such analyses are mostly available in English rather than Amharic or other local languages, the reports use inaccessible scientific jargon, and there were no attempts to share information with drought-affected communities. Earlier studies confirm this finding (see quote). By not addressing this, the humanitarian community missed an opportunity to have an important impact on people's ability to prepare with minimal investment.
- "In terms of [...] warning [potentially affected] people of impending shocks, the early warning for the 2015–2016 El Niño was an enormous failure." *Early Response and Resilience Investments: The Case of Drought in Eastern Ethiopia in 2015–16*
- 97 Second, forecasts focused heavily on agricultural indicators such as crop production and followed the *belg* and *kiremt* rains, which are key to agricultural production, more closely than the rainy seasons, which are critical for pastoralists. Important indicators for pastoralist areas, such as levels of animal milk production or fodder availability, were not included in the forecasts. Consequently, interviewees felt that droughts in pastoralist areas were detected late. This analysis is consistent with the data points above, suggesting that the response was more severely delayed in Afar and the Somali region – which are predominantly pastoralist areas – than in Tigray and Oromia.
- 98 Despite these weaknesses in early warning data, interviewees and previous evaluations consistently found that the humanitarian community generally had sufficient information at hand to be aware of the expected impact of impending droughts.<sup>46</sup> However, humanitarian actors had difficulty processing early warning information. According to several interviewees, meteorological information did not receive adequate attention.<sup>47</sup> One reason for this was that discussions in the EHCT tended to focus on the ongoing response, with little space to reflect on impending developments.
- 99 **Early action.** With ample early warning information available, the main reason for late response was the humanitarian community's delayed reaction to warning signs. In all the phases analyzed, alarm bells went off – and triggered funding – only after harvests failed and malnutrition rates went up. Assessment and government approval processes also took too long. In addition, individual phases were delayed due to late government recognition of the emergency, intervening political dynamics, slow funding decisions, and/or competing humanitarian priorities.
- 100 With sufficient early warning information available, delays occurred because early warnings did not sufficiently trigger early action – this is a recurring theme brought up in previous evaluations and reviews as well. Some of the factors that explain why this has remained an issue are the same for all the droughts within the scope of this evaluation. Funding was only made available once it was confirmed that harvests had indeed failed, and once evidence of rising malnutrition levels was clear. Interviewees also pointed to the onerous government-led, multi-agency assessment process, delays in publishing official figures on people in need, and delays in
- "In addition to the absurdity of waiting for a failed harvest before sounding the alarm is the fact that the current bureaucratic systems can add three months' further delay to collate and analyze the data from the different areas." *Comprehensive Review of 2016–17 ECHO Horn of Africa Drought Response.*

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, François Grünewald, Valérie Léon, and Simon Levine. *Comprehensive Review of 2016–17 ECHO Horn of Africa Drought Response*, p.18.

<sup>47</sup> See also Levine et al., p. 26.

government approval for humanitarian projects as contributing factors. Other factors differed between the different droughts during the period under review, as also illustrated in the timeline above:

- The drought in the **Sitti** zone in early 2015 caught the humanitarian system off guard. Two successive failed rainy seasons in 2014 should have provided sufficient warning of the looming drought. According to several interviewees, the humanitarian community did not act on the information available at that time. When the Multi-Agency Rapid Assessment finally took place in May 2015, conditions were already dire, and livestock were decimated. This failure to foresee the impact of El Niño on the already depleted resources in Sitti meant that insufficient action was taken.<sup>48</sup> Interviewees pointed to two main reasons why early action failed. First, the humanitarian community was slow to take action on any new crisis before the general elections in May 2015, out of a concern that humanitarian issues would be politicized. Second, after a few years of comparatively good rains across Ethiopia, the international community was focused on development interventions and the refugee response and was paying little attention to drought dynamics.
- Warnings of the likely severity of the **2015 El Niño** drought were available by April 2015.<sup>49</sup> However, it took until November 2015 for international funding to come in at the required levels. Several factors explain this late action in the context of the El Niño drought. First, the Ethiopian government was late to acknowledge the drought for political reasons. Ethiopia hosted the International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015, and US President Barack Obama visited in the same month. For both events, the Ethiopian government was keen to showcase the country's progress on development. Acknowledging a drought-related crisis would have tainted that picture. Declaring the El Niño drought a Level 3 response would have helped to mobilize international funding, but the international community refrained from doing so because the government did not acknowledge the crisis. The absence of an official warning also made it difficult for donor staff based in Ethiopia to argue for funding in their respective capitals and restricted private fundraising. This is an example in which lessons from earlier crises were only partially taken up. A real-time evaluation of the drought response in 2011 had already highlighted the fact that donors have difficulty committing funding in the absence of an "official" recognition or appeal.<sup>50</sup> As a remedy, OCHA issued a drought call to action in September 2015, while assessments were still ongoing.<sup>51</sup> According to several interviewees, this document helped draw attention to the drought – but only five months after the first warning signs. Second, after decades of making large development contributions, international donors expected the Ethiopian government to fund a substantive part of the humanitarian response. Donors therefore waited for the government's pledges before adding their own contributions, which further delayed the response. Third, interviewees who witnessed EHCT meetings in the run-up to the May 2015 elections reported that there was little space for open discussion of the droughts due to political sensitivities. Ministers were only appointed several months after the elections, which also meant that the humanitarian community did not have clear counterparts in the respective line ministries.
- The first meteorological forecasts for **La Niña** came out in April 2016,<sup>52</sup> and the peak of the **Indian Ocean Dipole** occurred in July 2016.<sup>53</sup> Despite these early warnings, the mid-year review – issued in August 2016 – did not analyze how the two simultaneous weather events would drive needs in the lowland areas. At that point, only the agriculture cluster committed to developing a La Niña emergency plan. FewsNet issued a crisis warning in October 2016,<sup>54</sup> and by December 2016, the NGO Inter-Agency Working Group on Disaster Preparedness for East and Central Africa issued an urgent call for action.<sup>55</sup> Despite these repeated early warnings, however, incoming funding levels remained low, averaging US\$21 million a month in the second half of 2016. The monthly average doubled to US\$55 million in the first half of 2017, and again to US\$105 million in the

<sup>48</sup> Lewis Sida, Simon Levine, Bill Gray, and Courtenay Cabot Venton. 2019. *Multi-year Humanitarian Funding in Ethiopia*.

<sup>49</sup> USAID/Ethiopia Agriculture Knowledge, Learning, Documentation and Policy Project. 2016. *El Niño in Ethiopia, 2015–2016 – A Real-Time Review of Impacts and Responses*.

<sup>50</sup> IASC. 2012. *Real-Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to the Horn of Africa Drought Crisis – Ethiopia*.

<sup>51</sup> OCHA & EHCT. 2015. *Ethiopia Slow Onset Natural Disaster, Sep 2015*.

<sup>52</sup> Grünewald et al., *Comprehensive Review of 2016–17 ECHO Horn of Africa Drought Response*.

<sup>53</sup> HRD, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> FewsNet. 2016. *Ethiopia Food Security Outlook October 2016 to May 2017*.

<sup>55</sup> Inter-Agency Working Group on Disaster Preparedness for East and Central Africa. 2016. *Lesson Learned? An Urgent Call for Action in the Horn of Africa*.

second half of 2017. In this case, interviewees attributed the lack of early funding and early action to four main factors. First, the drought mainly affected pastoralists in the Ethiopian lowlands, who were not the main constituents of the then-government. The Ethiopian government contradicted the humanitarian community's statements at times by stressing decreasing humanitarian needs, which hindered fundraising efforts.<sup>56</sup> Second, the humanitarian community's attention was focused on getting the cholera crisis under control, and high malnutrition rates were not sufficiently prioritized. In addition, the increasing shift of attention to conflict-induced displacement overshadowed drought-related needs. Third, donors found it challenging to argue for funding for yet another drought in Ethiopia after substantial contributions had been made in the previous years. Competing priorities in Syria and the "four famines" advocacy effort – covering Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen – diverted attention away from Ethiopia. Fourth, while surge deployments were pointed out as helpful, other global support measures did not seem to have the desired effect on improving the timeliness of the response. No interviewee mentioned any collective global preparedness bodies, such as the IASC Reference Group for Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness.

- 101 **Resource mobilization.** The humanitarian community in Ethiopia invested in a substantive resource mobilization effort for the El Niño drought in 2015. Funding arrived late but at a high level in 2016. Resource mobilization efforts for the Indian Ocean Dipole/La Niña in 2017 were less successful, mainly due to underestimated needs in the initial 2017 humanitarian requirements document. For 2017 and 2018, it was not possible to discern how much funding went into the drought response as compared to the displacement response.
- 102 With 60 to 68 percent of requirements funded between 2015 and 2018, resource mobilization in Ethiopia was above the global average of 58 percent for the same period.<sup>57</sup> However, fundraising efforts for the droughts were not perceived as equally successful over the years. Interviewees found the fundraising effort for El Niño well coordinated, thanks to a joint effort and to OCHA's strong supporting role. The EHCT used different opportunities to raise funds, including visits to donor countries and a presence in global fora.<sup>58</sup> Interviewees attributed this difference to lessons learned from 2011.
- 103 According to the aid worker survey, however, issues related to funding levels, timeliness, and focus were still the most common factors (at 17 out of the 80 factors mentioned) hindering an effective drought response in Ethiopia. The main reason for interviewees' dissatisfaction is the late arrival of funding, as discussed in the preceding paragraphs. In addition, the initial appeal in 2017 set the funding target too low, because it underestimated the number of people in need – which had to be corrected from 5.6 million to 8.5 million people in August 2017. Several interviewees also felt that relatively more funding went to support the conflict response than the drought response in 2017 and 2018. It is difficult to analyse these claims systematically, as funding requests and reporting do not enable a clear distinction between the two responses.
- 104 **Funding instruments.** Bilateral funding was the most important funding source. However, interviewees criticized aspects of various bilateral funding instruments. They recognized internal emergency funds of humanitarian organizations and crisis modifiers of development programs as particularly helpful for enabling a fast response. Interviewees appreciated the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund mainly for its strategic gap-filling role. Some interviewees criticized its short-term focus and its tendency to support sector-focused responses. The ability of the CERF to enable timely response was seen as limited. CERF applied lessons from earlier drought responses globally in 2019 by launching an anticipatory drought funding pilot.
- 105 Despite its importance in absolute terms, most interviewees criticized certain **bilateral funding** instruments as unpredictable, too heavily earmarked, and not always aligned with the priorities set by the humanitarian planning process. For example, calls for proposals made by donors often specify the zones and types of intervention, and there is little flexibility to adjust this based on cluster or organizational assessments. In addition, interviewees reported that it can take up to six months – or in extreme cases, up to a year – from project proposal to the disbursement of funding, depending on the

<sup>56</sup> EHCT meeting notes, 12 January 2017.

<sup>57</sup> This is the average between 2015 and 2017, reported in ALNAP. 2018. *The State of the Humanitarian System 2018*, p. 87.

<sup>58</sup> This is taken from an analysis of HCT meeting notes.

donor. Several interviewees pointed to ECHO's funding process as a good practice example. Based on a short concept note, ECHO commits funding within one month.

- 106 Humanitarian organizations used different alternatives to enable timely assistance. A relatively small number of humanitarian organizations active in Ethiopia reported having a significant amount of **internal emergency funds** at their disposal. Those that did were adamant that this was by far the most effective source of funding in enabling them to act early. WFP's forward purchase facility was one such example which several interviewees pointed to as good practice.
- 107 **Crisis modifiers**, portions of development grants that can be repurposed to respond to occurring crises, were the second instrument frequently mentioned as effective in enabling a rapid response. Depending on the exact processes used by the respective development funder, some interviewees reported that they were able to start using these modifiers within a matter of days. Crisis modifiers had also been used in earlier responses, and interviewees pointed to a slowly increasing number of projects in which they were included. However, because organizations can usually only draw on 5 to 10 percent of existing funding, crisis modifiers were not sufficient to support larger-scale interventions. In addition, there were some examples in which donors restricted the use of crisis modifiers to the same *woreda* as the development intervention, which made it impossible to intervene in more heavily drought-affected areas.
- 108 Finally, many organizations had benefitted from **Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF)** contributions and emphasized the usefulness of this funding instrument. Among aid worker survey respondents, the largest number (19) indicated the EHF as the most important funding mechanism in enabling a timely response. They appreciated the EHF because it is predictable and because it aligns closely with collective priorities. However, there were also some shortcomings. First, because clusters played an important role in selecting projects, the EHF process incentivized single- rather than multi-sectoral projects. Second, several partners emphasized that EHF funding contributions were typically for six months or less and criticized this timeline as too short-term. In theory, the EHF's short-term contributions allow organizations to kick-start the response, assuming that they will then receive follow-on funding from bilateral or other sources. However, since bilateral funding tends to be largely earmarked (see below), in practice, specific projects rarely receive continued funding. In addition, government approval and staff recruitment take a long time, so there is little time left for implementation and limited room to take longer-term considerations into account. Third, the shift to handling calls for proposals at a specific point in time – rather than on a rolling basis, as during the El Niño response – made the EHF less useful in early action. This was a major trade-off. While it allowed the EHF to make more strategic decisions, and while processing timelines from proposal to decision improved,<sup>59</sup> this change increased the time that elapsed between the recognition of a problem and the disbursement of funds.
- 109 In 2015, the **CERF** made two critical allocations to the drought response in Ethiopia, US\$8.5 million from the window for underfunded emergencies and US\$17 million from the rapid response window. With that, Ethiopia was the largest recipient of CERF funding for the El Niño response. However, interviewees highlighted that all CERF funding in 2016 focused on the response to the Sudanese refugee crisis. Because CERF rules only allow one annual allocation per funding window per country, subsequent requests for drought funding were declined. Some interviewees criticized this lack of flexibility<sup>60</sup> and the prioritization of the refugee response. In 2017, the CERF contribution to WFP (nutrition), UNICEF (WASH), and FAO (agriculture) in their drought response in the Somali region was substantial. Nevertheless, indirect recipients of CERF funding – those who received the funding from the three UN organizations – pointed to delays in disbursements from their UN partners, which then defeated the purpose of the rapid-response window. However, the CERF Secretariat has learned the lessons from earlier slow-onset disasters, and CERF launched a pilot of anticipatory funding in the Horn of Africa in June 2019.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> The processing timelines for standard EHF decisions have steadily declined, from 57 days in 2015 to 24 days in 2018. See the EHF annual reports from 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018.

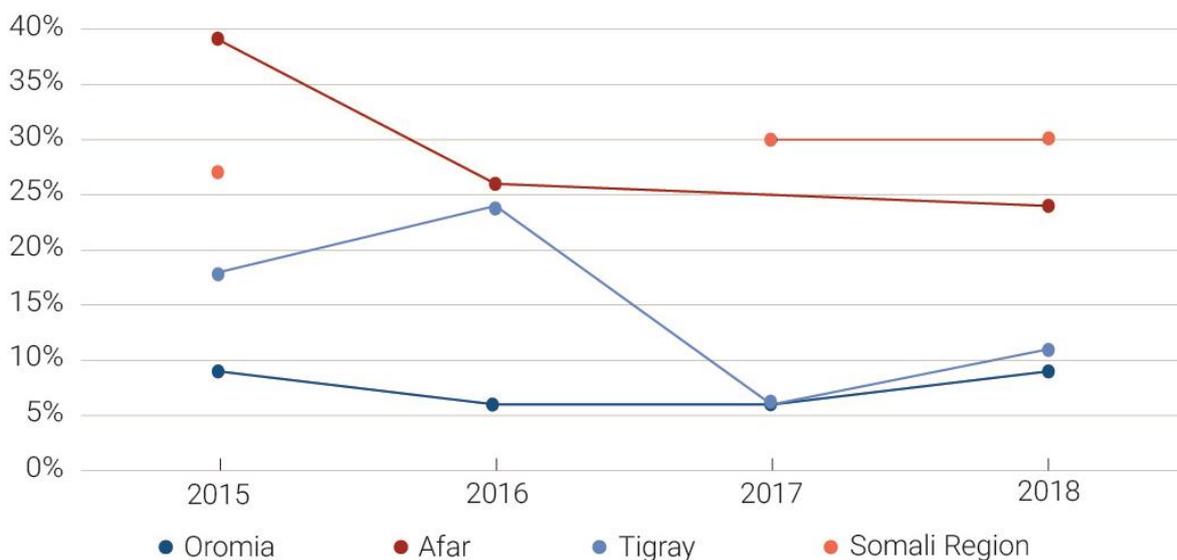
<sup>60</sup> *The Independent Review of the Value Added of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in the Countries Affected by El Niño* (March 2018) notes that organizations were not sufficiently aware of the one-allocation-per-country rule.

<sup>61</sup> OCHA. 2019. *CERF Allocates US\$45M to Stave Off Famine Risk in the Horn of Africa*.

## 2.3 Relevance: Did Planning and Response Reflect the Needs and Priorities of Affected People?

- 110 **Background.** Two annual, seasonal, multi-sectoral assessments – the meher and belg assessments – constitute the main basis for drought-response planning. On the ground, the Ethiopian government and its humanitarian partners implement assessments jointly. Mixed teams of government employees, United Nations staff, and NGO staff travel to a sample of woredas and collect information through interviews with community leaders as well as zonal, woreda, and kebele officials; focus group discussions with farmers and traders; market analyses; and direct field observations. Government authorities then compile the data first at the regional, and then at the federal level. The government publishes the aggregate number of people in need of food assistance based on these assessments and makes recommendations for other response sectors. Figure 14 shows the share of the total population in the four regions investigated for this evaluation who were identified as in need of assistance.

Figure 14: Share of Population in Need of Assistance



Source: Evaluation team computation, based on Disaster Risk Management Committee (2018)

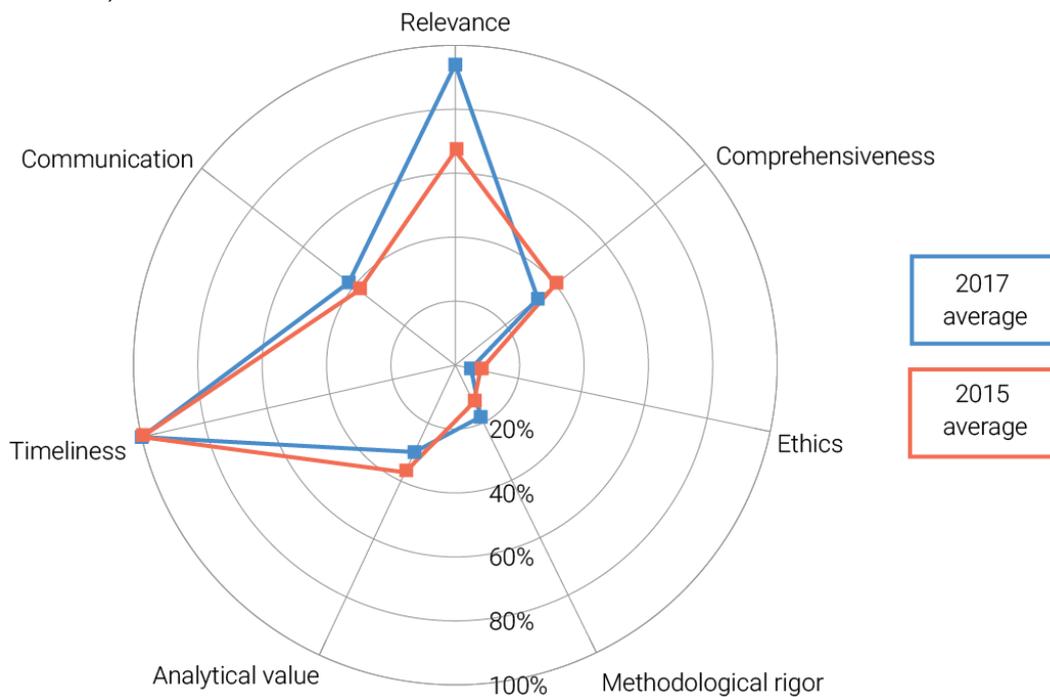
- 111 Based on multi-sector indicators, the government identifies priority woredas for intervention and the humanitarian community then uses this information in its response planning.<sup>62</sup> The International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s displacement tracking matrix also informs response planning for people displaced by conflict or drought. This data feeds into the annual humanitarian response plan, which is issued as a joint planning document approved by the Ethiopian government. In addition to the response plans and their mid-year reviews, the humanitarian community in Ethiopia also issues prioritization statements, in which the main priorities for funding and response are identified. The Somali region government and the regional intercluster coordination group have also prepared two region-specific Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans from November 2018 onward.<sup>63</sup> These covered the period of November 2018 to June 2019, with a three-month extension for June through August 2019.
- 112 **Needs assessment data and its use.** The credibility and accuracy of the needs assessment data used for collective response planning is highly contested. There are issues with data quality and political influence on the data during the compilation and approval processes, as well as with their use for planning. The International Phase Classification system pilot and the introduction of the household economy approach together with the Humanitarian Needs Overview have the potential to improve data quality but are unlikely to address political influence over data.

<sup>62</sup> HRD, 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Somali region government. 2019. *Ethiopia: Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan in the Quest of the 2019 Gu Rainfall Failure and Floods in Somali Region*.

- 113 The assessment data used for collective drought-response planning is highly contested. The majority of interviewees across all stakeholder groups found the assessment results inaccurate due to issues with the quality of and political influence over the data. Eight previous evaluations and reviews also identified issues with disputed or unrealistic data. An important minority of interviewees across all the different stakeholder groups, however, felt that collective assessments reflected the situation on the ground well.
- 114 One issue was the **quality of the seasonal assessments**. The questionnaires and tools used for the assessments have become more sophisticated since 2015. The assessments conducted for the El Niño response, for example, did not address protection at all, whereas there were efforts to include protection checklists in later assessments. However, these tools were not consistently applied. According to several interviewees, for example, the protection checklists yielded few results due to a lack of capacity among those conducting the assessment. Moreover, assessment teams did not conduct the required nutrition screenings in each area visited. In addition, assessments were often rushed due to poor planning, which led to incomplete data collection.
- 115 As part of this evaluation, an analysis of a sample of seasonal assessments was conducted, using a newly developed methodology for assessing the quality of collective needs assessments.<sup>64</sup> This analysis found ongoing issues with the quality of the assessments. Although assessment quality improved with the introduction of the Humanitarian Needs Overview in 2019, none of the evaluated assessments met the minimum standards introduced in mid-2019 as part of the Grand Bargain process. One main weakness of the seasonal assessments was their methodological rigor: reports were not transparent about their data sources or their limitations, and they lacked measures to mitigate bias. Another important weakness was ethics: potential risks to the affected population were not identified, and there were no requirements regarding informed consent for participants. Figure 15 shows the average quality scores of the seasonal assessments conducted in Tigray and the Somali region in 2015 and 2017.

Figure 15: Average Quality Scores of Seasonal Assessments in Tigray and the Somali Region (2015 and 2017)



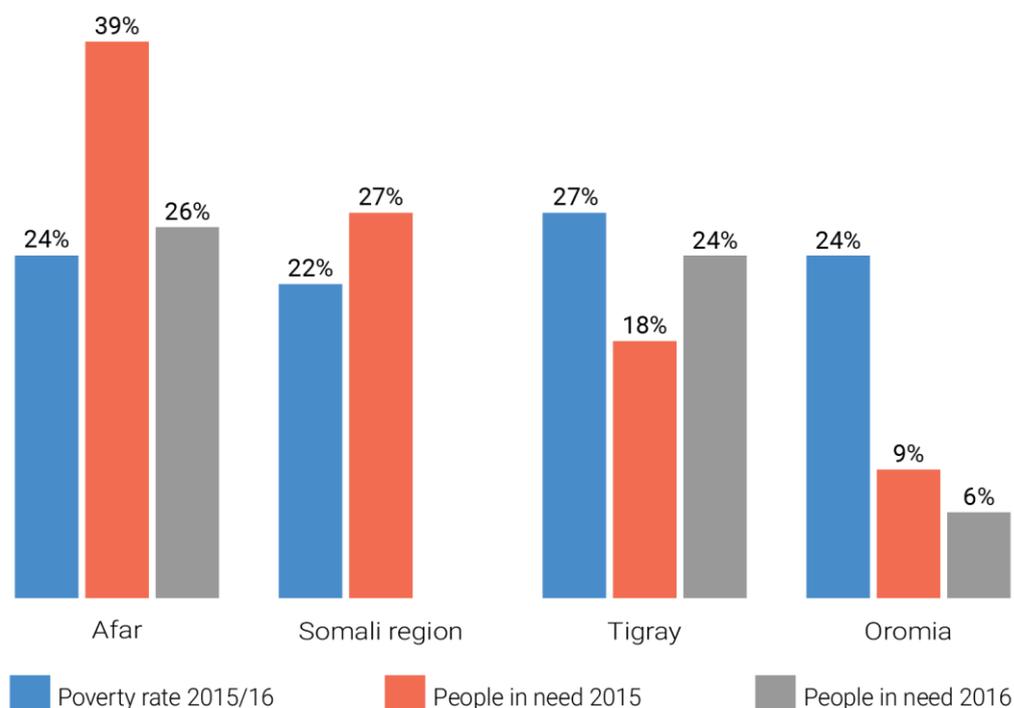
Source: Evaluation team, quality assessment of assessment reports

<sup>64</sup> The methodology was adopted in June 2019. An introduction to the methodology and the assessment tool are available [here](#). The sample of assessment reports analyzed for this evaluation includes the 2015 Somali region *deyr* assessment; the 2015 Tigray food *meher* assessment; the 2015 Tigray non-food *meher* assessment; the 2017 Somali region *gu* assessment; and the 2017 Tigray food and non-food *meher* assessments. The 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview was also assessed, but results are not included in Figure 15 because it lies outside the period assessed by this evaluation.

116 Another issue was **politically motivated changes** in the number of people in need during the data compilation process from the zonal to the federal levels. Interviewees pointed to examples in which they believed the number of people in need was either inflated – to draw more resources to an area – or deflated – to paint a more favorable picture of an area and to uphold a narrative of economic success. There are four points of evidence that support these suspicions:

- The trends in the numbers of people in need in some areas contradict drought patterns and all the available indicators on the severity of the drought's impact. Two data points in particular demonstrate this: The official number of people in need in Afar dropped drastically, from 39 percent of the total population in 2015 to 26 percent in 2016. At the same time, all the objective indicators signal a pronounced peak of the emergency in Afar in 2016. FewsNet indicated that all areas of Afar were in crisis mode and were likely to be at least one phase worse without humanitarian assistance.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, the number of children admitted for treatment of SAM and the number of children who dropped out of primary school peaked in 2016, whether measured in absolute numbers or relative to population size (see above, Figures 12 and 13). The same is true for the Somali region in 2017. Here, official figures report a relatively constant level of around 30 percent of the total population in need of humanitarian assistance. Yet analyses of rainfall patterns, soil moisture, and vegetation; admission numbers for children with SAM; and figures on primary school dropouts all indicate an acute spike in needs in 2017.
- There are instances in which the officially reported number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is larger than the official number of people living in poverty. In Afar and the Somali region, the poverty rate reported for 2015/2016 was significantly lower than the share of the population reported to be in need of assistance in 2015 and 2016. In Tigray and Oromia, by contrast, the reported number of people in need remained well below the poverty rate (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Poverty Rates and Share of Population in Need of Assistance

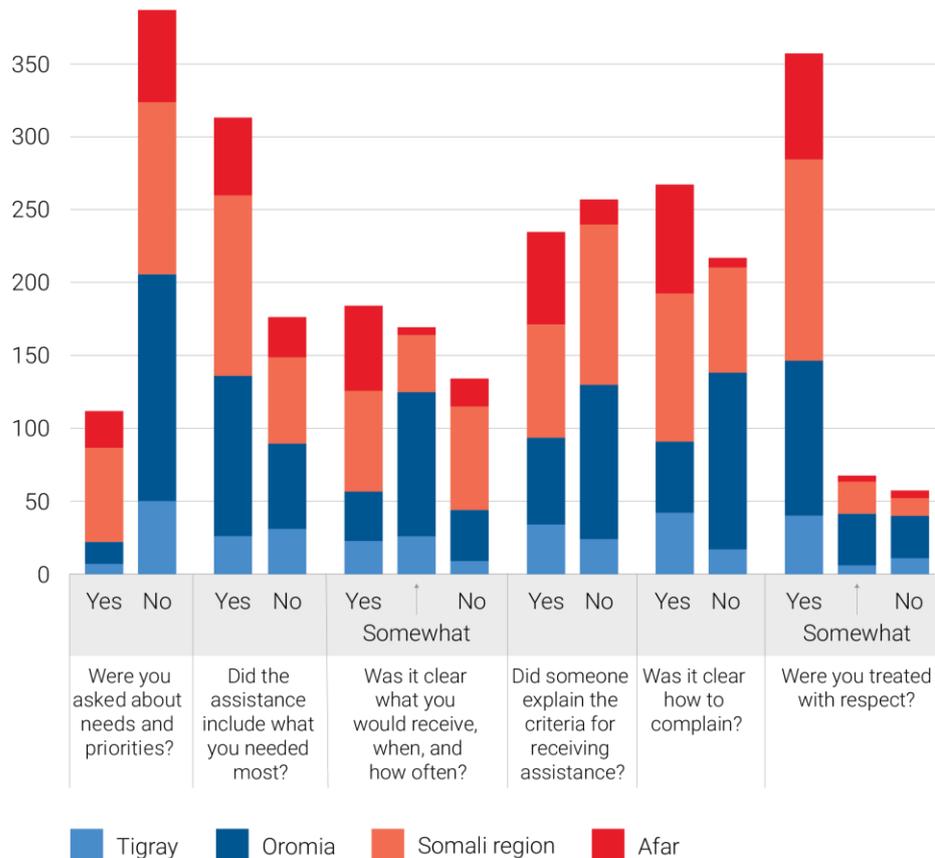


Source: Evaluation team computation, based on Disaster Risk Management Commission (2018) and National Planning Commission (2016)

<sup>65</sup> See, for example, FewsNet and World Food Programme. 2016. *Ethiopia Food Security Outlook, February to September 2016*.

- Humanitarian organizations have repeatedly asked for but were denied access to the original assessment data collected in the field. Humanitarian staff who are part of the assessment teams theoretically have access to primary data during the data collection process. However, most organizations do not use that access to challenge the officially published federal numbers. Only two interviewees reported that their organization compares primary data from the seasonal assessments internally to gauge the veracity of what is published. Some others triangulated the data with their own information sources.
  - Interview partners from several humanitarian organizations who conduct their own needs assessments reported that they were not allowed to publish the result and that they have faced government pressure over divergent data in the past.
- 117 A third issue was that **collective planning documents** did not always reflect the seasonal assessment figures. In 2018, for example, the number of people in need of assistance in the HDRP was lower than that found in the seasonal assessments. Several interviewees pointed to pressure from the Ethiopian government as well as from donors to reduce numbers. In other cases, proxy data and estimates were used for planning. In 2016 and 2017, for example, no protection assessment data were available. The number of people in need of protection interventions was calculated by applying the global average percentage of people requiring protection assistance to the Ethiopian population. In 2017, this number was then revised downward based on the expected capacity of humanitarian organizations to respond.
- 118 The humanitarian community has recognized the data quality issues and successfully advocated for and implemented improvements. Since December 2018, the household economy approach has been used as a standard method for assessments, which strengthens the quality of the data collected. The newly introduced Humanitarian Needs Overview uses this data as a basis and is more transparent in its methodology. In addition, the Ethiopian government is currently piloting the International Phase Classification (IPC) system, which, if adopted, would also increase the rigor of collected data. While interviewees were confident that these developments would improve data quality, they were more skeptical about the possibility of reducing political influence during the compilation process.
- 119 **Accountability to drought-affected people.** A strong majority of 64 percent of survey respondents felt that the response was relevant and included what they needed most. 74 percent felt that they were treated with respect. This is despite the fact that formal mechanisms for creating accountability to affected people were often weak. Between one third and half of the people consulted did not know what assistance they would receive or when, what the selection criteria were, or how they could complain. Since 2016, there have been several inter-agency processes aimed at strengthening engagement with affected people and improving protection against sexual exploitation and abuse. However, more tangible outcomes of these processes – such as the repeatedly recommended collective complaints mechanism – had not yet materialized.
- 120 The survey responses paint a mixed picture of accountability to affected people and show clear room for improvement (see Figure 17). A total of 22 percent of drought-affected people surveyed for this evaluation were **asked about their needs and priorities** before receiving assistance. There are stark regional differences, with only 8 percent of people in Oromia and 12 percent in Tigray indicating that they had been consulted, as compared to 35 percent in the Somali region and 28 percent in Afar. There were no significant differences in the responses of women and people with disabilities on this question.
- 121 Focus group discussions with affected people confirmed issues around consultation. Only one *woreda* consulted – in Oromia – had in the past had a community committee in place. The main criticism was that officials were the primary source of information for assessments. Some assessment teams reportedly included ad hoc “spot checks” with drought-affected people who were selected by *kebelle* officials. However, these consultations were not done systematically, and according to several interviewees, people who are marginalized in a community were unlikely to get a say.
- “People should sit down with us to ask us directly what we need, without interference of the *kebelle* officials – what kills us is having these middle men make decisions for us.” *Women focus group discussion participant*

Figure 17: Survey Results on Questions Related to Accountability to Affected People, N=496, 489, 488, 492, 491, 481



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

- 122 A clear majority of 64 percent of respondents indicated that the assistance **included what they needed most**. While this sounds positive, there are still over one third of respondents who felt the assistance did not include what they needed most. It is critical to point out that this figure is much higher in Tigray, where a staggering 54 percent indicated that the assistance did not include what they needed most. For Tigray, this mirrors the comparatively low level of consultation. Interestingly, the same is not the case for Oromia, where consultation levels were even lower than in Tigray, but answers on this question were average. Statistically speaking, consultation only had a light and statistically not significant effect on how useful respondents found the assistance in the immediate term and whether they felt that it included what they needed most. By contrast, consultation was central to usefulness of the assistance in the longer-term. People who had been consulted about their needs and priorities were almost four times as likely as those who had not been consulted to find the assistance very useful in the longer-term.<sup>66</sup> In terms of the regional variation, the evaluation findings contrast with the 2011 IASC evaluation, which found that the assistance package was less relevant to people in pastoralist areas than in primarily agricultural regions. This indicates that some lessons may have been learned.
- 123 The drought-affected people surveyed for this evaluation were **not well informed** about the assistance they received. Reflecting different practices of different aid organizations, 38 percent of respondents knew what they would receive, when, and how often, while 28 percent did not know. 48 percent said that someone had explained the criteria for receiving assistance to them. Regional differences align only partly with differences in consultation levels. The results were worst in Oromia (where only 20

<sup>66</sup> This is the result of a regression analysis of the survey data. Whether or not people were consulted was the most significant variable affecting their long-term satisfaction with the response. The log odds for “was consulted” was 1.37 at a confidence level of at least 99.9 percent. This corresponds to an odds ratio of 3.94, meaning that people who were consulted were 3.94 times as likely as those who were not consulted to see the assistance as very useful in the longer-term.

percent knew what they would receive and 36 percent understood selection criteria), which also had the lowest consultation rate. Afar had the most positive responses (with 70 percent knowing what assistance would be delivered and 78 percent informed about selection criteria). Responses from women and people with disabilities were close to the average, except that people with disabilities were more likely to know what they would receive. Nevertheless, affected people participating in the survey did not make any recommendations regarding their participation / consultation or information (see Figure 37 below).

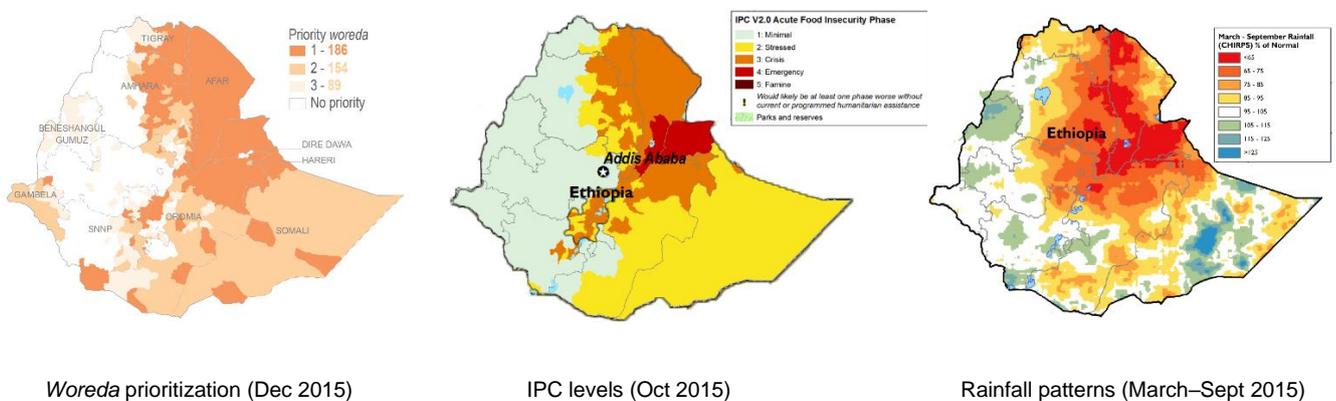
- 124 In focus group discussions, affected people explained how this lack of information had negative effects on them – for example, because it forced them to wait for long periods at food distribution points. They also discussed a resulting lack of accountability: since neither community members nor *kebele* officials knew what was supposed to be delivered and when, they were not able to check whether the assistance was provided according to plan or to claim what was due to them.
- 125 Affected people were only slightly more confident when it came to **complaints**. 54 percent of respondents indicated that they knew whom to complain to in case this was necessary. Focus group discussion participants specified that they usually approached the local government official in case of any problems. Independent complaints channels were either not available or not known to affected people. Regional differences were significant, with responses in Afar again being the most positive (93 percent knew how to complain), followed by Tigray (71 percent) and the Somali region (56 percent), with Oromia lagging far behind (29 percent). Some interviewees reported that local governance mechanisms worked better in Tigray than in the other regions that were the focus of this evaluation, but provided no explanation for the good results in Afar. Responses from women were slightly more negative on this question (51 percent knew how to complain), but responses from people with disabilities were more positive (61 percent).
- 126 A strong majority of 74 percent of respondents **felt treated with respect** by those providing assistance, and a further 14 percent felt “somewhat” treated with respect. Again, important regional differences exist. Afar received the most positive responses (with 89 percent of respondents answering “yes”), followed by the Somali region (80 percent), with Tigray (70 percent) and Oromia lagging behind (62 percent). Responses from women were more positive than the average in all the regions (82 percent answered “yes”). Again, it is important to point out that this seemingly positive result still means that 12 percent of all respondents, and, importantly, 16 percent of people with disabilities, felt they were not treated with respect.
- 127 There were several **inter-agency initiatives** to strengthen accountability to drought-affected communities. However, even after several years, these had not yet yielded tangible results on the ground. Four previous evaluations had already criticized both the absence of a collective complaints mechanism and the challenges involved in the uptake of accountability commitments. An Inter-Agency Accountability Working Group has been in place since at least 2012.<sup>67</sup> The EHCT tasked the protection cluster with developing a strategy on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in September 2016, which was then adopted in April 2018. A PSEA Network of focal points representing EHCT members has also been in place since then, yet the first step – PSEA trainings of humanitarian staff – was only planned for 2019. In 2016, the STAIT mission recommended establishing a collective accountability mechanism together with the government. However, explorations in preparation for a joint community-based complaints mechanism were only beginning at the time of this evaluation in 2019. The few humanitarian staff interviewed who commented on specific inter-agency efforts found them ineffective in influencing practice. They attributed the slow progress to insufficient political will, a lack of funding, and the fact that protection-related concerns only began to receive attention during the IDP response, from 2018 onward.<sup>68</sup> Accountability to affected people is thus an area in which global reform commitments have not produced results on the ground.

<sup>67</sup> This is according to a [Humanitarian Accountability Project deployment](#) in 2012. The co-facilitators of the Inter-Agency Accountability Working Group (IAAWG) did not respond to the evaluation team’s request for an interview.

<sup>68</sup> There were some protection mainstreaming trainings for clusters, but the level of attention was hard to sustain due to turnover. In 2016, the EHCT adopted a protection strategy, but interviewees were either unaware of the document, unaware of its adoption, or felt that it was out of date.

- 128 **Planning and prioritization.** The official prioritization of geographic areas (*woredas*) in need of assistance largely matched observed drought patterns and food insecurity levels. However, the prioritization had only a limited influence on the allocation of assistance. The priorities defined in the humanitarian planning documents were also very broad. Interviewees therefore found additional prioritization exercises as well as assessments conducted by individual organizations more useful for targeting interventions. A recurrent controversy was whether humanitarian assistance should only target those facing recent shocks, or whether assistance should extend to those who have not yet recovered from previous shocks.
- 129 An official classification of *woredas* into different priority levels – based on expert judgments and considering various response sectors – was meant to guide the response. This **prioritization has been largely consistent with analyses of drought patterns** and their expected impact. Figure 18 shows that most “hotspot” or “priority 1” *woredas* identified at the end of 2015 are in areas that experienced significant rain shortages during that year, which led to high levels of expected food insecurity (IPC phases 3 or 4) in 2015/2016. Outliers include some zones in the central and eastern Somali region and in central Oromia, where *woredas* were prioritized despite above-average rainfalls and low projected IPC levels.<sup>69</sup>

Figure 18: *Woreda* Prioritization, IPC Levels, and Rainfall Patterns (2016)



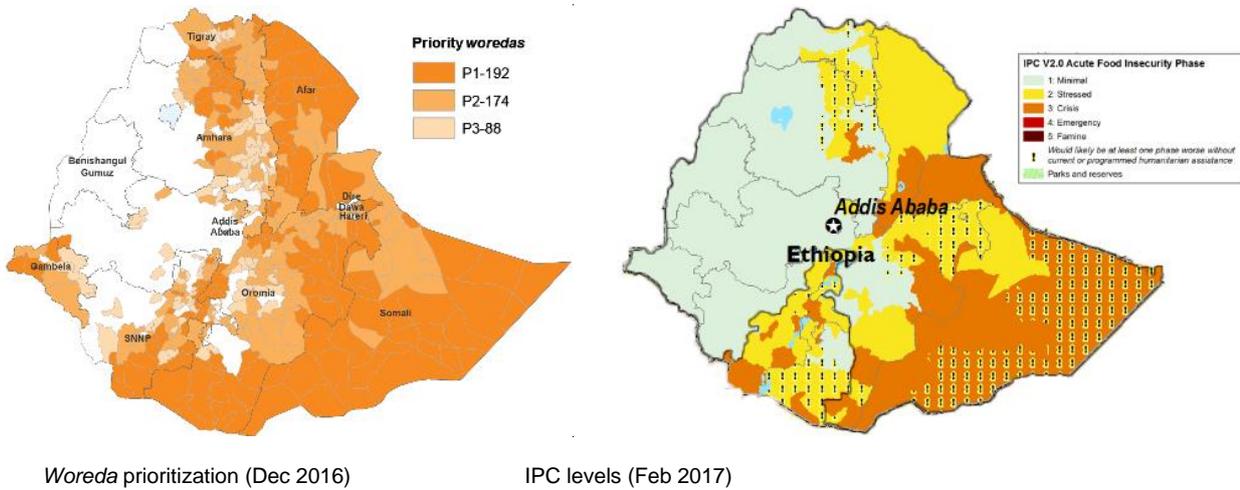
Sources: HRD 2016, IPC October 2015, FewNet Ethiopia Special Report 2015

- 130 Similarly, *woreda* prioritization during the 2017 Indian Ocean Dipole-induced drought largely matched expected food insecurity levels. Figure 19 shows data from late 2016/early 2017, and Figure 20 shows data from mid-2017. Outliers here include some of the worst-affected areas in southern Afar and Sitti, which were not prioritized despite early warnings in October 2016.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> The prioritization of Gambella in 2015 and 2017 was due to the refugee response, not drought.

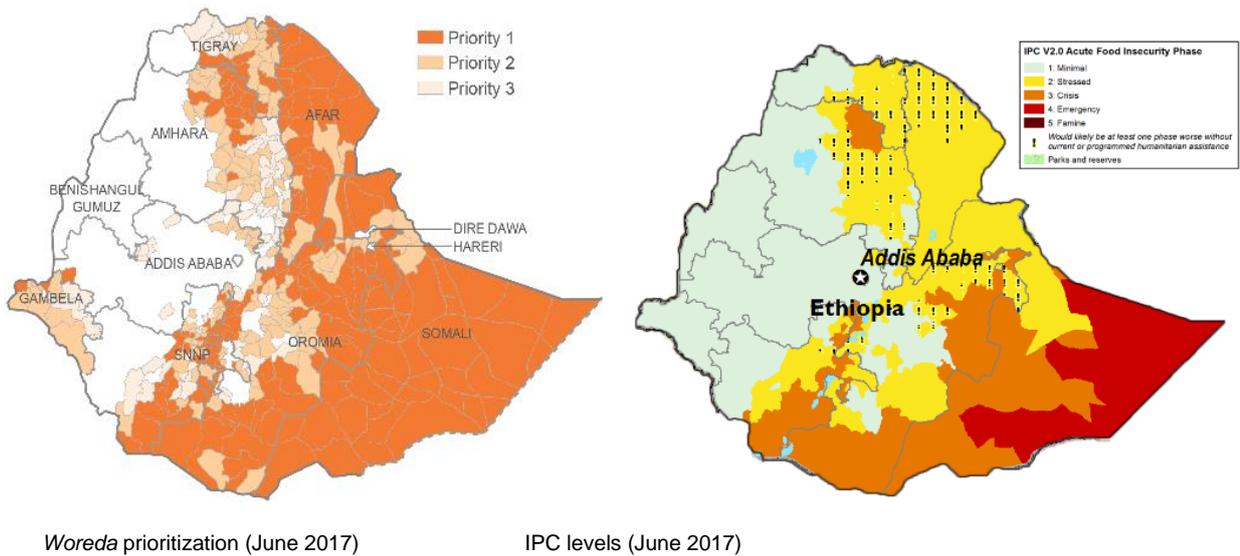
<sup>70</sup> FewNet. 2016. *Ethiopia Food Security Outlook October 2016 to May 2017*.

Figure 19: Woreda Prioritization and IPC Levels (Early 2017)



Sources: HRD 2017, FewsNet IPC February 2017

Figure 20: Woreda Prioritization and IPC Levels (Mid-2017)

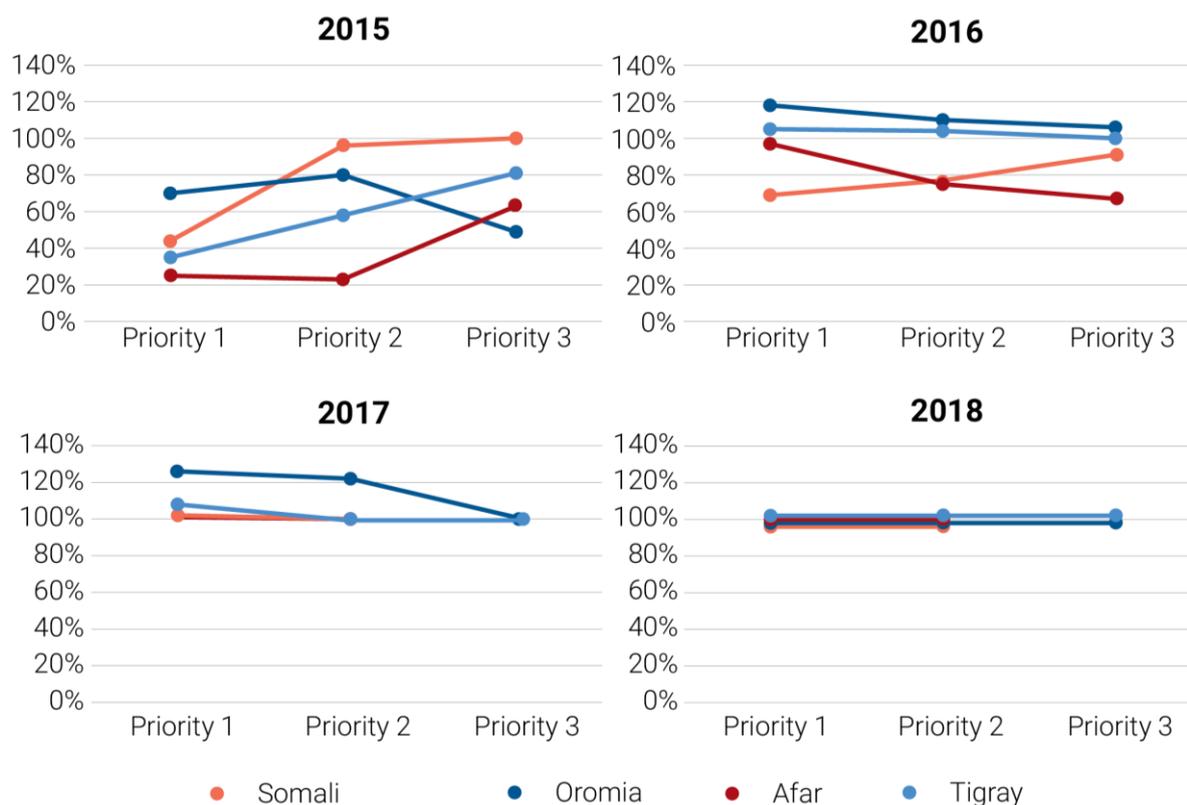


Sources: MYR 2017, FewsNet IPC June 2017

131 However, the **influence of official priority classifications on assistance allocation** was limited. While a study on the accuracy of geographical targeting in 2015 found that food assistance largely focused on the worst drought-hit areas,<sup>71</sup> there was little correlation between the official priority level and the level of assistance reported for each *woreda* at the beginning of the response. In 2015, priority 2 and 3 *woredas* were in most cases reported as receiving more assistance than priority 1 *woredas*. In 2016, this changed in Afar, Oromia, and Tigray, but not in the Somali region. By 2018, highly improbable constant coverage rates of exactly 100 percent were reported for all the areas (see Figure 21).

<sup>71</sup> Humanitarian Food Assistance. 2018. *Process Evaluation Report*, p. 65.

Figure 21: Reported Coverage Rates of Needs in Woredas with Priority Levels 1, 2, and 3



[Source: Evaluation team computation, based on Disaster Risk Management Commission (2018)]

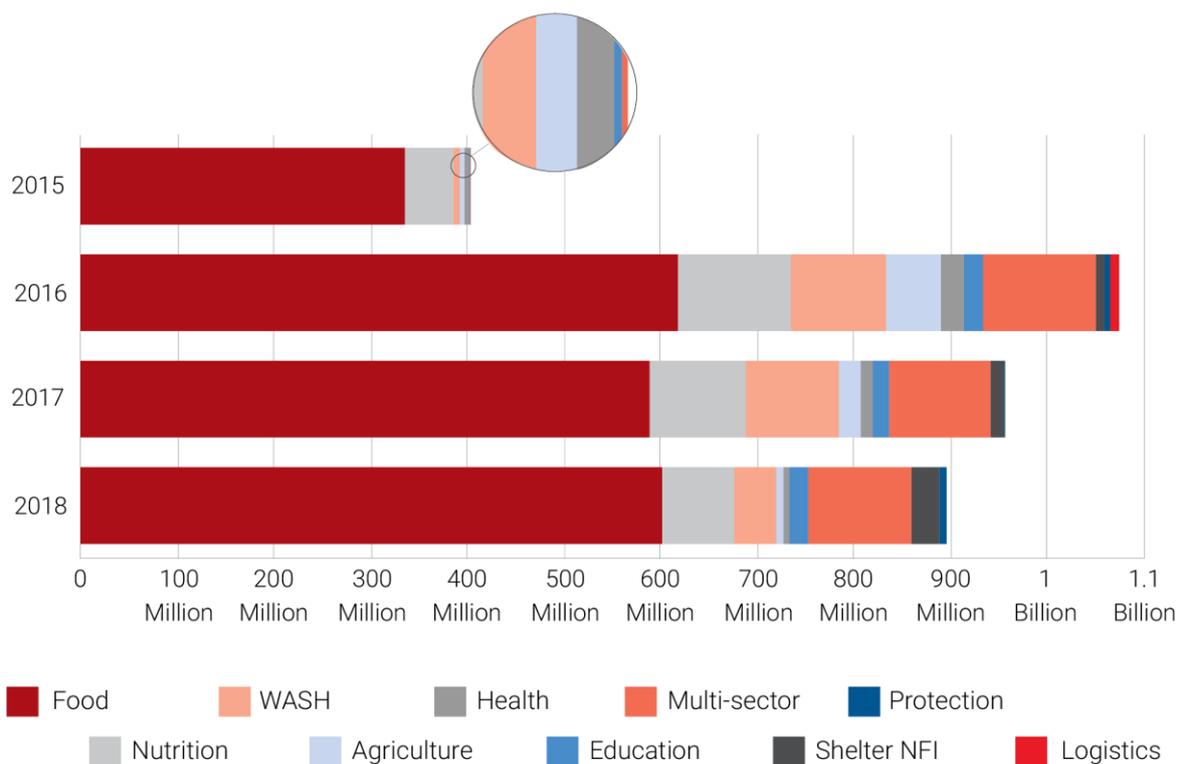
- 132 Another issue was that planning documents defined priorities in a very broad sense. The number of *woredas* considered “priority 1” in the four regions analyzed for this evaluation increased steadily, from 103 in 2015 to 181 in 2018. This means that by 2018, 62 percent of *woredas* were deemed highest priority. Moreover, planning and monitoring documents show that only a few clusters – with the exception of the nutrition and WASH clusters – define geographic priority areas for their interventions. According to several interviewees from individual organizations and clusters, the planning documents are therefore not detailed enough to support geographic project targeting. Instead, organizations do their own assessments to tailor their interventions.
- 133 Several interviewees identified the **prioritization exercises** conducted by clusters as good practice to strengthen the focus of individual clusters and to advocate for donors to cover priority funding gaps. In addition, some interviewees suggested that the prioritization exercises also helped to correct suspected biases in the original assessment data by relying on updated information. The quality of the prioritization documents has improved over the years, as they became more precise and succinct. The 2019 Ethiopia Immediate Humanitarian Funding Priorities document could be used as a good practice reference from which other emergencies could learn.<sup>72</sup>
- 134 A highly controversial issue when it comes to prioritization was how to deal with new or acute crisis-related (as compared to chronic) needs and needs related to past shocks. Some interviewees argued that humanitarian organizations should only plan to respond to recent shocks, because structural vulnerabilities are covered by the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). Others argued that those who have faced repeated shocks over the past few years should be prioritized for assistance, as their coping mechanisms are weaker than those of newly affected people, and not all of them can access the PSNP. One example of this controversy is the recent Somali region Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP), launched in 2019. While the Humanitarian Needs Overview only considered people displaced during the previous six months, the EPRP used a broader definition. Several

<sup>72</sup> EHCT. 2019. *Immediate Humanitarian Funding Priorities Issued: 29 March 2019 (April-June 2019)*.

interviewees in the Somali region found this broader definition more relevant. However, this also entailed discrepancies between two current planning documents, which one donor representative who was interviewed found unhelpful when trying to mobilize funding.

- 135 **Sector priorities.** The drought response primarily focused on food – which only partially covered the sectors which affected people would have prioritized. Livelihood assistance in particular was identified as a gap. Agriculture was one of the most underfunded sectors. Other critical drought response sectors – such as nutrition, WASH, and health – were also massively underfunded in some response years.
- 136 The response focused heavily on food assistance. In 2015, 83 percent of all humanitarian expenses went into food. The balance between sectors changed drastically in 2016, and the response was much more diversified, with food funded at 58 percent, more funding for WASH (9 percent) and agriculture (5 percent), and a much higher level of multi-sector funding. By 2017, the relative importance of food assistance increased again, and investments in agriculture and health dropped noticeably (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Annual Cluster Funding



Source: Evaluation team, based on OCHA data and humanitarian planning documents

- 137 As mentioned above, 64 percent of people who participated in the survey found that this mix of sectors included what they needed most. 36 percent – and a majority of 54 percent in Tigray – found that it did not include what they needed most. The survey responses confirm that food was a very important component of the assistance package. People who had received food were three times as likely to say that they got what they needed most and more than five times as likely to say that they found the assistance very useful for their immediate situation as people who had not received food.<sup>73</sup> However,

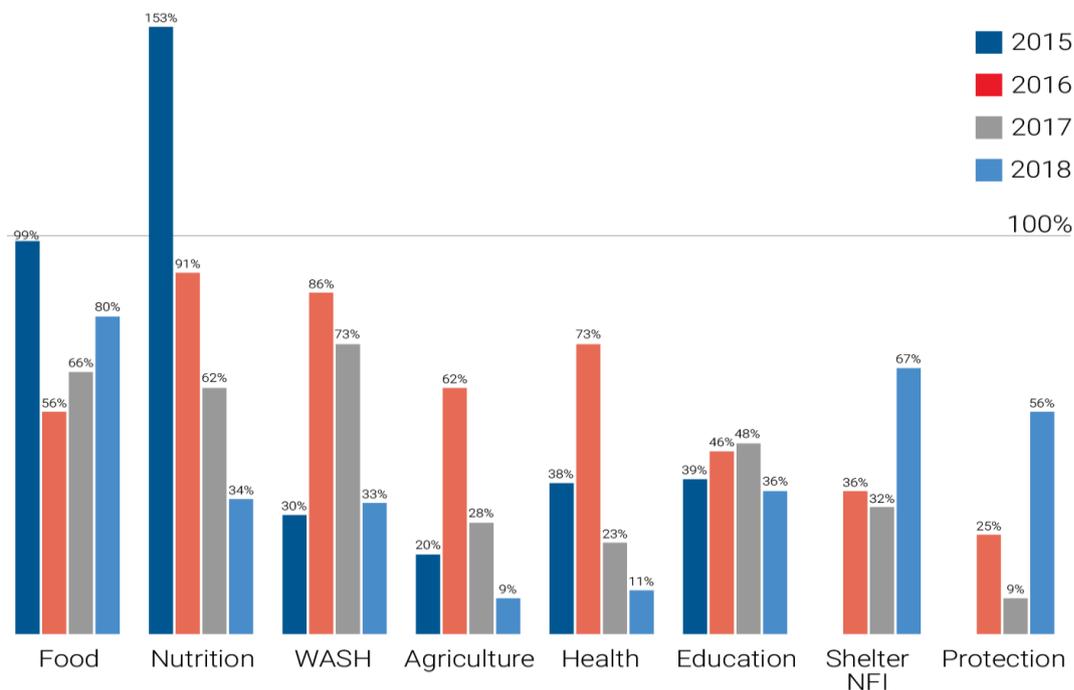
<sup>73</sup> This is the result of a regression analysis of the survey data. Whether or not people received food emerged as the only statistically significant variable influencing whether people felt they got what they needed most. The log odds for “received only non-food assistance” was -1.08 (at a confidence level of at least 95 percent), corresponding to an odds ratio of 0.34. This means that people who had not received were 0.34 times as likely as people who had received food to say that the assistance included what they needed most. The same variable emerged as the strongest factor influencing perceptions of the immediate usefulness of the assistance. Here, the log odds was -1.74 at a confidence level of at least 99 percent, corresponding to an odds ratio of 0.18. This means that people who received only non-food assistance were 0.18 times as likely as those who had received food to find the assistance very useful for their immediate situation.

other forms of assistance were critical for the assistance to be useful in the longer-term. People who had received food as well as at least one other type of assistance were 2.6 times as likely to find the assistance very useful in the longer-term as those who had only received food.<sup>74</sup>

- 138 Many of the people surveyed indicated that they would have needed better livelihoods assistance – particularly agriculture and livestock interventions – to cope better with the drought. Requests for livelihood support were also voiced in all the focus group discussions conducted in Afar and Oromia. The aid workers interviewed agreed with affected people that agriculture, livestock assistance, and water for livestock did not receive sufficient attention in humanitarian planning and response. Several previous evaluations also pointed to this gap. Agriculture was one of the most underfunded sectors, with only 28 percent of the requested funding covered in 2017, and 9 percent in 2018. Several interviewees attributed the lack of funding to the fact that agriculture was often not perceived as a core “humanitarian” sector (discussed below in section 2.4.3).
- 139 Other sectors also struggled with very low funding levels. One of the main explanations given for low funding in sectors such as protection or education is that more “acute” needs took precedence, given the high level of uncovered needs in Ethiopia. However, the response also had low funding levels in areas central to a drought response such as nutrition (2018: 34 percent), WASH (2015: 30 percent; 2018: 33 percent), or health (2015: 23 percent; 2018: 11 percent, see Figure 23). Several interviewees suspected that the insufficiently funded WASH response in 2015 might have exacerbated the cholera outbreaks in 2016. While interviewees and aid worker survey respondents generally had divergent views on which sectors should have been prioritized, several explained these imbalances by referring to insufficiently coordinated bilateral donor priorities, which did not necessarily align with inter-agency prioritization. As discussed above, given that only three donors funded most assistance, better coordination could have been expected.

“We have no funding predictability in the cluster – we are winging it as very detailed donor calls for proposals pop up for specific areas, and try to use more flexible funding to cover gaps.” Interviewee

Figure 23: Yearly Cluster Funding Levels Compared to Mid-Year Requirements



Source: Evaluation team, based on humanitarian planning documents and mid-year reviews

<sup>74</sup> Here, the log odds was 0.95 for respondents who received both food and non food assistance, at a confidence level of at least 99 percent. This corresponds to an odds ratio of 2.59. This means that respondents who received food and non-food assistance were 2.59 times as likely as those who received only food to find the assistance very useful in the longer-term.

## 2.4 Effectiveness: Did the Response Achieve Its Intended Results?

- 140 **Background.** *The humanitarian community in Ethiopia defined three constant goals against which the effectiveness of its response can be assessed:*<sup>75</sup>
- *Lives saved, morbidity reduced;*
  - *Livelihoods protected and restored;*
  - *Preparedness for responding to other humanitarian shocks increased.*
- 141 *The different clusters identified more specific goals for their work. Their formulation changed from year to year and included not only outcome-, but also output-level objectives. Core goals for the different sectors include:*
- *Agriculture: livelihoods protected and restored through emergency livestock and seed interventions;*
  - *Education: school-age boys and girls supported and education continued;*
  - *Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items: displaced populations provided with shelter and non-food items;*
  - *Food: improved food consumption in targeted households; food needs related to humanitarian shocks prepared for and responded to;*
  - *Health: life-saving health services provided; epidemic disease outbreaks detected and responded to;*
  - *Nutrition: SAM and MAM cases in children under 5 as well as pregnant and lactating women identified and treated, with continuum of care and support for appropriate infant and young child feeding;*
  - *Protection: vulnerable groups and children protected from life-threatening protection risks;*
  - *WASH: access to water (for human and livestock consumption), sanitation, and hygiene promotion provided to affected people.*
- 142 *In targeting interventions, the government prioritizes woredas, as described in the previous section. The process used to identify individuals or households involved in specific programs varies between regions, organizations, and response sectors. Kebele authorities usually play an important role in these decisions. In some areas, they work with community-based selection committees or food security committees, but these do not exist everywhere. For food assistance, detailed government targeting guidelines have existed since 2000 and were revised in 2011.<sup>76</sup> The guidelines include instructions on the process to follow and how to address gender issues and power dynamics in the community.*
- 143 *The humanitarian community in Ethiopia monitors response through the mid-year reviews and, since 2016, with an annual Periodic Monitoring Report. In addition, on three occasions between 2016 and early 2018, OCHA organized “call-around” monitoring exercises, where members of the humanitarian community called zonal and woreda authorities in a sample of priority woredas to ask whether certain types of assistance had arrived and been delivered, as well as posing questions on infrastructure, services, and drought effects in the area.*
- 144 **Monitoring data.** *The humanitarian community in Ethiopia is unable to track the collective effectiveness of its drought response due to a lack of outcome monitoring and sufficiently disaggregated information on outputs. This evaluation draws conclusions regarding the overall goals of the response, but because of the lack of secondary data, it cannot draw conclusions on whether or not individual clusters achieved their stated objectives.*
- 145 *There is no collective monitoring against the outcome objectives set for the response and for individual clusters. Reflections on whether the humanitarian community achieved its three main collective objectives – saving lives, protecting livelihoods, and increasing preparedness – are absent from periodic monitoring reports. There is also almost no data on sector-specific outcomes, and not all sectors define outcome-related objectives. Education is the only cluster which provided evidence of outcomes in the periodic monitoring reports, and that only in one report. The cluster reported that school feeding in 2016*

<sup>75</sup> HRD 2016; HRD 2017; HDRP 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Agriculture, Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector. 2011. *National Guidelines on Targeting Relief Food Assistance.*

and 2017 helped to decrease the number of closed schools from 400 to 158 in the Somali region and from 137 to 45 in Oromia.<sup>77</sup>

- 146 Two factors explain this lack of data on outcomes. First, several interviewees explained that organizations and donors were primarily interested in output-level reporting. Second, with several ongoing emergencies, EHCT discussions were focused on addressing current challenges and completing formal planning processes. The EHCT rarely carved out time to look back. One exception was the STAIT mission in 2015. However, this mission and the related discussions only included a limited number of actors and mainly focused on process issues.
- 147 The majority of clusters track outputs through the 4Ws or 5Ws matrix, with some – such as agriculture – disaggregating information to the site level. In addition, government agencies track data – for example, on the amount of water, seeds, and different food items provided, or the number of livestock supported – at the *woreda* level. Even though the reliability of some official monitoring data is questionable (see Section 2.5 for more detail), most clusters do have data that would allow for disaggregated output analysis geographically (across *woredas* or zones) or by gender and age. Annual monitoring reports, however, only include output data aggregated at the regional or the national level. For example, the reports provide information on the total number of non-food item kits distributed throughout the year in Ethiopia, or the total number of community conversations on gender-based violence prevention held. Such aggregate data is not useful for reflecting on potential gaps in the response.
- 148 Several interviewees pointed to the “call-around” exercise as useful for raising challenges in implementation. By contrast, they did not believe that the general collective monitoring reports had an influence on the response.

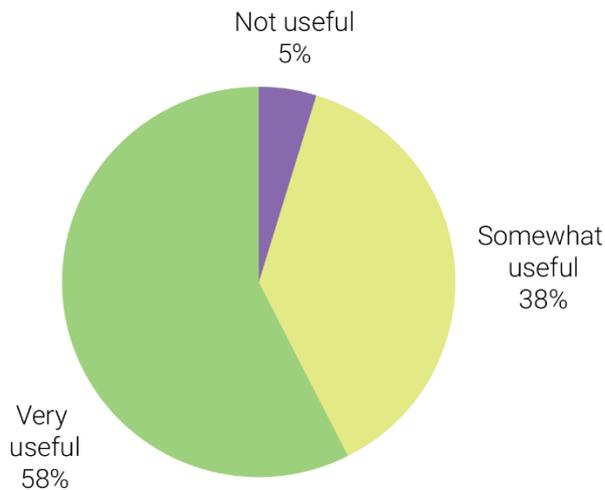
#### 2.4.1 Saving lives and reducing morbidity

- 149 **Saving lives.** There is a dominant narrative in the humanitarian community in Ethiopia that lives were saved during the different droughts and that assistance averted a famine in 2015. Despite issues with data availability, this evaluation found evidence that lives were indeed saved, though it is impossible to quantify how many. 58 percent of the affected people surveyed and several focus group discussion participants suspected that (more) family members would have died without assistance. SAM treatment rates were within internationally defined standards, and there are reports pointing to improved food consumption in households.
- 150 Whether a response saved lives is a complex question to evaluate. Determining whether people would have died without assistance is counterfactual. Key data – including morbidity rates for different population groups – was either missing or not available to international researchers and could therefore not be used to analyze correlations between the levels of assistance provided in different areas and morbidity rates. This evaluation therefore relied on proxy indicators – primarily the number of children with SAM admitted to treatment centres – and the perceptions of drought-affected people and interviewees.
- 151 All the people interviewed who commented on this issue were convinced that the drought response had saved lives. Many pointed to the sheer scale of the humanitarian intervention to support their argument: in 2016, for example, the monitoring report indicates that for a total contribution of US\$1.08 billion, 10.2 million people received food, 13 million benefitted from WASH interventions, that 2.47 million were treated for moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 297,135 for SAM.<sup>78</sup>
- 152 The affected people consulted for this evaluation generally perceived the assistance provided as useful. 58 percent of survey respondents indicated that the assistance was “very useful” in helping them immediately, and 38 percent found it “somewhat useful.” Only a small minority of 5 percent found the assistance “not useful” (see Figure 24). There were slight variations between the regions, with the share of people who did not find the assistance useful in helping them immediately at 2 percent in Afar and Tigray, 4 percent in the Somali region, and 7 percent in Oromia. Women answered this question slightly more positively than the average (with only 4 percent finding the assistance not useful), whereas people with disabilities answered it more negatively (with 7 percent finding the assistance not useful).

<sup>77</sup> 2017 Monitoring Report.

<sup>78</sup> 2016 Monitoring Report.

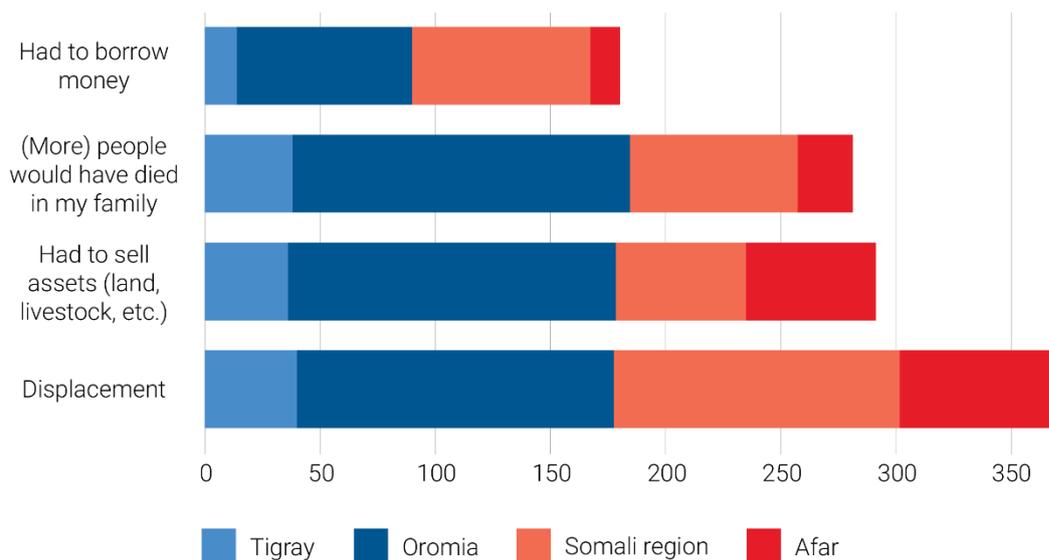
Figure 24: Affected People Survey Responses to “How useful was the assistance to help you immediately?” N=412



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

- 153 Survey respondents who had received assistance were also asked what they thought would have happened if no assistance had been provided. Their answers confirm that the response did save lives: In total, 58 percent of all the respondents indicated that (more) people in their family would have died without assistance (Figure 25). It is interesting to note that many of these answers come from Oromia, where a total of 90 percent of respondents believed that there would have been more deaths without assistance. That share was 68 percent in Tigray, 40 percent in the Somali region, and 28 percent in Afar. Survey responses also show that the drought response helped to prevent other negative coping mechanisms, such as selling assets, moving, or borrowing money.

Figure 25: Affected People Survey Responses to “What would have happened if assistance was not provided?” N=484



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

- 154 Focus group discussions confirmed this finding. Almost all the focus groups acknowledged that the different types of assistance provided (e.g. health, food, water) had helped promote survival. In one focus group, participants suspected that without assistance, more people in their community might have committed suicide out of desperation. The focus groups also brought to light an important cultural aspect that needs to be taken into account when interpreting the results of consultations with affected people on the question of whether or not assistance saved lives: particularly in the Muslim communities in Afar, people were not comfortable ascribing the cause of death to droughts or to other causes, because death is seen as an expression of the will of God.
- “Many people here had cholera last year. They opened a treatment center in the village. Very few died.” *Focus Group*
- “If there had been no support [food, water], we would not have survived or survived well.” *Focus Group*
- 155 Another data point that supports the claim that the response saved lives is the treatment results for SAM.<sup>79</sup> Between 2016 and 2017, over 640,000 children under 5 years of age were admitted to treatment centres in Ethiopia. The reported treatment results meet the Sphere standards and record over 75 percent recovery, less than 15 percent defaults, and fewer than 3 percent deaths. In response to the survey, a relatively low 5 percent of respondents indicated that a child had died in their family as a result of the drought. Without treatment, which was supported by the humanitarian response, the mortality for these children would undoubtedly have been higher.
- 156 Finally, there are reports indicating that food assistance had a positive effect on food consumption scores in Ethiopia. Thus a comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis published by the World Food Programme and Ethiopia’s Central Statistics Agency, based on a 2016 household consumption and expenditure survey (among others), found that “20.5 percent of households are estimated to be food insecure in 2016. [...] The number of food insecure could have been much higher had food assistance not been provided to around 18 million people.”<sup>80</sup> A World Food Programme emergency situation report also found that “the overall food consumption across the country improved by 24 percent in 2016, compared to 2015 due to successful *Kiremt* rains between June and September, together with the assistance provided by the Government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners.”<sup>81</sup>
- 157 **Delays, quality issues, and gaps.** At the same time, the humanitarian community could have saved more lives with timelier and better-quality assistance. There is evidence that the arrival and distribution of food and supplementary feeding at the *woreda* level was at times heavily delayed, and drought-affected people pointed to quality issues with food assistance. More importantly, however, insufficient quantities of assistance were delivered, and there were gaps in the services provided.
- 158 The humanitarian response to the droughts in Ethiopia was large-scale and managed to save lives. Yet no humanitarian response is perfect. The following elements emerged as the most important respects in which the Ethiopian drought response was limited in its effectiveness.
- 159 First, as discussed above (section 2.2), the response was often **delayed**. Affected people reported negative effects on their families which the response had not managed to prevent, including the deaths of family members in a small number of cases (5 percent for children, 3 percent for adults) and family members falling ill in a larger number of cases (31 percent of respondents). Trends in the admission rates for children with SAM show that malnutrition increased significantly in some areas (cf. Figure 12 above), leading to the deaths of around 3 percent of admitted children and an unknown number of children and adults who were not admitted for treatment. A recent study also found that delays made certain types of assistance ineffective. Fodder distributions in Sitti in 2015 and 2016, for example, had no identifiable impact because most of the animals had already died by that point.<sup>82</sup>
- 160 Second, while this did not necessarily undermine the life-saving effects of assistance, several interviewees and affected people consulted argued that there were problems with the **quality** of some of the assistance provided, and that this reduced the effectiveness of the response. For example, focus groups mentioned that they had received rotting or vermin-infested food and recalled instances in which deliveries of wheat or beans had been mixed with filler materials. Participants in one group reported that

<sup>79</sup> See, for example, Seid Legesse Hassen, Ayalew Astatkie, Tefera Chanie Mekonnen, and Getahun Gebre Bogale. 2019. “Survival Status and Its Determinants among Under-Five Children with Severe Acute Malnutrition Admitted to Inpatient Therapeutic Feeding Centers in South Wollo Zone, Amhara Region, Ethiopia,” *Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism*.

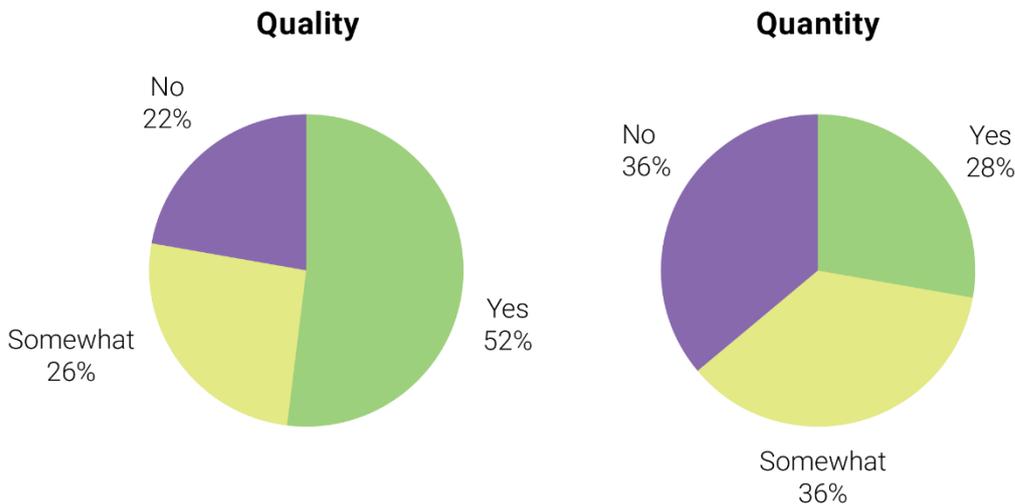
<sup>80</sup> WFP. 2019. *Comprehensive Food Security Analysis Report, June 2019*, p. iv.

<sup>81</sup> WFP. 2017. *WFP Ethiopia 2017 Emergency Situation Report #1*.

<sup>82</sup> Levine et al., 2019, p. 22

they had to throw away about one-fifth of the food assistance they had received. Survey results indicate that a majority of respondents (52 percent) were satisfied with the quality of the assistance provided. However, a significant minority of 22 percent expressed its dissatisfaction with the quality (Figure 26). The largest share of dissatisfied respondents was in Oromia (37 percent).

Figure 26: Affected People Survey Responses to “Are you satisfied with the quality/quantity of the assistance provided?” N=479 / 485

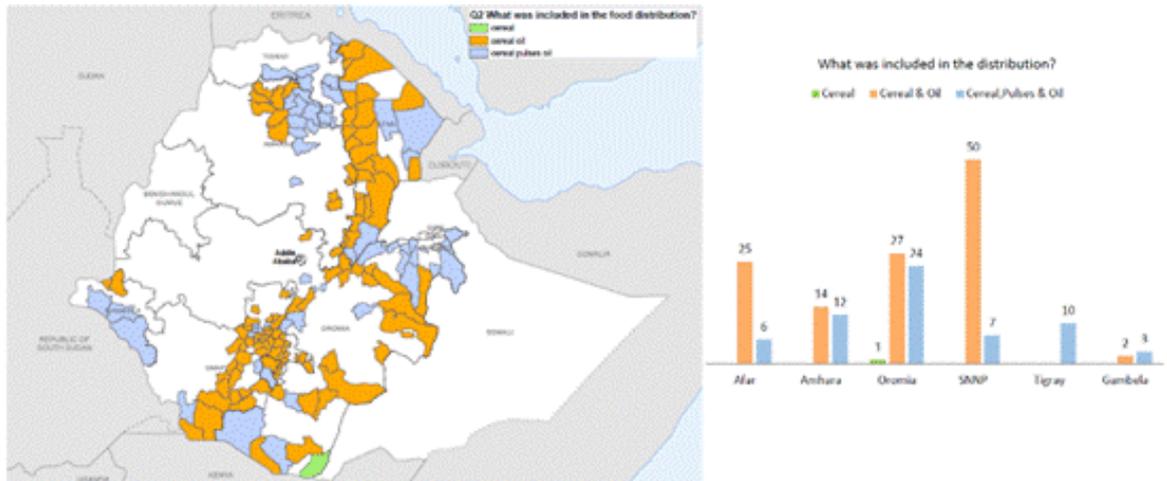


Source: GPPi, IAHE affected people survey

161 Third, the survey results also suggest that affected people were more concerned with the **quantity** than with the quality of the assistance provided. The largest respondent groups (36 percent each) stated that they were not satisfied or only somewhat satisfied with the quantity of assistance provided. Dissatisfaction was again strongest in Oromia, where 55 percent of respondents were not satisfied with the quantity of the assistance (compared to 37 percent in Tigray, 27 percent in the Somali region, and a surprising 16 percent in Afar). Interviewees and affected people provided several specific examples of response gaps:

- Focus group participants highlighted the very limited quantity of animal fodder made available to them during the droughts.
- Due to a pipeline break in targeted supplementary feeding in 2018, many areas in Afar, Oromia, and the Somali region only received rations covering one to two months for that year. Several focus groups highlighted the discontinuation of supplementary feeding as a priority concern.
- As the response progressed, only partial food rations were distributed in some areas. Affected people and several interviewees emphasized that food rations which were restricted to grains and oil were lacking in nutritional value. Participants in a focus group in Oromia reported that rations had included beans during distributions in 2015, whereas distributions after 2017 only included oil and wheat. Similarly, a process evaluation of humanitarian food assistance in 2018 presents data suggesting that most households were not receiving their full entitlements. The call-around monitoring data from September 2017 confirms that restricted rations were delivered (Figure 27).

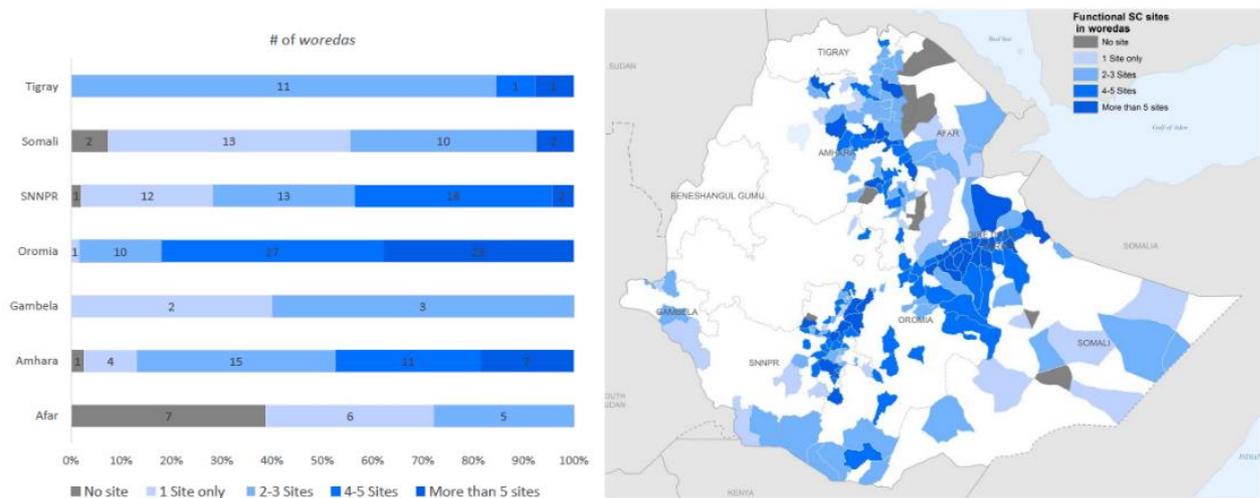
Figure 27: Call-Around Monitoring, 2017: “What was included in the distribution?”



Source: OCHA, Call-around monitoring, Sept. 2017

- Several interviewees also pointed to the limited number of functional stabilization centres and to health posts without staff as factors that limited the humanitarian system’s ability to save lives. The number of centres increased from 14,000 to 16,000 in 2016,<sup>83</sup> but the 2016 call-around monitoring found that Afar, the Somali region, SNNPR, and Amhara had several *woredas* with no or only one functioning site (Figure 28) – a problem which persists. One of the reasons for this was the lack of international investment in health infrastructure; another was that posts in remote areas – especially in the lowlands – were not attractive to health sector staff (who are often from highland areas).

Figure 28: Call-Around Monitoring, 2016: “How many stabilization centres for the treatment of complicated cases of malnutrition are functional?”



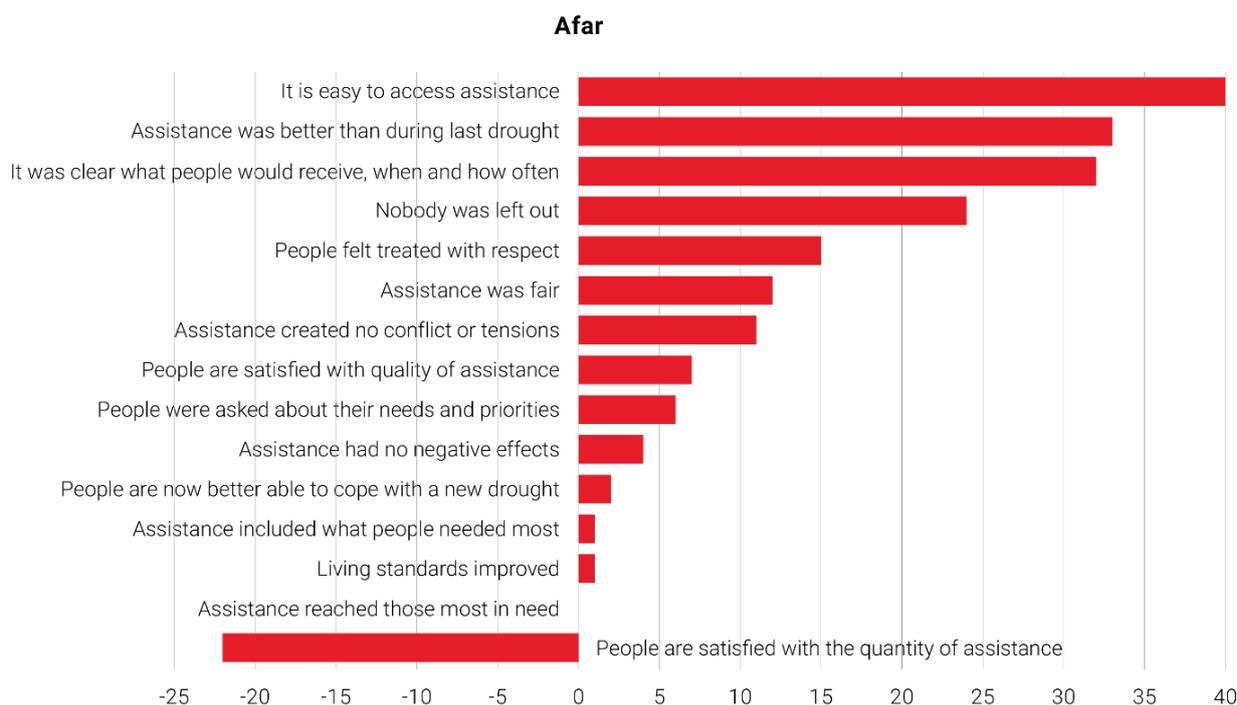
Source: OCHA, Call-around monitoring, 2016

<sup>83</sup> 2016 Periodic Monitoring Report.

### 2.4.2 Impartiality of the response

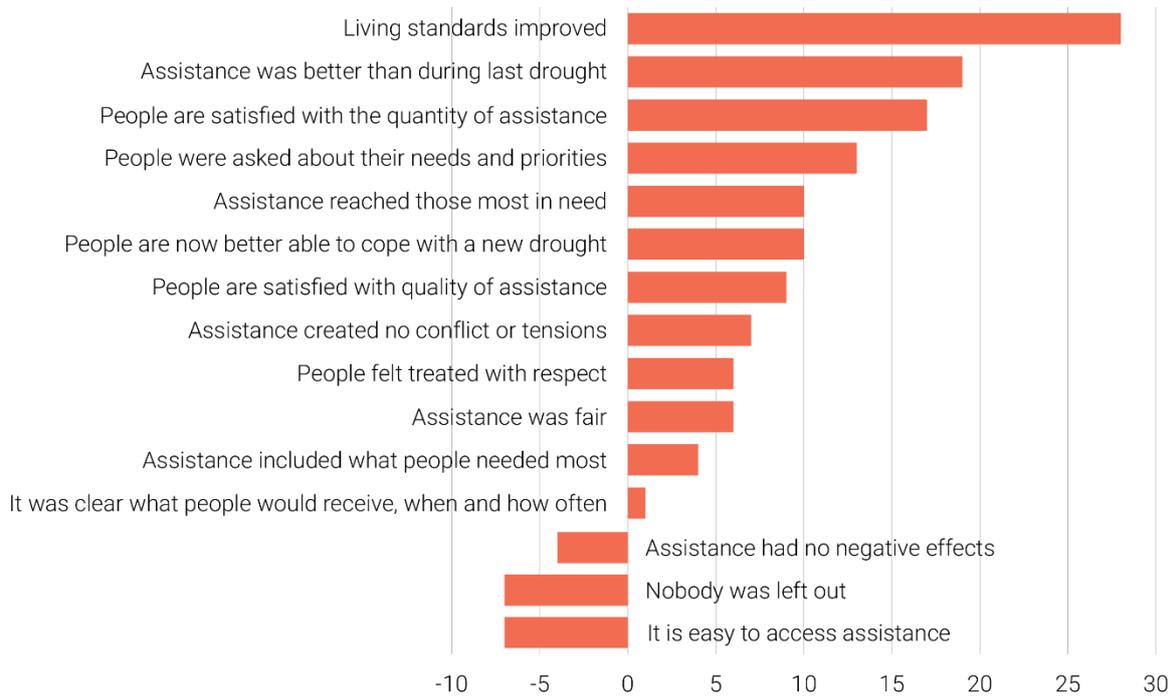
- 162 **Geographic patterns of assistance.** The prioritization of the response largely matched the level of need. However, affected people surveyed were clearly more satisfied in Afar and the Somali region than in Oromia. By contrast, interviewed aid workers perceived regional imbalances as particularly affecting Afar. Within regions, evidence of a suspected bias of delivering assistance to easily accessible areas is inconclusive. No data was available to triangulate perceptions that areas affected by conflict received more assistance.
- 163 As demonstrated above (section 2.3), the geographic priorities defined for the response largely corresponded to identified drought patterns, food insecurity levels, and malnutrition rates. However, these priority criteria became increasingly broad over the period of this evaluation, with 62 percent of *woredas* in Afar, the Somali region, Tigray, and Oromia classified as “priority 1” by 2018. More importantly, reported coverage rates at the beginning of the response ran counter to the official prioritization, with priority 2 and 3 *woredas* receiving significantly better coverage of needs than priority 1 *woredas* in 2015 and also partially in 2016.
- 164 From 2017 onward, overall coverage rates of 100 percent or more were reported for all regions. These reports are highly improbable and therefore do not allow for a credible analysis of whether assistance was provided impartially and according to need **across regions**. The perceptions of affected people surveyed for this evaluation differ strongly between regions. In Afar, responses were consistently more positive than on average. Perceptions in the Somali region were also largely more positive than average, whereas they were mixed in Tigray, and consistently more negative than average in Oromia (Figure 29).

Figure 29: Differences in Survey Responses from Different Regions on Most Positive Answer Option Compared to Average Response<sup>84</sup>

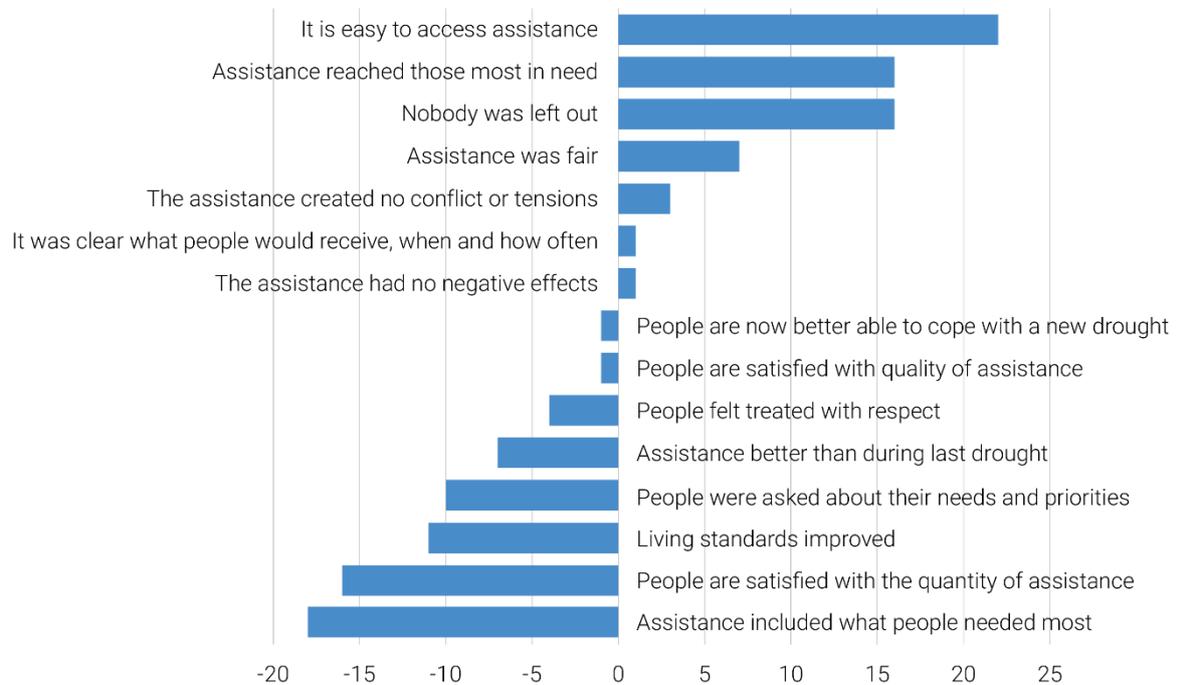


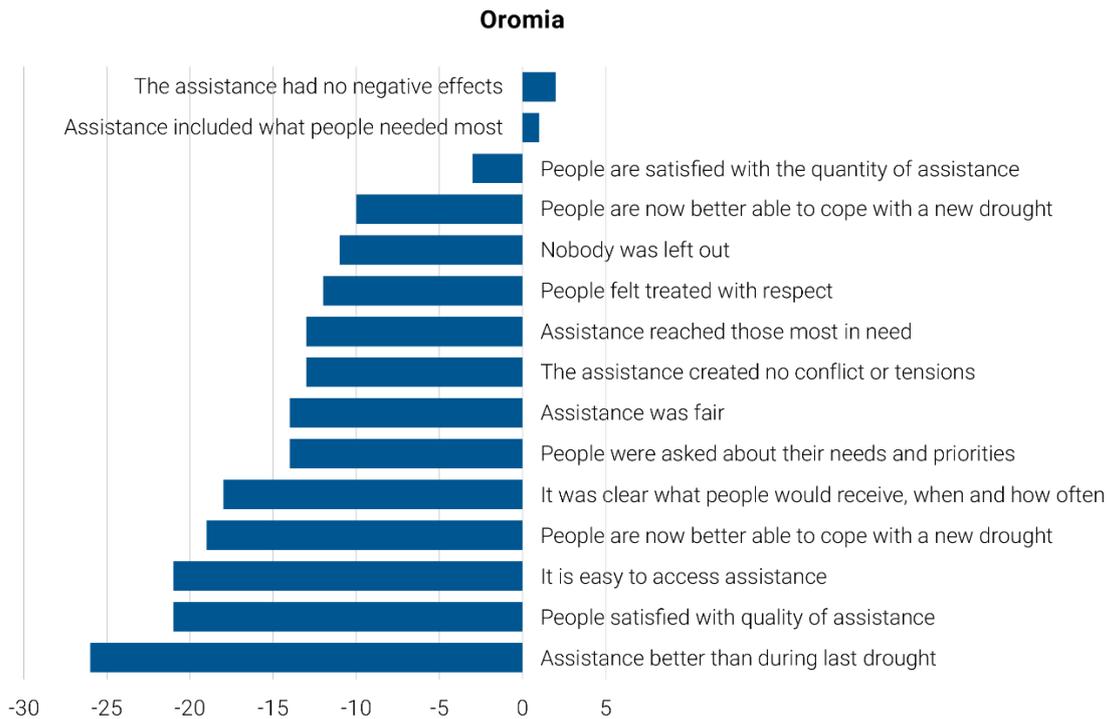
<sup>84</sup> These graphics show the number of percentage points by which the average answer given in the region differs from the overall average response to the question. In Afar, for example, 90 percent of respondents indicated that it was easy to access assistance, whereas it was only 50 percent among all survey respondents. The graphic therefore shows 40 points more positive response on this question for Afar.

### Somali region



### Tigray





Source: GPPi, IAHE affected people survey

- 165 These patterns are at odds with the perceptions of aid workers interviewed for this evaluation. They were more likely to identify Afar as receiving comparatively less assistance relative to need and had mixed opinions about other regions, with a tendency to see the response in Tigray more positively than elsewhere. Factors mentioned by interviewees to explain this perceived imbalance include: The 2015 drought was often simplistically framed as a “highland drought,” even though it was primarily Afar and the Sitti zone in the Somali region that experienced emergency food insecurity levels; Afar and the Somali region are “emerging regions” with weaker governance structures and public administration systems than the “developed regions” of Oromia and Tigray; Afar’s representatives lack influence at the federal level; few organizations operate in Afar due to the fact that the region has a harsh climate and is remote; and Afar lacks geostrategic importance when compared to the Somali region, which borders Somalia and is therefore important for containing Al Shabaab’s influence. However, most interviewed aid workers were not aware that the humanitarian response in Oromia was perceived as more problematic than elsewhere. This might, among others, be related to the fact that a lower percentage of the total population in Oromia was categorized as in need of assistance, rendering beneficiary selection processes more controversial. Oromia also does not have a regional humanitarian coordination hub equivalent to the other regions.
- 166 **Within regions,** the aid workers interviewed in Addis Ababa as well as in all four of the regions visited for this evaluation believe that drought assistance tends to focus on areas around major towns and close to asphalt roads. Affected people perceived only a light “roadside bias” of assistance distribution in the Somali region (see Figure 30 below). Here, 20 percent of respondents who answered the question felt that people living far away from the road were among those who were left out. In Afar, several interviewees reported that the government was trying to address this roadside bias by actively requesting NGOs to work in areas which the government is unable to reach.
- 167 In Oromia, several interviewees from different stakeholder groups claimed that drought-related needs in conflict-affected areas bordering the Somali region received more attention than those further away. Similarly, interviewees noted a conflict bias in the Somali region, where recently displaced people (who were mainly, but not exclusively, displaced due to conflict) were prioritized for assistance, irrespective of their level of need. The reasons given for the decision to focus on recently displaced people include the desire to limit the overall number of people in need at a time of donor fatigue by focusing on more recent shocks and also the high level of attention the humanitarian community has paid to issues related to conflict. Some observers also see a connection to the recent restructuring of the Ethiopian

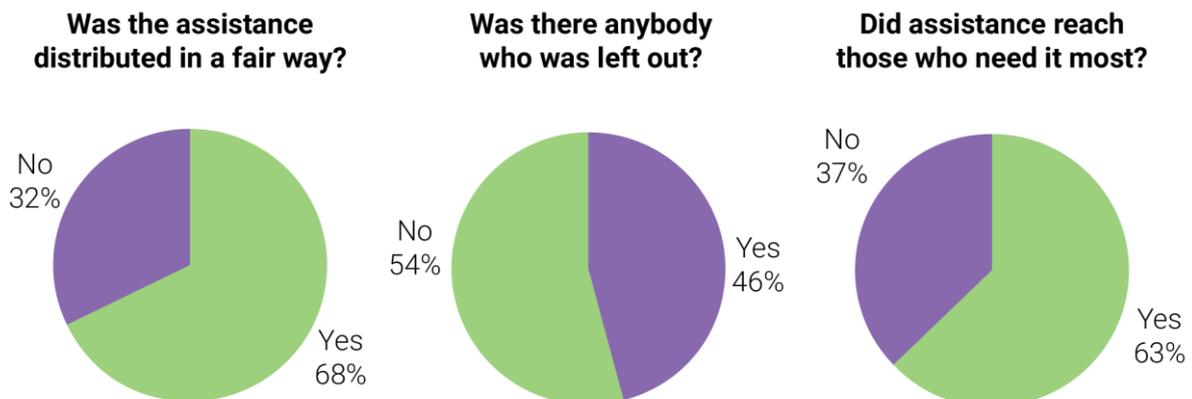
government. NDRMC, the main government entity responsible for crisis response, used to be an independent agency but was recently integrated into the Ministry of Peace. Observers expect this move to reinforce the overall focus on conflict and security issues.

168 Finally, some interviewees pointed to the geographic prioritization of some bilateral donors down to the *woreda* level as another factor that explains imbalances. In Oromia, several donors issued calls for response proposals in the same *woredas*. However, there were also examples in which the zonal authority, together with humanitarian organizations, managed to convince donors to shift the response to different, underserved areas.

169 **Balance of assistance across different groups, including vulnerable groups.** The majority of affected people perceived the assistance provided as fair and as not leaving anybody out. However, due to weak targeting systems, humanitarian assistance did not always target the poorest segments of society. Findings on other vulnerable groups are mixed. Planning processes did not give much consideration to different vulnerable groups, and interviewees provided several examples of situations in which the response was not adapted to specific needs. Nevertheless, women on the whole rated the response more positively than men. In contrast, people with disabilities perceived the response more negatively.

170 Another key aspect of impartiality is whether assistance was provided fairly and according to need between different population groups, including those particularly vulnerable to the effects of droughts. Affected people saw the response quite positively in this regard. A clear majority of survey respondents felt that the assistance was distributed in a fair way (68 percent), that nobody was left out (54 percent), and that assistance reached those in the community who needed it most (63 percent) (Figure 30). While this is an overall positive result, there is still a significant minority (over one-third of respondents) who see this aspect of the response critically. On all aspects, women responded more positively than average, people with disabilities responded more negatively, and elderly people responded more negatively on fairness and people being left out.

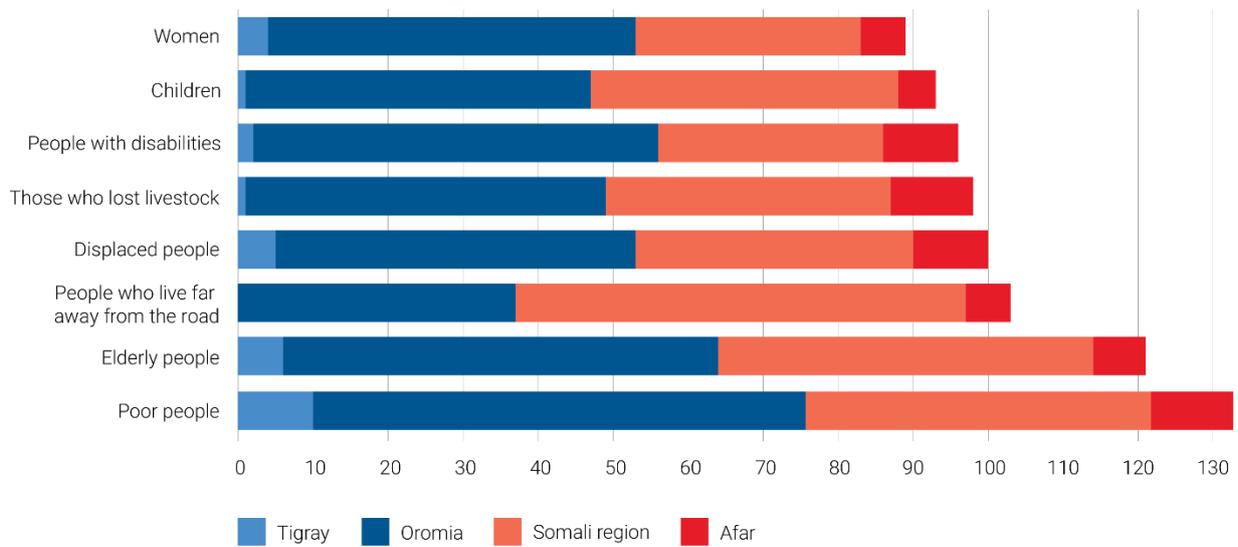
Figure 30: Affected People's Perceptions of Fairness and Impartiality, N=502/513/500



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

171 The more detailed analysis presented in Figure 31 shows that affected people have the impression that **poor and elderly people** are those most frequently left out of the current assistance system.

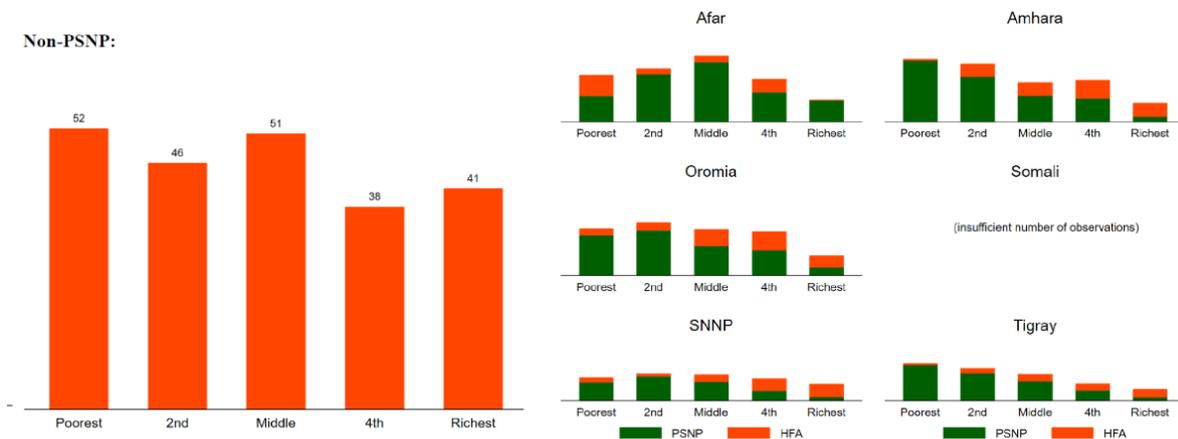
Figure 31: Affected People’s Survey Responses on Who (If Anybody) Was Left Out, N=216



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

172 Consistent with these perceptions, an evaluation of food assistance targeting in 2017 found that humanitarian (non-PSNP) food assistance was not clearly focused on the poorest people in the community. Where only humanitarian food assistance was available, the richest income group in the assessed communities was almost as likely to receive assistance as people in other income strata. Where both PSNP and humanitarian food assistance were provided, PSNP was more likely to target the poorer income brackets, whereas humanitarian food assistance was complementary to this and thus often focused on the richer population groups (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Percent of Households Receiving Humanitarian Food Assistance in 2017, by Livestock-Holding in Non-PSNP Areas Overall and PSNP Localities by Region



Source: Hirvonen et al. 2019-DRAFT. Humanitarian Food Assistance 2018: Process Evaluation Report

173 **Problems with targeting** explain why the response faced difficulties in focusing on the poorest members of the community. In most cases, government authorities are in charge of selecting beneficiaries at the community level. There were big differences in the way humanitarian organizations handled this situation. Some NGOs reported that they put considerable effort into advocating for targeting the most vulnerable and vetting beneficiary lists to avoid including wealthy individuals. Other organizations delegate targeting and distribution entirely to government entities. One frequently mentioned example was food distributions, which are supported by WFP in some areas and by the Joint Emergency Operations Program (JEOP) in other areas. Both work with beneficiaries selected by the government, but whereas JEOP was involved in the targeting process, a recent evaluation found that WFP often does not even have access to the beneficiary lists in the Somali region (see quote). The only process-related recommendations for the humanitarian system that affected people gave were about targeting and beneficiary selection (see Figure 38 below).

“WFP attracts criticism for not reporting against beneficiary lists, but in practice this situation has been tolerated by the federal government and humanitarian partners collectively, and it requires joint action to insist on systematic beneficiary registration.”  
*Ethiopia: An Evaluation of WFP's Portfolio*

174 One reason for this poor targeting practice is incentives. The success of drought programs in Ethiopia was primarily judged according to how many people got assistance, with little focus on who received it. Another reason is that centralized efforts to strengthen targeting showed little effect in practice. As an example, interviewees did not refer to existing, detailed national targeting guidelines. It is therefore an important signal that agencies are reporting the introduction of a new, joint targeting process in 2019, supporting the implementation of the “Guidelines for Needs Based Targeting of Humanitarian Response in Displacement Areas” issued by NDRMC and the EHCT in April 2019. A third reason is Ethiopia’s sharing culture, which is particularly pronounced in pastoralist communities. Interviewees and focus group discussion participants explained that the assistance provided is often shared among community members.<sup>85</sup> Some also argued that public institutions often strive to treat everybody equally, a practice rooted in the country’s communist past. There were several reports of communities challenging NGO targeting criteria based on a divergent understanding of fairness.

175 Findings on **other vulnerable groups** are mixed. The planning and monitoring of the humanitarian response in Ethiopia gave very little consideration to questions of gender, age, disability, and other factors that affect the vulnerability of different groups. Even though there is clear evidence that the gender gap has a significant negative effect on agricultural productivity in Ethiopia,<sup>86</sup> interviewees stated that cross-cutting issues were not usually part of inter-agency discussions – and if they occurred, they tended to be confined to a separate working group on gender.

176 Collective planning and monitoring documents contain very little analysis of how gender or age affect people’s needs – even though detailed, separate gender analyses exist – and include very little disaggregated data. Previous evaluations confirm that this is a long-standing issue, and there is little evidence of learning over time. All four of the previous evaluations analyzed for this evaluation that address cross-cutting issues found that diversity-related considerations were mainly boiled down to including broadly equal numbers of female and male beneficiaries, or including interventions which target women and girls. The 2012 IASC Real-Time Evaluation also reports that this issue was already flagged as a challenge in the 2006 Real-Time Evaluation.

177 There were three examples illustrating the negative effects of this lack of analysis:

- Many programs target female-headed households. However, several interviewees emphasized that female-headed households were not necessarily more vulnerable. In cases where the men in the household were absent as migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, for example, those families had comparatively more income from remittances than others.
- Some interventions targeted people with specific vulnerabilities for labor-intensive programs without the necessary adaptations. Examples of such interventions include a program that provided livestock to persons with disabilities, some of whom had difficulty looking after the animals.
- Nutrition interventions focused primarily on children under 5, as well as pregnant and lactating

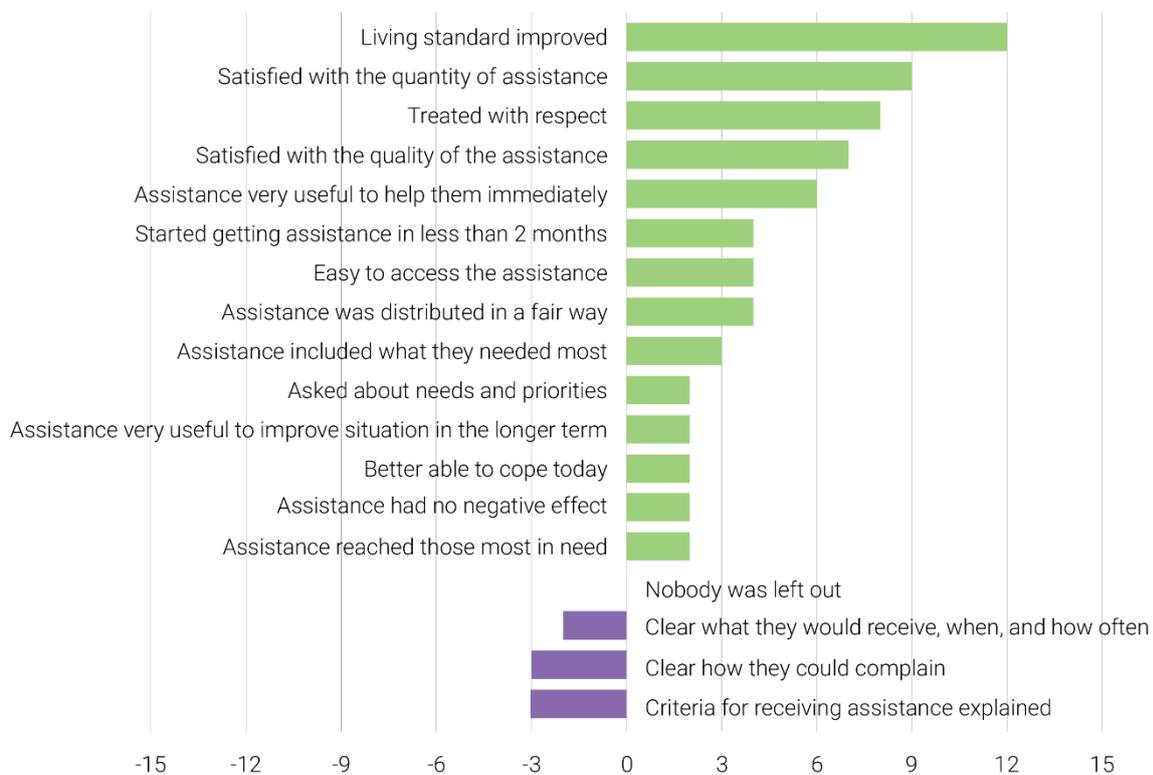
<sup>85</sup> See also Levine et al., 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, UN Women, UNDP, and UN Environment. 2018. *The Cost of the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Ethiopia*.

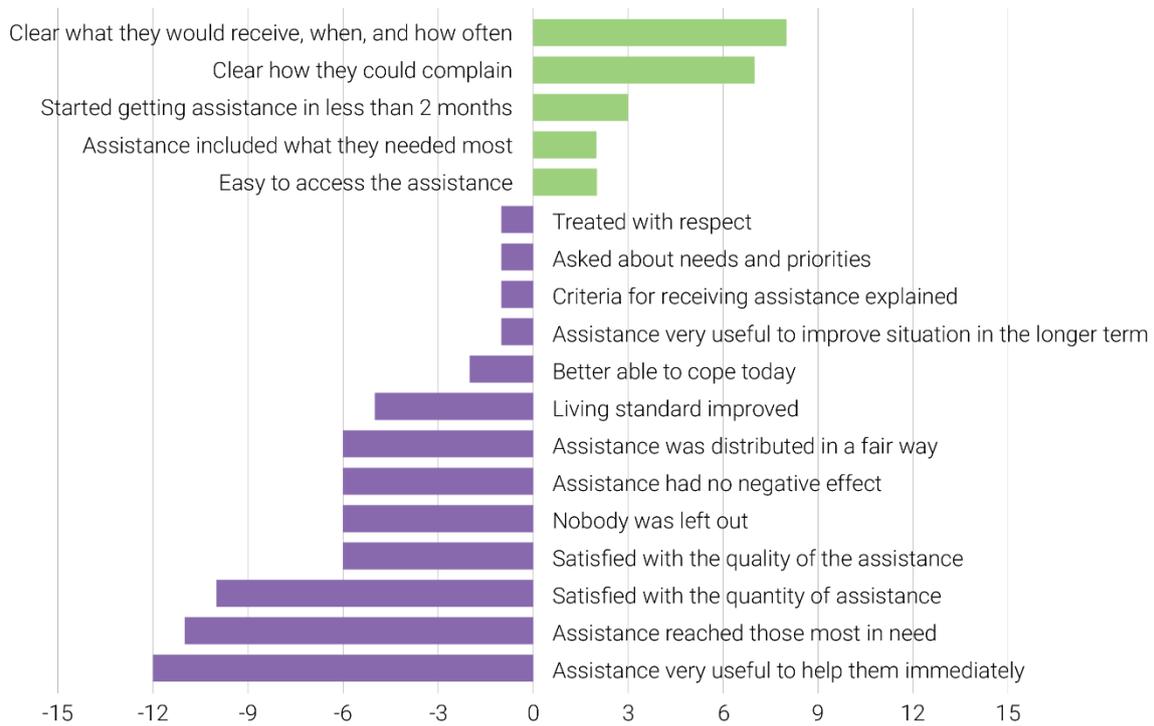
mothers. In pastoralist communities, children are typically fed before the adults – especially elderly adults – get their share. These adults, however, were in most cases not assessed for malnutrition and were thus not treated. In the survey, affected people also indicated that, after poor people, elderly people were the most frequent group left out of assistance (see Figure 31 above). The evaluation found a good practice example and evidence of lessons learned in Oromia, where rapid malnutrition assessments for elderly people were added as standard in all assessments.

- 178 Interestingly, survey results show that, while there are variations between the different questions, younger people perceive the response most positively whereas elderly people see it more negatively - even though they find the assistance more useful than others. Women also see the response more positively, although they are less well informed about it than other groups. The exact opposite is true for people with disabilities, who see the response more negatively, but are better informed about it and find it comparatively easy to access (Figures 33-36).

*Figure 33: Differences in Survey Responses from Women on Most Positive Answer Option Compared to Average Response. Source Figures 34-37: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey*



**Figure 34: Differences in Survey Responses from People with Disabilities on Most Positive Answer Option, Compared to Average Response.**



**Figure 35: Differences in Survey Responses from Youth (18-29 years) on Most Positive Answer Option, Compared to Average Response.**

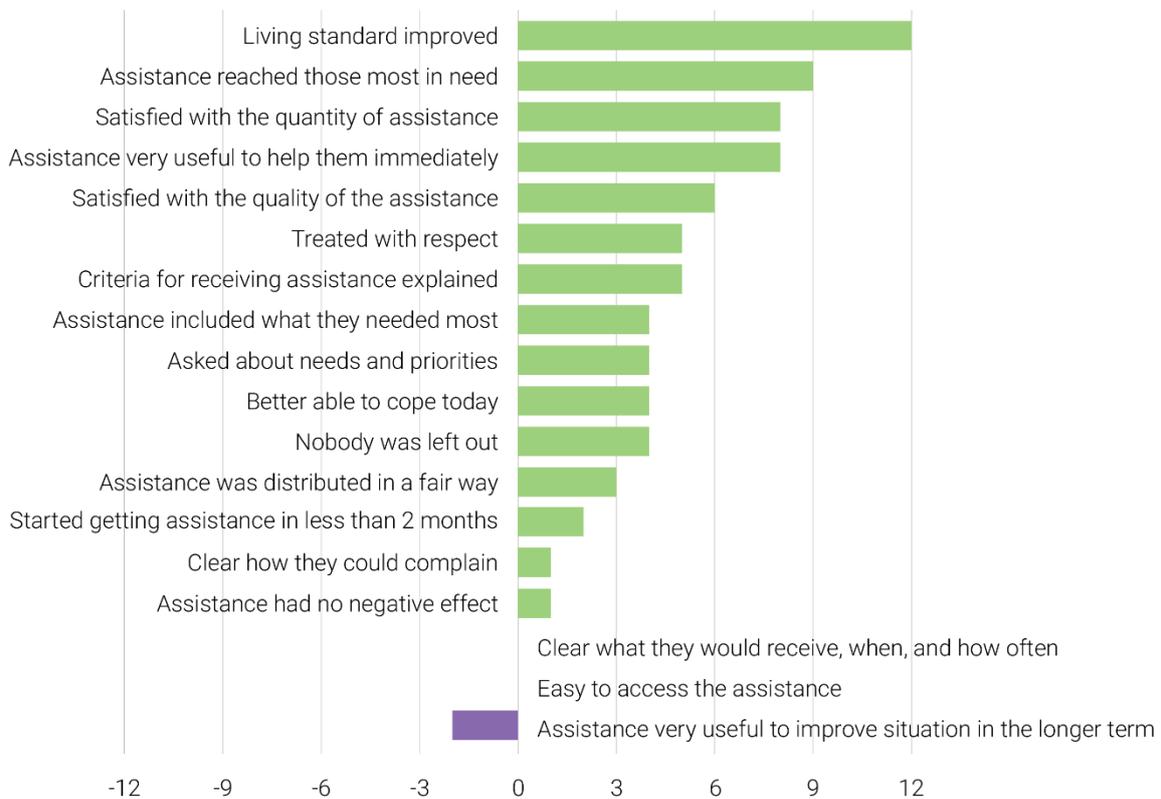
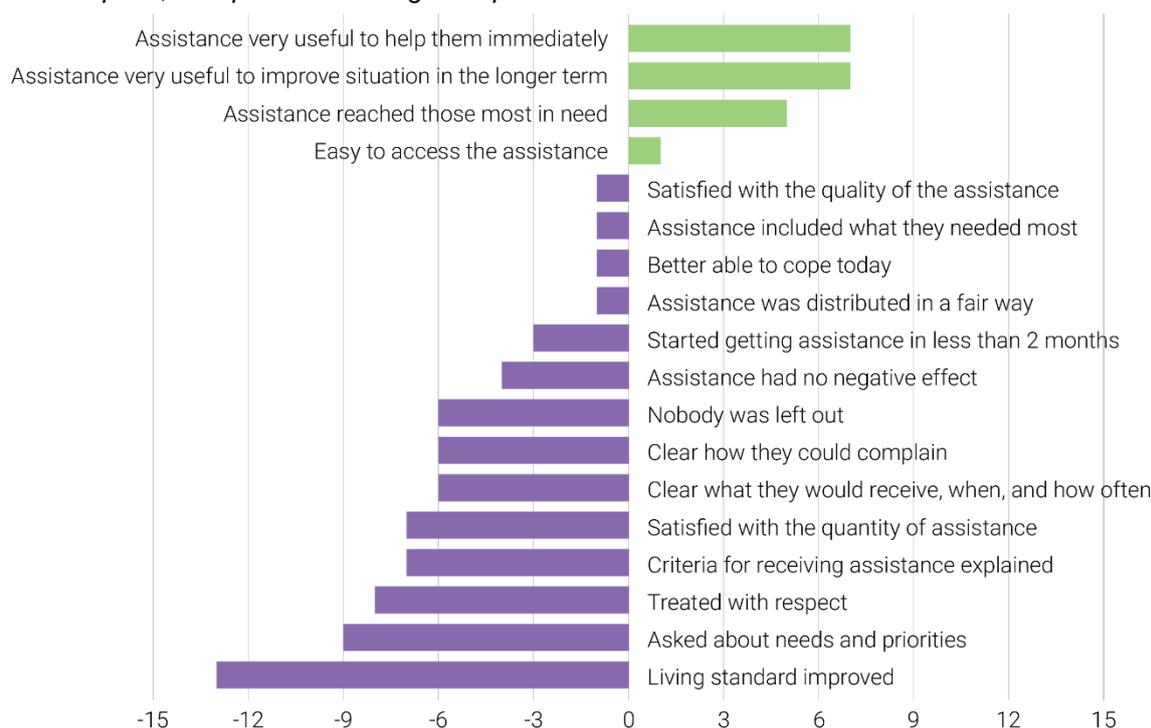


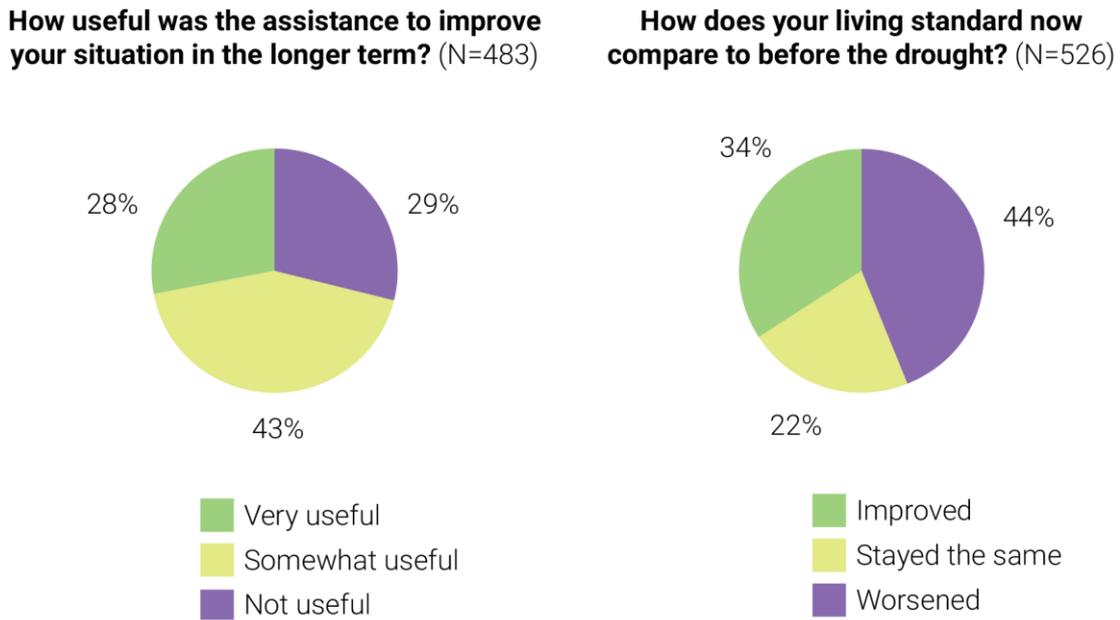
Figure 36: Differences in Survey Responses from Elderly People (60 years or above) on Most Positive Answer Option, Compared to Average Response.



### 2.4.3 Restoring livelihoods and building resilience

- 179 **Effects on livelihoods.** The drought response was only partially successful in restoring affected people's livelihoods and was often not able to prevent affected people from becoming less resilient to droughts and other crises over time. This is due to the rapid succession of several droughts; a response that did not sufficiently focus on livelihood interventions and resilience.
- 180 The Ethiopian government and the humanitarian community set protecting and restoring livelihoods as one of three overall response objectives. Aid workers, donors, and government officials interviewed for this evaluation broadly agreed that the slow progress in reaching this objective was the main shortcoming of the response. Focus group discussions held in Oromia and Afar strongly echoed this sentiment. All the communities involved in focus group discussions indicated that their level of resilience to potential future droughts and other crises was either unchanged or reduced as compared to the situation before the El Niño and/or Indian Ocean Dipole droughts.
- 181 The survey of affected people provides a more nuanced picture. The majority of respondents agreed and saw the assistance as less useful in the longer- than in the shorter-term. 29 percent found the response "not useful" and 43 percent "somewhat useful" for improving their situation in the longer term (Figure 37; compare Figure 24 above). Interestingly, responses varied a lot depending on whether or not people had been consulted about their needs and priorities. Respondents who had been consulted were almost four times as likely as those who had not been consulted to find the assistance very useful in the longer-term (see also paragraph 122).
- 182 44 percent of respondents also stated that their living standard had deteriorated as compared to the situation before the drought, and they felt that they would be less able to cope with a similar drought today. Yet there were also a significant number of respondents who thought that the assistance was very useful in the longer-term (28 percent), that their living standard had improved (34 percent), and that they would be better able to cope with a similar drought (18 percent). Unexpectedly, responses from the Somali region were by far the most positive. Here, 40 percent thought that assistance was useful in the longer-term (as compared to 14 percent in Tigray, 19 percent in Afar, and 25 percent in Oromia), a staggering 62 percent stated that their living standard had improved (as compared to 8 percent in Oromia, 23 percent in Tigray, and 35 percent in Afar), and 28 percent felt that they would be better able to cope with a similar drought today (as compared to 8 percent in Oromia, 17 percent in Tigray, and 20 percent in Afar).

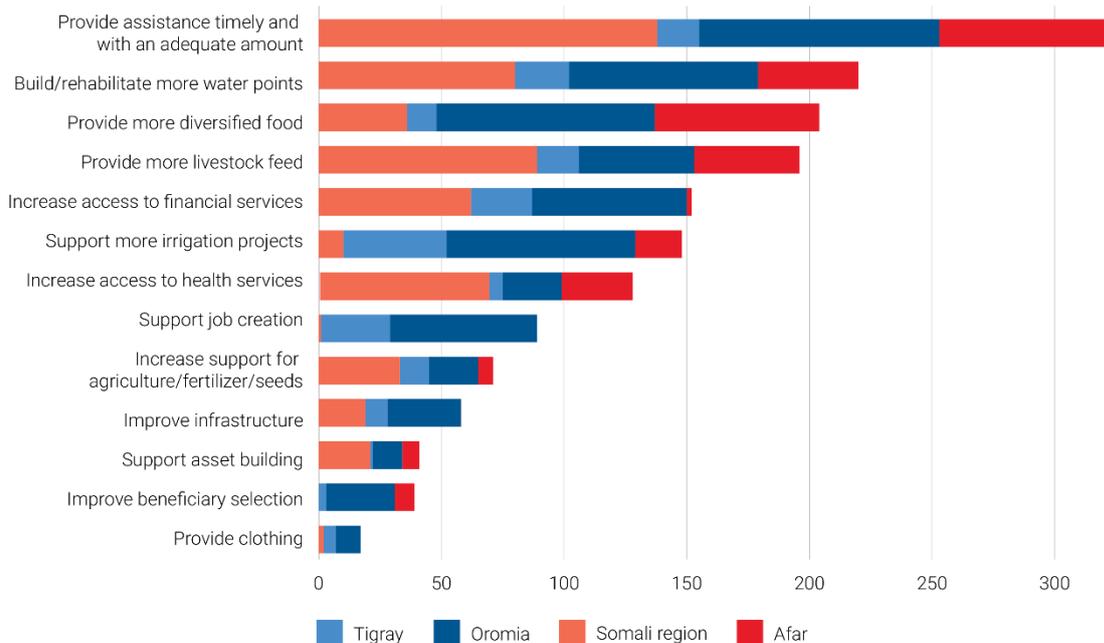
Figure 37: Affected People’s Perceptions of Livelihoods and Resilience, N=483/526/507



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

183 Affected people were asked in the survey to mention three things humanitarian organizations should do differently in the event of a new drought. It is interesting to note that the largest number of responses relates to the provision of classic humanitarian assistance. However, many answers also highlight the importance of longer-term interventions, including more durable water solutions, elements relating to agriculture and livestock (fodder, fertilizer, seeds, irrigation), and support for other livelihoods (financial services, job creation, infrastructure). Improvements in health services were also often mentioned. Few recommendations concerned the processes of the response and these focused all on beneficiary selection, but not, for example, the consultation or information of affected people (Figure 38).

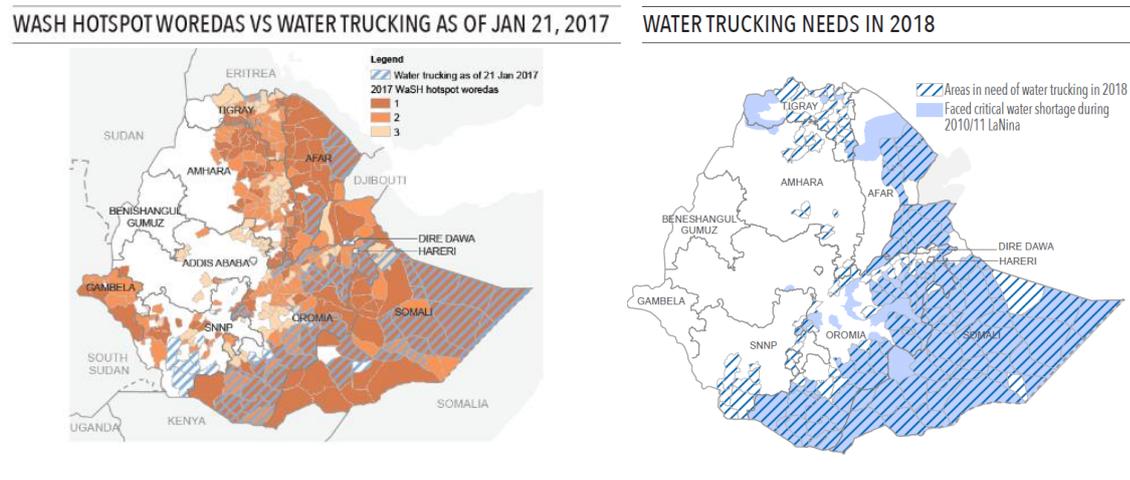
Figure 38: Recommendations Made by Affected People. N=510



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

- 184 A recent study conducted by the World Bank and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) might help explain these divided perceptions. It found that the Productive Safety Net Program and humanitarian food assistance had reduced overall poverty rates in Afar and the Somali region. Yet at the same time, asset-based poverty in the lowlands increased from 43 to 53 percent between 2011 and 2016.<sup>87</sup>
- 185 Several factors explain why the humanitarian community's efforts to restore people's livelihoods and build resilience were only partially successful. First, in some areas, particularly in Afar and Sitti, several droughts followed each other in rapid succession, leaving insufficient time for people and livestock to recover. Most interviewees believe that these drought patterns are caused by climate change and that such conditions are likely to persist or deteriorate further in the future. Particularly in Afar, but also in other predominantly pastoralist areas, affected communities and aid workers questioned whether traditional pastoralist livelihoods remained viable at all and highlighted the difficulties of restoring these livelihoods.
- 186 Second, according to many interviewees, the response did not sufficiently focus on livelihood interventions. This evaluation found some good practice – for example, projects in which communities set up slaughter groups to organize the culling of animals, while at the same time creating alternative livelihoods through the sale of other animal products, such as leather. Overall, however, short-term emergency assistance remained the main focus. As discussed above (section 2.3), the agriculture sector, for example, did not receive sufficient funding.
- 187 Many interviewees also saw much room for improvement in focusing on resilience within sectors, especially in WASH. People in many areas still relied on water trucking rather than rehabilitating water points and boreholes, although water trucking was defined as a “last resort.” According to the WASH cluster, two months of water trucking for 2,000 people costs the same amount as a new permanent water scheme for the same number of people.<sup>88</sup> In 2016, water trucking was used to cover more than half of all emergency water needs in drought-affected areas (with 3.3 million people reached with water trucking and 3.1 million through rehabilitated boreholes or water points).<sup>89</sup> This type of data is not available for later years, but interviewees explained that donor restrictions increased over time and limited their flexibility to use emergency funding for the rehabilitation of existing or the creation of new, more sustainable water schemes. Since water trucking is expensive, there are also important vested interests involved in these operations. While the need for water trucking should have decreased – for example, in the Somali region after the peak of the La Niña/Indian Ocean Dipole drought in 2017 – the number of *woredas* targeted for water trucking went up in 2018 (Figure 40). In May 2019, during this evaluation, a water trucking intervention was ongoing in Borena in Oromia at the end of the rainy season. According to several interviewees, the intervention was not relevant at that point in time, and rehabilitating water supply structures should have been the priority. The lack of timely planning and late funding were given as reasons for this situation.

Figure 40: Water Trucking Needs in 2017 and 2018. Source: HRD 2017 and 2018



<sup>87</sup> World Bank & DFID. 2019. “Vulnerability and Resilience in the Ethiopian Lowlands” (Powerpoint presentation), p. 13–14.

<sup>88</sup> HRD 2016.

<sup>89</sup> 2016 WASH monitoring report.

- 188 However, there were also good practice examples in the WASH sector. In both Oromia and Afar, several interviewees who had witnessed all the droughts since 2015 said that there were fewer non-functioning structures because government, community, or private-sector maintenance teams had taken more ownership. In Afar, water schemes based on deep boreholes supplying several *woredas* at once had been created. In addition, the success rate of (costly) deep boreholes had improved significantly thanks to a system that uses satellite imagery to identify areas where ground water is likely to be found.
- 189 A third reason why the response had limited effects on resilience building was the reluctance to fund resilience-oriented humanitarian programs. Interviewees reported that donors were more open to funding resilience and recovery activities during the El Niño drought – when the deep boreholes in Afar were built, for example – than during the La Niña/Indian Ocean Dipole response. In addition, while more multi-year funding was available, some interviewees explained that UN organizations do not necessarily pass on the multi-year agreements to their implementing partners, and the one-year humanitarian planning cycle hinders longer-term thinking.
- 190 In an effort to counter this funding trend, the Ethiopian government and the humanitarian community shifted from the Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD) to a multi-year Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan (HDRP) in 2018. The HDRP included large-scale resilience interventions, preparedness, and national system strengthening in its three pillars. Several interviewees saw this as a move in the right direction. However, the preparedness and response pillar constituted the lion's share (88 percent) of overall funding requested under the HDRP. In addition, this was the only well-funded pillar. According to OCHA reports, it received 85 percent of the funding requested, whereas the pillar on national systems strengthening and recovery received only 7 percent of the resources requested.<sup>90</sup> In 2019, the Humanitarian Country Team shifted back to preparing a Humanitarian Response Plan without a dedicated pillar on national systems strengthening and recovery. Because the HDRP had been intended as a multi-year strategy, this move confused several stakeholders.

#### 2.4.4 Links with development interventions

- 191 **Crisis modifiers and the mobilization of development funding.** The use of crisis modifiers in Ethiopia is widely lauded as good practice in terms of linking humanitarian and development interventions. Some clusters also managed to attract funding from development budgets for emergency interventions.
- 192 A key development instrument in Ethiopia that can be adapted during times of crisis is the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). The PSNP is a social safety net that provides food or cash to chronically food insecure households.<sup>91</sup> The PSNP has a contingency mechanism that enables it to add additional people to the beneficiary list or to extend the number of months over which participants receive assistance, from six up to nine months. Its contingency budget can also be used to support humanitarian food assistance. These contingency mechanisms were used in 2015 (US\$16 million) to add three distribution rounds. In 2016 and 2017, donors increased their contributions to the PSNP to support its expansion as part of the drought response. The World Bank, for example, provided an additional US\$100 million and US\$108.1 million, respectively, primarily from the International Development Association's Crisis Response Window.<sup>92</sup> The interviewees who commented on this PSNP expansion lauded its contribution to buffering some of the effects of the droughts. However, they also highlighted the fact that the PSNP itself can only be expanded in *woredas* in which it is already active.
- 193 Several other development interventions also had crisis modifiers in place, which allowed implementers to reallocate parts of their existing development funds to crisis response. Of the organizations interviewed, those that benefitted from these arrangements indicated that this was one of the most effective mechanisms in enabling an early response, while at the same time linking emergency interventions to longer-term programs. One limitation of this approach is that resources often had to be spent in the same geographic area, even though development interventions do not often focus on the most crisis-prone areas.

<sup>90</sup> OCHA. 2019. *Ethiopia 2018 HDRP Funding Update* (last accessed on 15 January 2019).

<sup>91</sup> This evaluation did not assess the effectiveness of the PSNP directly. For evaluations of the PSNP, see Filipski et al.. 2017. *General Equilibrium Impact Assessment of the Productive Safety Net Program in Ethiopia*; and Berhane et al.. 2013. *Evaluation of Ethiopia's Food Security Program*.

<sup>92</sup> See <http://projects.worldbank.org/P146883/?lang=en&tab=financial> (last accessed on 16 August 2019).

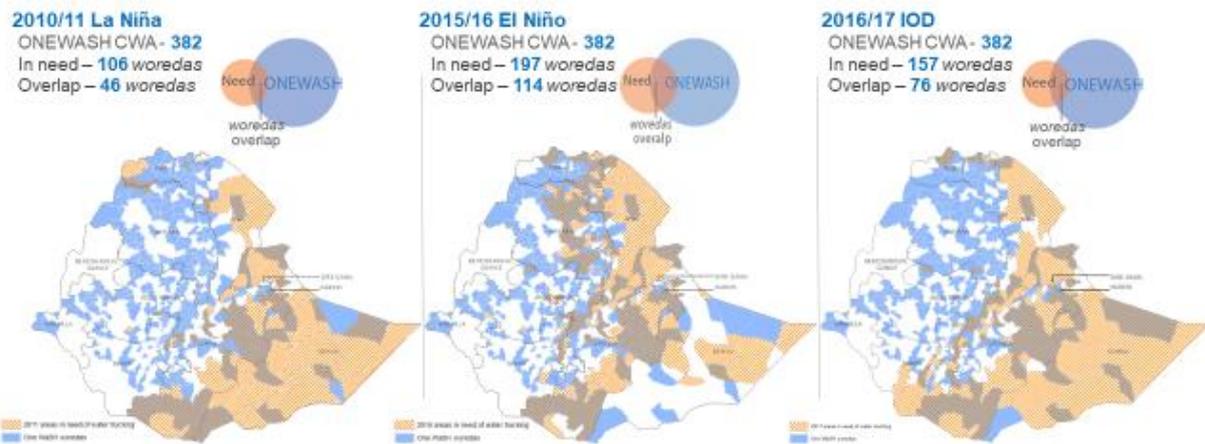
- 194 Another way of linking humanitarian and development interventions was to mobilize development funding for the drought response. Some of these funds had the benefit of spanning several years. In 2016, for example, 25 percent of emergency school feeding in the Somali region and Oromia was funded by the development sector.<sup>93</sup> However, the humanitarian system was not able to mobilize these resources in a more systematic way. As discussed above (section 2.4.3), attempts to attract funding for the HDRP pillar on national systems strengthening and recovery, for example, largely failed.
- 195 **Missing links to development interventions.** Overall the missing links between humanitarian and development interventions remain a major concern, despite repeated discussions, policy initiatives, and advocacy efforts to address this issue. Coherence between development and humanitarian interventions was lacking in several of the examples analyzed for this evaluation, and important development programs did not focus on areas affected by the droughts.
- 196 Despite these good practice examples, the missing links between humanitarian and development interventions in Ethiopia remain a major concern. As discussed above (section 2.3), in both the survey and the focus group discussions, affected people indicated that their most important unmet needs were related to recovery, the restoration of livelihoods, or the development of alternative livelihoods. Aid worker interviews and survey results are consistent with this finding. Addressing the gap between humanitarian and development work was one of the challenges most frequently mentioned in interviews. With eight mentions, improving the focus on resilience and a better connection to development actors was also the recommendation most frequently made in the aid worker survey.
- 197 One problem was that development and humanitarian interventions were often **not coherent**. The PSNP is the most prominent example of a development intervention that is highly relevant in crisis-affected areas. However, there are differences in the criteria for receiving PSNP and humanitarian food assistance. In many areas, humanitarian food assistance is unconditional, whereas regular PSNP distributions require households with able-bodied members to participate in public works projects. In several focus group discussions conducted for this evaluation, participants reported that this led to tensions within communities. Since the PSNP reached more very poor households than humanitarian assistance, the different conditions for the two aid modalities were perceived as reinforcing inequality. Other differences include the fact that regular PSNP contributions support a maximum of five family members, whereas humanitarian assistance can provide for more. According to several interviewees, the coordination of humanitarian and PSNP distributions has improved in recent years. In 2017, for example, PSNP beneficiaries were prioritized for seed distributions for the first time, ensuring that such distributions target the most vulnerable.<sup>94</sup>
- 198 Another issue was that development interventions often pursued **different objectives than humanitarian interventions**. As a result, many development interventions in Ethiopia focused primarily on the highlands, where the population density is much higher and where the conditions for successful development were seen as more promising, at least in some areas. By contrast, the most protracted emergency situations occur mainly in lowland, pastoralist areas. As one interviewee put it, the gap between humanitarian and development programming is very much a “rift valley gap.”
- 199 For example, the biggest development program on water and sanitation, the OneWash program, primarily focuses on the highland areas and western Ethiopia. During the three most impactful droughts, there was very limited overlap between those *woredas* identified as in need of emergency assistance and the OneWash program (Figure 40). In 2016/2017, only 48 percent of all *woredas* in need of emergency WASH assistance were also targeted for OneWash interventions. Even during the 2015/2016 El Niño drought – which affected the highland areas more than the lowlands – the overlap was only 58 percent.

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<sup>93</sup> Mid-Year Review 2017.

<sup>94</sup> HRD 2017.

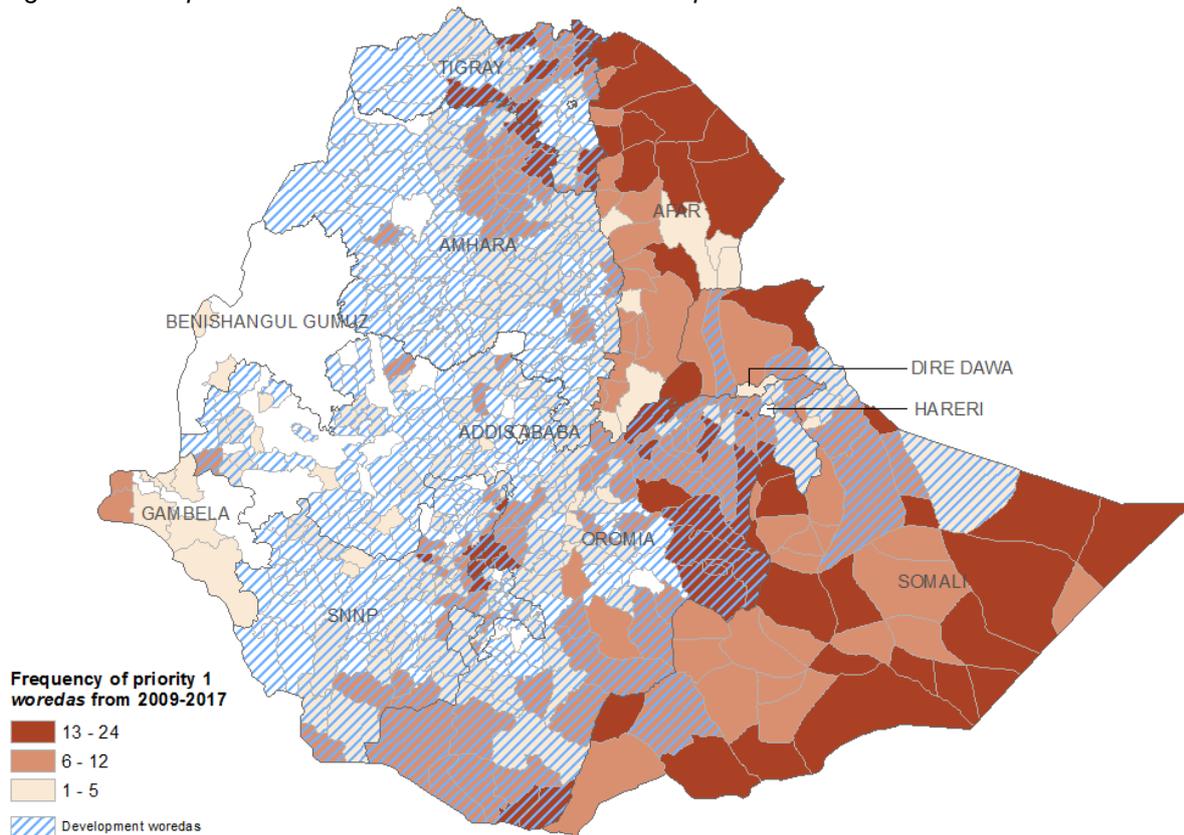
Figure 40: People in Need of WASH Interventions vs. OneWash Woredas



Source: OCHA, 2018 (draft), Mapping of Recurrent Climatic Shocks and Humanitarian Impact vs. Development Programming

200 Patterns in nutrition were similar. The three largest nutrition development projects<sup>95</sup> targeted 73 percent of recurrent hotspot woredas between 2009 and 2017. However, as Figure 41 shows, none of the development projects targeted Afar, and very few woredas in the Somali region were covered.

Figure 41: Comparison between Humanitarian and Development Nutrition



Source: OCHA, 2018 (draft), Mapping of Recurrent Climatic Shocks and Humanitarian Impact vs. Development Programming

<sup>95</sup> Community-Based Nutrition, the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, and Empowering New Generations to Improve Nutrition and Economic opportunities.

- 201 Using these analyses provided by OCHA, the humanitarian community tried to **advocate** with development actors to address this gap. It also argued early on that development actors should focus on access to services (rather than population density) when deciding where to target aid. For example, the 2016 HRD shows that access to water and sanitation in 2015 was above 80 percent in the highlands, but less than 5 percent in the lowlands.<sup>96</sup> Several interviewees pointed to these analyses and the related advocacy effort as good practice. However, since development planning cycles are long, it is unclear to what extent these insights influenced subsequent development practice.
- 202 Since 2015, there have also been many **discussions and policy initiatives** on strengthening links between the humanitarian and development sectors. These include regular discussions in the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team on resilience, discussions with a “Humanitarian and Resilience Donor Group,” the designation of Ethiopia as a pilot country for the “New Way of Working,”<sup>97</sup> and the creation of a “Nexus Group” in the Humanitarian Country Team that devised new conceptual approaches – such as the “bundle” and “bundle+” approaches – to integrate humanitarian and development interventions taking place in the same area.
- 203 However, these initiatives have so far had **little effect on practice**. Interviewees who voiced their frustration with these processes identified four reasons why they did not have the desired impact on the ground: *“The nexus discussions are a waste of time.” Interviewee*
- Discussions often focused on process – for example, on which task forces should be created and what their terms of reference should be, or on how the Humanitarian Country Team could be better connected to other coordination fora, such as the Development Assistance Group or the Humanitarian and Resilience Donor Group. Yet these fora include many of the same main stakeholders.
  - All six of the evaluations that commented on nexus-related issues say that a lack of clarity on what resilience entails and operational silos between humanitarian and development actors prevent progress on the ground.
  - Discussions increasingly focused on the division of labor and who should fund what. Several interviewees in humanitarian organizations were adamant that structural issues were “the responsibility of development actors.” However, there was no process in place to ensure that development actors would live up to this responsibility. Some issues therefore fell between the cracks. WASH in schools, for example, was seen by some as a “development task” although there were no development projects focusing on this issue. The underlying buck passing mentality is particularly problematic given that humanitarian funding makes up a third of all official aid in Ethiopia. With limited development funding, it is important for the humanitarian sectors to also address some structural issues.
  - The nexus debate mainly looked at the link *between* humanitarian and development organizations rather than links *within* multi-mandated organizations. Many implementing partners for big development projects in Ethiopia – such as Save the Children, World Vision, Concern, or UNICEF – are also key humanitarian players. The potential to strengthen links between humanitarian and development interventions therefore also lies within these multi-mandated organizations.<sup>98</sup>
- 204 A process is currently underway to develop a multi-year strategy for resilience and durable solutions for 2020–2025.<sup>99</sup> This strategy foresees linking a new, multi-year HRP with key development frameworks, including the government’s Third Growth and Transformation Plan, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and the Productive Safety Net Programme. While some interviewees feared that this effort would once more be heavy on process, others recognized its potential because the strategy will include joint objectives and define collective outcomes, which could inform planning in both sectors.

<sup>96</sup> HRD 2016, p. 26.

<sup>97</sup> IASC. 2017. *Snapshot: Ethiopia’s New Way of Working*. United Nations. 2018. *ETHIOPIA. New Way of Working – Progress Update*.

<sup>98</sup> Unicef has started a process of improving the connections between its humanitarian and development programming, see Unicef. 2018. *Update on UNICEF humanitarian action with a focus on linking humanitarian and development programming*.

<sup>99</sup> HRD 2019, p. 14.

### 2.4.5 Unintended effects

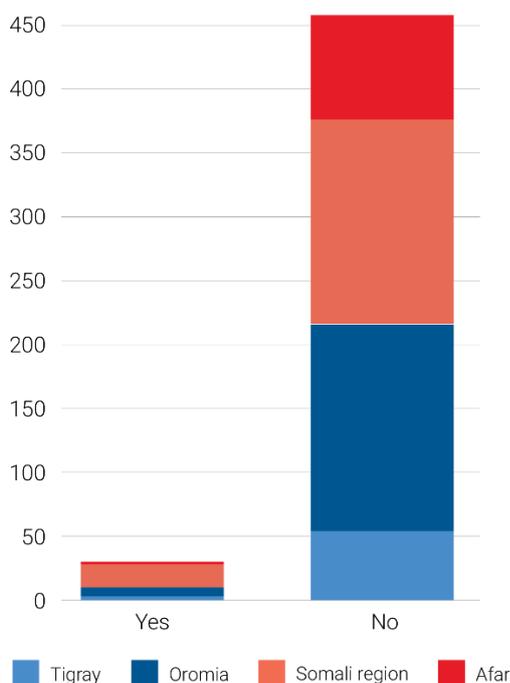
205 **Dependency.** A very strong majority of the affected people surveyed did not see any unintended negative effects of the drought response. However, people’s growing dependency on aid was seen as a major issue.

206 A very strong majority (94 percent) of the affected people surveyed for this evaluation stated that the response did not have any negative effects on them or their community (Figure 42). Figures were similar but slightly higher among women (96 percent) and youth (95 percent), and slightly lower among people with disabilities (88 percent) and elderly people (90 percent). By region, the most positive results are from Afar (98 percent) and the least positive from the Somali region (90 percent).

207 In focus group discussions, affected people were more skeptical. Participants in areas relying on agriculture in Oromia and Afar provided self-critical reflections on how drought assistance had changed their incentives and reduced their motivation to look for or maintain sources of income other than aid (see quote). In pastoralist communities, the discussion focused more on the perception that pastoralist lifestyles were no longer sustainable, which rendered the question of incentives and motivations less relevant.

“Most people now have aid as their main survival strategy.” *Focus Group*

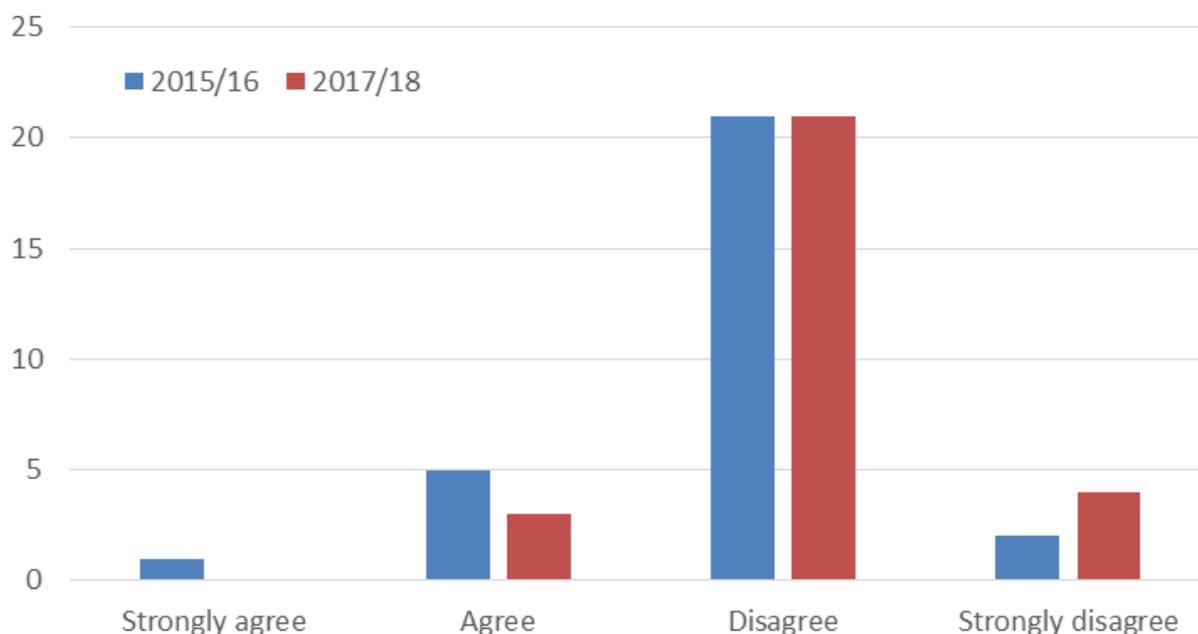
Figure 42: Affected People Survey Responses to: “Did the assistance have any negative effects on you or your community?” N=489



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

208 Aid workers shared this more critical assessment. While some did not see any negative effects of the response, dependency was frequently mentioned as a negative effect in interviews with humanitarian staff, government officials, and donors. The aid worker survey mirrors this perception. In general, survey results were very positive. Yet around 80 percent of respondents stated that aid dependency could not be avoided (see Figure 43).

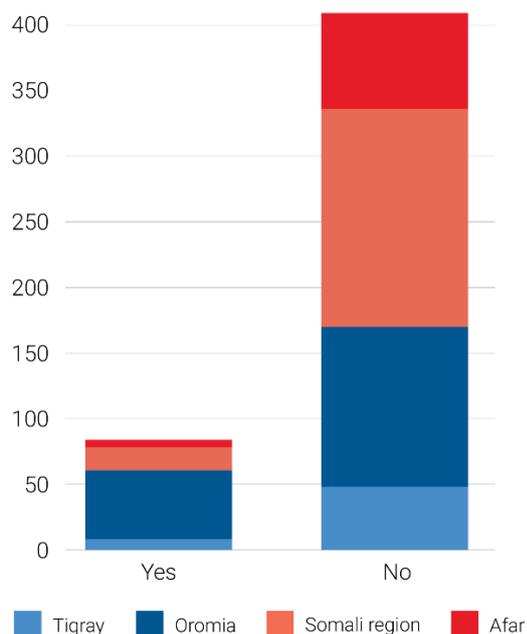
Figure 43: Aid Worker Survey: Level of Agreement That Aid Dependency Was Avoided, N=29(2015/2016), 28 (2017/2018)



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE aid worker survey

- 209 Few interviewees had an explanation for why the drought response led to such high levels of dependency. With over 55 percent of people targeted for either PSNP or humanitarian food aid in Afar, the sheer scale of assistance is enough to change societal dynamics and incentives. In Oromia, some interviewees suspected that traditional pastoralist knowledge of how to handle droughts (i.e., systems to stock fodder or preserve water) were lost across generations due to aid. Some interviewees also found it problematic that humanitarian food rations were distributed throughout the year – even in relatively good harvest periods. They suggested that the dependency syndrome could be reduced by focusing more strongly on the lean season and the immediate peaks of the droughts.
- 210 **Effects on conflict dynamics.** The affected people survey supports the prevailing assumption that the scale of the assistance provided reduced the potential for conflict. Yet affected people also provided some examples of how assistance (or the lack thereof) fueled tensions.
- 211 The 2016 HRD acknowledges that drought will force more people to move in search of water and pasture and could therefore exacerbate conflict. While recognizing the causal link between drought and conflict, the planning documents contain almost no reflection on what needed to be done to ensure that the response itself does not fuel tensions, but helps to prevent conflict as effectively as possible. A short mention of conflict-sensitive education programs in the planning document for 2016 was an exception to this rule.
- 212 Nevertheless, there was a broadly held assumption among aid workers, government officials, and donors that the assistance provided was at such a scale that it helped to reduce pressure on resources and thereby also helped to reduce the potential for conflict. The affected people who participated in the survey support this general assumption. 77 percent of survey respondents indicated that they would have been (more) displaced if no assistance had been provided, making this the most frequent answer.
- 213 Overall, the assumption that the drought response helped to limit conflict therefore seems to be fair. At the same time, however, there are some indications that the way in which the assistance was provided also fueled tensions. Two focus groups – both in Oromia – described how disagreements and jealousy over who should receive assistance led to tensions within their communities. Among the individuals surveyed, a clear majority of 83 percent felt that the assistance had *not* created or reinforced tensions or conflict. However, the large minority of 30 percent in Oromia, and also the smaller groups in the other regions who believed that the assistance had created or reinforced tensions or conflict should give the humanitarian community in Ethiopia pause (see Figure 44).

Figure 44: Affected People Survey Responses to: “Did the assistance create or reinforce any tensions or conflicts within your community or with other communities?” N=490



Source: Evaluation team, IAHE affected people survey

- 214 **Other unintended effects.** During focus group discussions and in interviews, several examples of other unintended negative effects on women, the private sector, and the environment were mentioned.
- 215 While 96 percent of women surveyed saw no negative effects of the assistance, participants of two focus group discussions with women in Oromia explained that assistance can have severe negative effects on women, who are usually the ones to collect food assistance. According to participants, it took up to six hours to walk to food distribution points. This disrupted their daily routines. Due to the distance and to unpredictable distribution schedules, women were at times also required to spend the night in the location where the assistance was distributed. Several women shared that they were beaten by their husbands, either because they came back empty-handed due to delays, or because their long absence raised suspicions. 27 percent of all survey respondents (and 23 percent of women) stated that they found it difficult to access the assistance.
- 216 Interviewees also provided an example of unintended negative effects related to animal health services. As an emergency intervention, certain drugs and services were provided for free. According to the interviewees, this undermined private-sector initiatives. The free provision of veterinary drugs and services reduced the presence of private veterinary pharmacies. Once the emergency interventions stopped, pastoralists were less able to access animal health services.
- 217 Environmental damage was also brought up as a side-effect – primarily plastic pollution from small jerry cans and waste at Djibouti port, where some imported relief goods rotted due to logistical problems. Several interviewees pointed to the fact that environmental considerations were not part of the inter-agency discussions, and that few organizations paid attention to this issue.

## 2.5 Partnerships: Did the Response Adequately Involve and Build National Capacities?

- 218 **Background:** The Ethiopian government leads the humanitarian response, while assessments, planning, coordination, and implementation are handled jointly by humanitarian partners and the government. Government approval is required for any humanitarian project or program implemented.
- 219 The Ethiopian government's role in the drought response needs to be analyzed against the backdrop of a very ambitious, state-led economic development agenda. Protecting these development gains is

*an important priority for the government. This includes avoiding potential threats to foreign investments which may be presented by too much publicity for humanitarian crises. At the same time, economic development policies have led to a high debt burden, driving inflation.<sup>100</sup> Ethiopia is still one of the poorest countries in Africa, heavily relying on rain-fed agriculture. Through its hierarchical system of central planning, it has managed to significantly increase its implementation capacity for social security and humanitarian programs in some areas. These capacities are uneven, however, with strong systems in the central areas and the highlands, and weaker systems in the more peripheral areas.*

- 220 **Operational partnership.** Practical cooperation through the integrated humanitarian and government response, based on a partnership between the Ethiopian government and humanitarian actors, was generally seen as key to explaining successes in the drought response since 2015. At the same time, interviewees from both the Ethiopian government and humanitarian organizations identified gaps – for example, the relatively weaker relationships at the sub-national level, and tensions between national ownership and the humanitarian principle of independence.
- 221 Several interviewees identified the close working relationship between the Ethiopian government and the humanitarian community as key to the relatively smooth delivery of a large-scale response. In many areas, assistance was delivered through government agencies. This limited the need to create (expensive) parallel humanitarian implementation systems. Using government systems also provided opportunities for dialogue, influence, and trust building, which strengthened the working relationship over time.
- 222 Four out of five previous evaluations and reviews that commented on this issue reached the same general conclusion. The logistics cluster review of lessons learned, for example, found that the cluster's response in 2016 was greatly facilitated by the direct access to decision-makers which this close working relationship enabled. A review of the drought response in the Horn of Africa by the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations stressed that coordination between the government, UN agencies, and other actors significantly improved between 2011 and 2016.
- 223 However, interviewees also pointed to several important weaknesses in the joint management of the response. First, most joint strategic meetings happened at the national level. Although drought response coordination in Ethiopia follows a clear hierarchy from the federal to the regional, zonal, and *woreda* levels, important operational decisions are made at lower administrative levels. For this reason, several interviewees recommended increasing humanitarian engagement with government counterparts at the sub-national level.
- 224 Second, the government-led response model also created tensions between the humanitarian principle of independence and national ownership in Ethiopia. Global policy debates on the localization of humanitarian responses do not provide guidance on how to handle this inherent tension. In Ethiopia, response planning was carried out jointly, and each project required government approval. However, humanitarian organizations and donors decided which programs to fund based on their own priorities. Interviewees mentioned several instances in which funding decisions served to correct suspected biases in assessment data and targeting (as discussed in the following sections). While this model thus allows for a certain level of independence, several government interviewees gave examples in which the lack of attention to government priorities hindered an intervention which would have been better adapted to the evolving needs. In Oromia, for example, there was a case in which several donors decided to fund a similar type of intervention in the same *woreda* and did not initially take government officials' concerns into account. In addition, disagreements over funding decisions delayed the subsequent government approval process. Nevertheless, there have also been examples of joint humanitarian-government funding requests which were seen as good practice, strengthening integration and speeding up government approval since priorities were agreed on up front.

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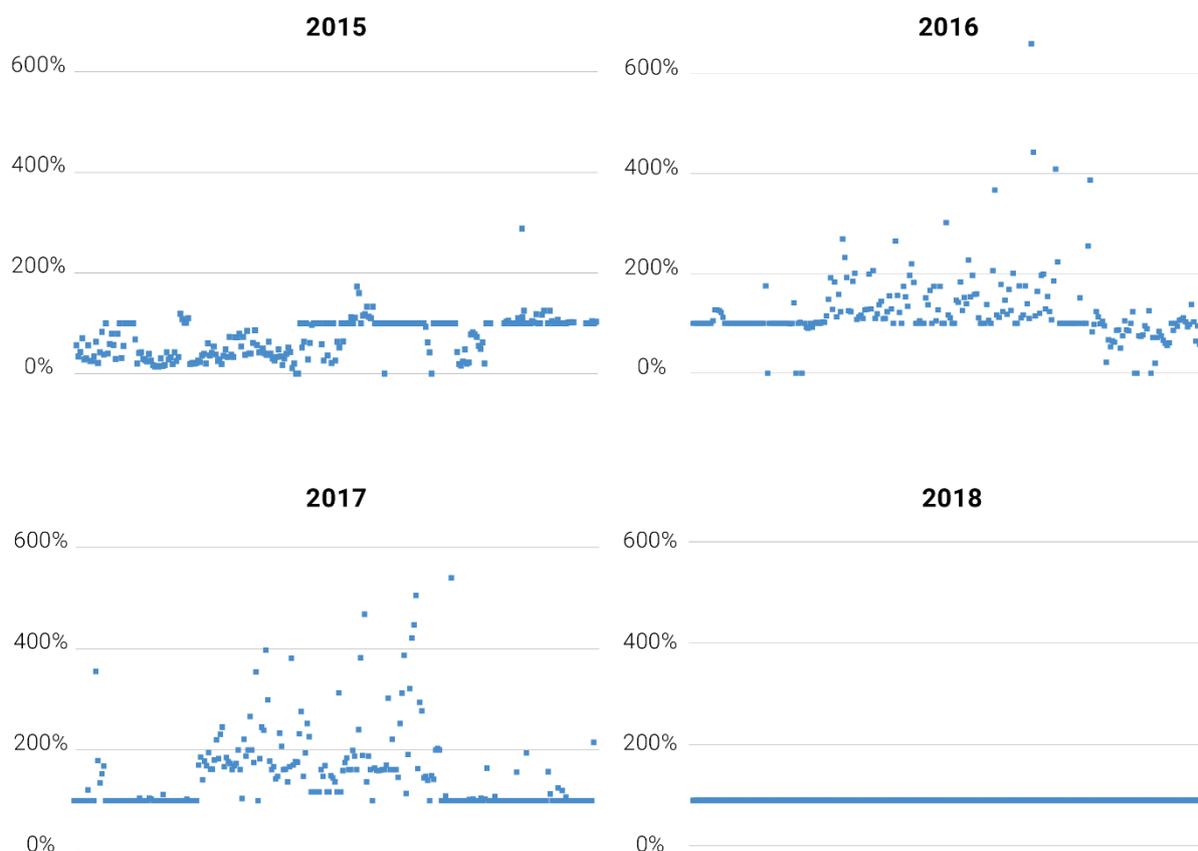
<sup>100</sup> International Crisis Group. 2019. *Managing Ethiopia's Unsettled Transition*.

- 225 **Accountability for the response.** The humanitarian community failed to address critical questions of accountability. Government data and accountability mechanisms have obvious limitations, yet there is no independent monitoring of the delivery and effects of assistance in key areas of the response.
- 226 The government's own response to the droughts was not a focus of this evaluation. However, in order to address the question of whether the humanitarian community appropriately managed its partnership with the Ethiopian government, the issue of accountability is key. The types and levels of monitoring and other accountability mechanisms required by the humanitarian system depend in part on the strength of the government's systems. There are several indications that these systems have limitations:
- 227 First, even though the evaluation team did not ask this question actively, many of the people consulted – including affected people, government officials, and aid workers – raised the question of accountability for the response and the international community's role in ensuring it. They emphasized the fact that communities and even local officials did not know when, how much, or which kind of assistance was supposed to reach which locations. Without this information, they were not able to hold government branches or humanitarian organizations accountable for delivering assistance or to verify whether there was evidence for suspected cases of aid diversion.
- 228 Second, official data on key aspects of the response is not available. An evaluation of WFP's portfolio in Ethiopia, for example, estimated that around 60 to 70 percent of the food distribution points in the Somali region supplied by WFP did not have registration lists for aid recipients available.<sup>101</sup> WFP reports that it has since agreed on a new registration mechanism with the Somali regional government. Other key data, such as overall malnutrition rates or mortality rates, are also not systematically recorded.
- 229 Third, the credibility of important available data is questionable. Key data compiled by the government includes figures on the total number of people who benefit from assistance and the quantity of different goods – for example, water, food, seeds, or livestock – provided. Figure 45 plots the reported number of beneficiaries as a share of the official number of people in need for all the *woredas* in Afar, Oromia, Tigray, and the Somali region in 2015–2018. In 2015, the picture reflects more or less what is to be expected: coverage rates vary and are below 100 percent for most areas, with some outlier areas reporting more than 100-percent coverage. From 2016 onward, the data becomes increasingly less plausible. In 2016 and 2017, an increasing number of *woredas* report exactly 100-percent coverage, and rates of between 150 percent and 500 percent become common. In 2018, this shifts to an implausible exact 100 percent for all the *woredas*. Similarly, the reported figures on the delivery of individual assistance lack plausibility. For example, particularly in 2018, the rations of supplementary food, pulses, and oil delivered per person in need are reported to remain completely constant across all the *woredas* in these four regions. This contradicts reports of pipeline breaks and indications from several of the communities consulted that the delivery of certain relief items – such as supplementary food – had been discontinued.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>101</sup> WFP Office of Evaluation. 2019. *Ethiopia: An Evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2012-2017)*. Evaluation Report, p. 37.

<sup>102</sup> Between 2015 and 2018, a total of 61 percent of *woredas* in the four regions assessed use constant coefficients when reporting the amount of cereals, supplementary food, oil, and pulses delivered per person in need. The share using a constant coefficient was even higher, at 84 percent, for the amount of assistance delivered per beneficiary.

Figure 45: Coverage: Ratio of Reported Beneficiaries to Official People in Need for Woredas in Afar, Oromia, the Somali Region, and Tigray, 2015–2018



Source: Evaluation team computation, based on Disaster Risk Management Commission (2018)

- 230 Despite these obvious and broadly acknowledged limitations of official data and internal accountability mechanisms, the humanitarian community in Ethiopia failed to develop a strong, independent monitoring system, as discussed above (see section 2.4).
- 231 **Advocacy towards the government.** The evaluation found divergent interpretations of whether the humanitarian community appropriately managed its advocacy to the government on sensitive issues. Critics – the majority of interviewees – argued that advocacy on these issues was too risk averse and that the humanitarian community should have taken a firmer stance – for example, on data, or on the arrests of humanitarian staff. Others felt that it was handled well – for example, in the case of the cholera or “AWD” response, in which interviewees believed that a firmer advocacy stance would have made the response more difficult. In later phases of the response, strengthened relationships at the federal level and escalating conflict in the country slowly opened space in which to address more contentious issues.
- 232 The international humanitarian community in Ethiopia was divided on the issue of advocacy vis-à-vis the government. NGO representatives in particular felt that advocacy to the government was too risk averse, especially during the El Niño drought. Issues such as the accuracy of needs assessment and monitoring data, the difficulty of obtaining NGO visas and hiring international staff, or the arrests of humanitarian staff would have benefitted from stronger joint positioning and advocacy. The main reason for this cautious stance on advocacy was that development priorities were competing with humanitarian concerns. Development funding to Ethiopia dwarfs humanitarian funding. Several interviewees suspected that dual-mandate organizations and the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator, who represents both sides, toned down their advocacy in order to maintain good relations with the government for the benefit of development programs.
- “Everyone was tip-toeing around sensitivities. The HC at the time was seen to be partial to the government. Donors had their bilateral interests, so they couldn’t push hard either.” Interviewee

- 233 Several interviewees disagreed with their peers and believed that the humanitarian community in Ethiopia had appropriately handled the fine line with regard to advocacy. A majority of aid worker survey respondents – 26 out of 33 – also agreed that the Humanitarian Country Team followed a clear engagement strategy with the government. One example was the handling of cholera outbreaks. Until mid-2019, the government strongly objected to acknowledging that these outbreaks were in fact cholera. Instead of advocating for public recognition of the outbreaks, the humanitarian community accepted the reference to “Acute Watery Diarrhoea” (AWD). Using this label, the humanitarian community managed to deploy cholera experts to Ethiopia and provide adequate treatment. The Ethiopian government even requested rapid test kits for cholera, but vaccines could not be imported. Advocates of the softer, backdoor diplomacy approach claim that a firmer stance would have backfired and hindered an effective response. In their analysis, they drew parallels to the tensions that arose after the international community’s criticism of the 2005 election violence.
- 234 It is impossible to objectively assess whether the humanitarian community appropriately managed this aspect of the partnership. Interestingly, none of the previous studies and evaluations which were reviewed for the current evaluation addresses this difficult subject.
- 235 Over time, and especially with the recent change in government, the space in which to address more sensitive issues has slowly begun to open up. Since mid-2019, the government has acknowledged cholera outbreaks and allowed more protection activities. Until recently, humanitarian organizations were unable to focus on the treatment of abuse victims – although planning documents identified this as a crucial need. The new 2019 Organization of Civil Societies Proclamation lifted the restriction on case management. Several interviewees pointed to OCHA’s 2016 relationship-building efforts as an enabling factor when it came to raising certain sensitive issues later. An analysis of Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team meeting notes shows that the development of joint messages to the government also improved over time, although interviewees felt that more structured reporting on these advocacy messages after delivery was lacking.
- 236 **Response capacities.** Efforts to support government response capacity have focused on staff training as well as financial and logistical support. This evaluation found some evidence of strengthened government response capacities as a result, particularly in nutrition, health, and logistics. Emergency departments and joint humanitarian-government units within government ministries supported capacity-strengthening efforts. However, critical gaps at the point of delivery remain, especially with regard to targeting and food distribution. Attempts to advocate for reducing the distance between food distribution points, for example, have not been successful. The main reasons for the limited success in capacity building at the point of delivery are the high turnover of trained staff and the limited focus on and accountability for actions taken at the sub-national level.
- 237 The evaluation found several examples in which government practice regarding nutrition, logistics, health, WASH, and agriculture improved as a result of international support. For example, the Ethiopian government is taking on more responsibility for delivering nutrition programs. The number of joint government-UNICEF mobile health and nutrition teams increased to 20 in Afar and to 29 in the Somali region during the period reviewed by this evaluation.<sup>103</sup> While the teams still receive international financial support, the plan is to transfer full responsibility to the government in the next few years. The treatment of severe acute malnutrition has been integrated into the government’s regular health system.
- 238 Another example in which government practice improved is logistics. The logistics cluster was activated in 2016 and focused on strengthening the government’s logistics capacity. The evaluation of WFP’s portfolio between 2012 and 2017 found that these investments have reduced lead times for distributions by an estimated 74 percent.<sup>104</sup> Interviewees also pointed to improvements in communication between trucks and warehouses in Afar as a result of previous logistical support. In addition, interviewees reported that the maintenance of rehabilitated water schemes improved after local government officials were trained in Oromia. Following a joint project in Afar, the government set up local fodder production for livestock, which helped to buffer some of the needs during the ongoing early stages of the drought in 2019. There were also some successes in strengthening government capacity in protection, with more protection caseworkers hired to focus on child protection and gender-based violence. Additionally,

<sup>103</sup> ENCU. 2018. *Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams in Ethiopia*, presentation by ENCU for the EU Pastoralist workshop, 24 May 2018.

<sup>104</sup> WFP Office of Evaluation, 2019, p. 45.

emergency planning at the regional level has improved since the El Niño response. Regional bureaus now routinely develop emergency plans, particularly for hotspot *woredas*.

- 239 However, other investments in supporting better government policy and practice have yielded limited results. Detailed government targeting guidelines were developed in 2011 with international support.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, targeting processes at the *kebele* level are still problematic (see above, section 2.4.2). Similarly, efforts to influence the number and location of government food distribution points were unsuccessful. After realizing that the average walking distance to distribution points was much longer in areas where the government was responsible for food assistance, members of the food security cluster repeatedly tried to advocate with NDRMC for a change in practice. To date, the practice has not changed, creating protection risks for women.
- 240 One reason for this lack of success is that humanitarian advocacy targeted national-level government stakeholders, whereas decisions on the locations of distribution points were made on the zonal level. Another reason is that humanitarian organizations faced difficulties maintaining entry points for capacity-strengthening in ministries that do not match the international cluster logic or do not have emergency departments. A good practice example in this context is the Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit, a joint government-international coordination unit built into the relevant ministry. Interviewees also saw staff deployment in government structures as very useful, since this enabled longer-term follow-up to capacity-strengthening initiatives. By contrast, one-off, stand-alone trainings for government officials were not successful due to staff turnover, which is high in Ethiopian public service because it offers conditions that are less attractive financially than the private sector or international humanitarian organizations. In addition, public servants from the highlands who are deployed to the lowland regions often quit early due to the comparatively harsher conditions.

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<sup>105</sup> Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Agriculture, Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector. 2011. *National Guidelines on Targeting Relief Food Assistance*.

### 3 Conclusions

241 The dynamics of the international response to the droughts in Ethiopia changed significantly over time:

242 **Slow start.** The major 2015 drought caught the international humanitarian community off guard. It was clear from early 2015 onward that the drought would be exceptionally severe. The response by the Ethiopian government and the international community helped to save lives, but it was not quick enough to prevent severe negative effects on communities. These effects included people becoming ill, malnutrition rates increasing, livestock dying, and people selling assets. The following aspects are among the main reasons why the international response to the 2015 drought in Ethiopia got off to a slow start:

- Ahead of general elections and a major international development conference, the Ethiopian government was reluctant to officially acknowledge the drought. The political environment was tense, and the humanitarian community did not dare to push too hard for recognition of the drought.
- The international community had invested heavily in Ethiopia's development over decades. It expected the Ethiopian government to draw on these resources to address many of the effects of the drought. The resulting discussions about who would contribute what slowed down international fundraising.

243 **Effective, large-scale response in 2016.** After these initial delays, which resulted in an inadequate response to the early drought in Sitti, the international community mounted what many observers described as an impressive, large-scale response in support of the Ethiopian government throughout 2016. This evaluation found the claims that the response helped save many thousands of lives and avert famine to be plausible. The following factors (among others) enabled this large-scale response:

- The international community and the government were very successful in mobilizing resources for the response. This is a major achievement, given that organizations had to be cautious in the way they described the situation in Ethiopia.
- The coordination system – which was run jointly by the international community and the Ethiopian government at the federal, regional, and local levels – became increasingly effective.
- A range of development systems had crisis modifiers in place. The existing social safety net – the PSNP – stepped up to increase its support of a large share of the people in need of assistance. This eased the pressure on the humanitarian system.

244 **Declining scale and effectiveness of the response since 2017.** After peaking in 2016, both the scale and the effectiveness of the international response to the droughts in Ethiopia decreased. Aid workers and affected people who witnessed both periods share this assessment. The response became less multi-faceted as a growing share of resources was invested in food. At the same time, gaps appeared even in the food sector – for example, in incomplete distributions of supplementary food and the discontinuation of highly effective school feeding programs. The following factors (among others) explain this decline:

- The 2017/2018 drought mainly affected the lowland areas. Drought in arid, pastoralist areas has a more protracted effect than in agricultural areas, and it is more difficult to find effective solutions for recovery. In addition, some pastoralist communities receive less political attention than the government's traditional core constituencies in the highlands.
- In 2017 and particularly in 2018, conflict between different communities in Ethiopia became more acute, leading to internal displacement. This additional, complex emergency absorbed much of the international community's attention and an increasing share of the resources dedicated to Ethiopia.
- Humanitarian organizations struggled to convince donors to fund yet another drought response in Ethiopia –especially at a time when large-scale humanitarian crises in other parts of the world and the “four famines” advocacy effort shifted global attention away from Ethiopia.

- 245 **Little attention to impending drought.** From March 2019 onward, there were once more warning signs that Ethiopia would face a severe lowland drought in that year. The Somali region had already issued a region-specific response plan in November 2018 in anticipation of erratic rains. At the federal level, however, as of mid-2019, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team continued to dedicate most of its attention to issues related to conflict. As a result, there was a risk that the overall response would be delayed again in 2019.
- 246 **Changing ideas about recovery – but little concrete action.** The cyclical nature of the droughts also affected ideas about recovery and the link to development actors. In 2018, the international humanitarian community in Ethiopia made a big effort to shift the focus of the response to recovery and resilience. This effort was frustrated when the systems strengthening and recovery component of the new Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan barely received any funding. Successive discussions about better integration of humanitarian and development efforts have had limited effects. Few development interventions focused on the areas most at risk of drought. Additionally, agriculture and livelihoods interventions were drastically underfunded, which limited the humanitarian system's ability to build on the internal expertise of its resilience-focused actors. Addressing this shortcoming as part of a strategy to adapt to climate change and reduce disaster risk will be particularly important given that extreme weather events, including droughts and floods, are expected to become more frequent in Ethiopia.
- 247 Across these changing dynamics of the international response to the droughts in Ethiopia, three key characteristics of the inter-agency response stand out:
- 248 **Strengthened national systems.** Globally, international humanitarian action is often criticized for creating parallel structures and undermining existing systems. The drought response in Ethiopia not only avoided this common pitfall, it also managed – at least temporarily – to strengthen national capacities. This is due in large part to the fact that the Ethiopian government actively assumed and defended its leadership role, rather than a conscious decision of the international humanitarian community.
- 249 **Unacceptable lack of accountability for the response.** The strong reliance on Ethiopia's national systems created significant benefits, but also came at a high price. The lack of accountability for the response manifested itself at different stages of the response. A majority of aid workers saw the needs assessment process as influenced by domestic political interests. Affected people and local officials had little information about the planned response, which made it impossible for them to hold those who delivered assistance to account. The international community did not succeed in establishing independent verification or triangulation of response data, even given their evident limitations. Weak humanitarian monitoring systems meant that government and international actors often did not know who was receiving assistance, let alone what effects the assistance was having. Considering how much international funding was mobilized for the response, this evaluation concludes that the lack of independent verification and triangulation was unacceptable.
- 250 **Weak learning of previous lessons.** As discussed above, the international drought response in Ethiopia was large-scale and effective, especially in 2016. The drought response also improved compared to a previous response in 2011, and some lessons have been taken up during the period covered by this evaluation:
- To increase the quality of needs assessments, assessments were conducted in joint teams, improvements to the methodology were made, and a Humanitarian Needs Overview has recently been introduced.
  - Based on an acknowledgement that early warning signals were not sufficient, the Somali region published a full response plan in 2018.
  - To strengthen the consideration of protection, coordination structures and the integration of protection concerns into planning processes were gradually improved.
  - To address disconnects between humanitarian food assistance and the PSNP safety net, the two systems were more closely aligned.

- 251 These successes notwithstanding, it is striking that most of the critical problems this evaluation identified have been raised before, including in inter-agency processes (Figure 46). The majority of people affected by the droughts also saw little evidence of learning. Among those who had witnessed several phases of the drought response since 2015, 78 percent stated that the most recent phase was not better than previous phases.

Figure 46: Comparison between IAHE 2019 Findings and Previous Reviews and Evaluations

Key IAHE 2019 findings and recommendations	2016 STAIT mission	2012 IASC real-time evaluation
Limited strategic leadership of the EHCT → Rec 5	X	
Early warning does not lead to early action → Rec 3	X	X
Political influence on needs assessments → Rec 2	X	X
Dispute over “chronic” needs versus shocks → Rec 2		X
Gaps between different drought-response sectors → Rec 5	X	X
Insufficient focus on livelihoods and agriculture → Rec 4	X	X
Insufficient attention to pastoralist areas → Rec 4		X
Excessive focus on water trucking		X
Insufficient links between humanitarian and development actors → Rec 4	X	X
Lack of good monitoring systems → Rec 2	X	
Limited attention to protection	X	X
Little use of cash assistance → Rec 4	X	
Insufficient integration of gender, age, and other cross-cutting issues → Rec 2	X	X
Insufficient accountability to affected people → Rec 2	X	

Source: Evaluation team

- 252 It is crucial that the IAHE does not become part of this dynamic in which lessons are consistently identified but not learned. To increase the chances that some issues are addressed once and for all, this evaluation makes only a limited number of recommendations, focusing on the most critical issues. In addition, the evaluation team involved key stakeholders at the sub-national, national, and global levels in workshops, aimed not only at refining recommendations, but also at addressing those factors which have thus far hindered implementation. The obstacles that hinder implementation – some of which lie outside the humanitarian community’s spheres of control and influence – include:

- **Scale.** The frequency and sheer scale of the droughts, as well as the complexities of operating in Ethiopia, mean that even delivering the basics is a formidable challenge. This limits the energy and resources available for improving the system.
- **Competing priorities.** Ethiopia has to deal with a variety of emergency situations – ranging from drought, cholera, conflict, and internal displacement to caring for refugees from neighboring countries. The attention and resources available for improving drought response systems are therefore limited.
- **Fighting a losing battle.** All the stakeholders agree that trucking water and delivering food to people in need is not a sustainable solution, and that it is of the utmost importance to find ways to help communities recover and become more resilient to shocks. Yet the situation can seem intractable. Rapid population growth and climate change make traditional livelihoods – especially for pastoralists – increasingly less viable. Emergency approaches are not designed to address this kind of problem.
- **Entrenched problems in the funding architecture.** It is indisputably more effective, cost-efficient, and humane to respond to slow-onset disasters as early as possible. However, most funding mechanisms only provide resources once a crisis has turned into an emergency and caused widespread suffering.
- **Reform efforts that focus on policy rather than implementation.** Reform efforts often focused on the policy level and paid little attention to implementation. The link between humanitarian and

development efforts, for example, was discussed in different constellations, conceptualizing the problem in different ways (as resilience, nexus, new ways of working, etc.), without any clear effects on practice. Accountability to affected people is another example. Recurring global support missions and policies did not lead to a functioning collective system. Similarly, important gaps remained in the integration of other cross-cutting issues like gender, disability, and protection in program design, despite the various global policies and commitments on these issues. On other issues, such as increasing the level of direct funding for national NGOs, the changes that followed a global impetus for reform were short lived.

- **Constant urgency mode.** Droughts are relatively predictable. Yet year after year, inter-agency planning took place under enormous time pressure. Interviewees explained that this urgency made it difficult to address crucial “soft components” of the response, such as better targeting, stronger monitoring, accountability to affected people, and the integration of cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability, and protection.
- **Competition.** Humanitarian organizations share the goal of saving lives and alleviating suffering. At the same time, they compete with each other for funding and other resources. Organizational self-interest can stand in the way of effective response and efforts to improve the system – for example, when defining response priorities.
- **Pragmatic obstacles.** Finally, humanitarians committed to change have had to address some pragmatic obstacles. A large number of diverse organizations are active in emergency response and development in Ethiopia. Achieving consensus among them and mobilizing them behind an agenda for change is challenging – all the more so since staff turnover in many humanitarian organizations is high, thus limiting institutional memory and learning.

## 4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions presented above, the evaluation team makes the following recommendations. Since the evaluation assessed the contribution of the humanitarian community to the government-led response, the recommendations also primarily target the international community. For most aspects, changed government practices would also be crucial for success. The recommendations were discussed and refined through a series of workshops held in September and October 2019 with humanitarian organizations, government representatives, and donors at the regional and federal levels in Ethiopia, as well as at the global level.

### Recommendation 1: Ensure Lessons Are Learned and Reforms Implemented

Together, the IASC and the EHCT need to address the structural factors which prevent lessons from being learned and reform efforts from being implemented. These include:

- 1.1. Add information on the changes that will be implemented in response to the recommendations of this evaluation to the posters that inform local communities about evaluation results.

[OCHA and NDRMC](#)  
February 2020

- 1.2. In order to maintain the focus on addressing recommendations, the Humanitarian Coordinator in Ethiopia, together with the EHCT and the IASC Emergency Directors Group, should **report on their progress** 6, 12, and 18 months after the management response plan is endorsed and share these updates with regional coordination fora.

[ERC \(responsibility for follow up\), Emergency Directors Group, Humanitarian Coordinator, EHCT, OCHA](#)  
June 2020, December 2020, June 2021

- 1.3. The IASC should dedicate its full attention to **understanding and addressing the reasons why past reform efforts have failed**. This will require shifting resources and attention away from developing policies and towards analyzing and addressing obstacles to change. As the first reform area, the Operational Policy and Advocacy Group and the Emergency Directors Group should focus on those factors that hinder progress on resilience/the humanitarian-development nexus and should report on their progress to the ERC 6, 12, and 18 months after the management response plan is endorsed.

[IASC Operational Policy and Advocacy Group, Emergency Directors Group, ERC](#)  
June 2020, December 2020, June 2021

### Recommendation 2: Make the Response More Accountable

As long as credible, independently verifiable, government-led accountability mechanisms are not in place, the humanitarian community in Ethiopia needs to put in place strong measures to make the response more accountable:

- 2.1. **Continue and complete efforts to strengthen needs assessments.** Include direct consultations with drought-affected people (independently of local officials) in needs assessment processes. Fully implement and institutionalize the International Phase Classification and the Humanitarian Needs Overview systems. Regularly conduct disaggregated analyses of available data by geographic area and by potentially vulnerable group. During seasonal assessments, non-government participants should systematically provide raw data in real time from the ground level to OCHA and the EHCT in order to identify areas that require immediate action and to enable a triangulation of overall results.

[OCHA and participants in seasonal assessments in cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia](#)  
Start with the next assessment

- 2.2. Agree to define response priorities based on the **severity of needs** (rather than what type of shock or emergency people experienced, how recently they experienced it, or what their status is).

[Humanitarian Coordinator, Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team, clusters](#)  
By June 2020

### 2.3. Strengthen **accountability to affected people** and **response monitoring**:

- Provide affected communities and their leaders (at the *kebele* level) with **accurate and up-to-date information** on what and how much assistance is expected to be delivered when, which selection criteria are used, and how to complain. Use various information channels, depending on the local context, for doing so, for example public postings in the local language at *kebele* and *woreda* offices, news announcements through local radio stations, or SMS updates for registered beneficiaries.
- Conduct an in-person **survey of affected people** in a sample of locations at least once per year. The survey should cover what assistance individuals received and when; how satisfied they were with the different aspects of the response; and how well informed they were about the response. Led by OCHA and NDRMC, the survey should be implemented by teams of local, independent, professional enumerators. Resulting raw data should be publicly available (except for information potentially enabling the identification of individual respondents) and an analysis disaggregated for different relevant groups (including for example women, displaced people, people with disabilities, and elderly people) should be presented to humanitarian coordination fora and relevant government bodies at federal and regional level. These bodies should agree on actions that will be taken to address concerns raised in the surveys.
- Offer a phone-based, inter-agency **complaints mechanism**, operated jointly by OCHA and NDRMC. At a minimum, this complaints mechanism should enable affected people to send text and voice messages to a central number in a language of their choosing. The complaints mechanism should protect the confidentiality of individuals submitting complaints; guarantee a response within one week; relay complaints to the relevant agencies; and provide an analysis of incoming feedback on at least a bi-annual basis.

**OCHA and NDRMC, in cooperation with federal and regional humanitarian coordination fora**  
Start annual surveys in 2020; set up complaints mechanism by December 2020

## Recommendation 3: Strengthen Early Action

At the country level, both the humanitarian community and donors need to make immediate efforts to enable anticipatory action in the face of impending droughts:

- 3.1. **When relevant early warning information is published, dedicate an EHCT meeting to analyzing this information.** The EHCT should define immediate priorities for early action, assign clear responsibilities for follow-up, recommend what share of resources of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund should be allocated to anticipatory action, and track implementation. Representatives of regional coordination fora should participate in this meeting, contributing regional perspectives on the situation and necessary actions.

**Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team, regional humanitarian coordination fora**  
Start immediately

- 3.2. **Prioritize the establishment or strengthening of emergency units** within relevant line ministries and regional emergency operations centres of the Ethiopian government through capacity-building activities.

**Humanitarian and development actors with government capacity building programs, donors**  
By June 2021

- 3.3. **Shift to anticipatory, unearmarked, multi-year funding for drought responses.** Donors should speed up the implementation of their Grand Bargain commitment to provide more unearmarked funding and continue to support advance financing systems. UN organizations urgently need to pass on their existing flexibility to their implementing partners.

**Donors, Cluster lead agencies**  
EHF: within 6 months; General funding shift: by June 2021

- 3.4. Make is a standard to include **crisis modifiers** amounting to 20 percent of the program budget for use in severe crises in development programs in areas prone to drought. Ensure that related decision-making processes are quick and allow for flexibility to shift to those districts more acutely affected by the crisis.

**Donors, development organizations**  
By June 2021

## Recommendation 4: Prioritize Resilience and Support Alternative Livelihoods

Efforts from both, humanitarian and development actors, are needed to strengthen resilience and livelihoods. Development actors, in cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia, should increase their investment in resilience and livelihoods; ensure that relevant development programs focus on geographic areas prone to drought; and align development planning instruments such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework with the forthcoming resilience strategy.

The humanitarian community in Ethiopia, at the same time, should make a renewed effort to shift the focus of the response to resilience and not be discouraged by the difficulties it faced when it previously tried to do so. While there is no magic bullet, the following measures could support this aim:

- 4.1. Ensure that the **2020–2025 multi-year strategy for resilience and durable solutions** includes concrete, joint programs of humanitarian and development agencies focused on reducing drought risk – and does not stop at defining overarching goals or delineating responsibilities.

[EHCT, clusters, OCHA, Humanitarian Coordinator, development actors in cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia](#)  
Immediate action until the end of 2019

- 4.2. **Replace food distributions with cash** wherever possible and preferred by affected people. Where market conditions are currently not conducive to cash distributions, develop a plan for transitioning from in-kind to cash and complement distributions with initiatives to strengthen and stock local markets. Ensure that humanitarian cash distributions and cash for work activities are well coordinated and harmonized with each other, as well as with the PSNP cash system.

[Food assistance donors and organizations, federal and regional cash working groups](#)  
By April 2021

- 4.3. Increase resources allocated to supporting drought-affected pastoralists in developing **alternative livelihoods** and strengthening systems for those who remain pastoralists – for example, by supporting herd diversification, livestock insurance, improved livestock markets, and the processing of goods derived from livestock (milk, meat, leather).

[Agriculture Cluster, FAO, organizations involved in livelihoods assistance, development agencies](#)  
By June 2021

- 4.4. Strengthen the emergency capacity of FAO as the lead agency of the **agriculture cluster** and of other agriculture cluster members and their footprint in Ethiopia to make better use of their expertise on livelihoods and the resilience of agricultural and pastoralist communities. Identify and address the institutional limitations which currently prevent FAO from taking on a larger role.

[ERC, agriculture cluster, FAO, donors](#)  
By June 2021

## Recommendation 5: Further Enhance Coordination and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund

The humanitarian community should take the following steps to address the remaining issues regarding strategic coordination and use the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund to fill those systemic funding gaps which will likely persist:

- 5.1 Regularly dedicate EHCT meetings to a more **self-critical analysis of collective response gaps** and agree collective action on these issues. Hold these meetings without the presence of donors, but ensure representatives of regional coordination fora are present. Discuss agreed follow-up actions at the subsequent meeting including donors (enabling them to follow up with capitals on funding gaps), as well as relevant government bodies and share minutes with regional coordination fora.

[EHCT, OCHA, regional coordination fora](#)  
By June 2020

- 5.2 Create an inter-cluster review process to ensure **multi-sector projects** are included in the Humanitarian Response Plan in all areas where this is important. Aim to allocate 50 percent of the EHF and a significantly increased share of other donor funding to multi-sector projects in a specific area (for example, combining health, nutrition, and food interventions) and use the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group as the forum in which to make recommendations on allocation decisions to the Humanitarian Coordinator.

**EHF Advisory Board, clusters, inter-cluster coordination group**

By December 2020

- 5.3 **Lower the bar for national NGOs to access** EHF funding. Support national organizations that have demonstrated their implementation capacity as subcontractors in getting direct funding and strengthen their participation in relevant coordination fora. Extend the typical **duration of projects** funded by the EHF to one year, while continuing to require rapid implementation.

**EHF Advisory Board**

Within the next two EHF funding cycles

# Annex 1: Table Linking Evaluation Questions, Findings, and Recommendations

<u>Evaluation Question</u>	<u>Related Main Finding</u>	<u>Related Recommendation (-Step)</u>
<p><b>1. Relevance: Do the planning documents reflect the needs and priorities of people affected by the droughts?</b></p>		
<p>1.1. What is the quality of the needs assessment information used for response planning?</p>	<p>The credibility and accuracy of the needs assessment data used for collective response planning is highly contested. There are issues with data quality and political influence on the data during the compilation and approval processes, as well as with their use for planning. The International Phase Classification system pilot and the introduction of the household economy approach together with the Humanitarian Needs Overview have the potential to improve data quality but are unlikely to address political influence over data.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 2: Make the Response More Accountable</b></p> <p>2.1. Continue and complete efforts to strengthen needs assessments.</p> <p>2.2. Agree to define response priorities based on the severity of needs.</p> <p>2.3. Strengthen accountability to affected people and response monitoring.</p>
<p>1.2. To what extent do the planning documents reflect identified needs and priorities of affected people, including those of vulnerable groups?</p>	<p>Formal mechanisms for creating accountability to affected people during the drought response were weak. Between one third and half of the people consulted did not know what assistance they would receive or when, what the selection criteria were, or how they could complain. Strong majorities of 64 percent of survey respondents felt that the response was relevant and included what they needed most. 74 percent felt that they were treated with respect (while 12 percent did not). Since 2016, there have been several inter-agency processes aimed at strengthening engagement with affected people and improving protection against sexual exploitation and abuse. However, more tangible outcomes of these processes – such as the repeatedly recommended collective complaints mechanism – had not yet materialized.</p>	
<p>1.3. To what extent were lessons from the El Niño response incorporated in later response plans?</p>	<p>The international drought response in Ethiopia was large-scale and effective, especially in 2016. The drought response also improved compared to the previous response in 2011, and some lessons have been taken up during the period covered by this evaluation. These successes notwithstanding, it is striking that most of the critical problems this evaluation identified have been raised before, including in inter-agency processes.</p> <p>The majority of people affected by the droughts also saw little evidence of learning. Among those who had witnessed several phases of the drought response since 2015, 78 percent stated that the most recent phase was not better than previous phases.</p>	
		<p><b>Recommendation 1: Ensure Lessons Are Learned and Reforms Implemented</b></p> <p>1.1. Report on progress in implementing recommendations 6, 12, and 18 months after the management response plan is endorsed.</p> <p>1.2. Dedicate the IASC's full attention to understanding and addressing the reasons why past reform efforts have failed and shift resources and attention away from developing policies and towards analysing and addressing obstacles to change.</p>

## 2. Effectiveness: Did the response reach its intended results?

### 2.1 To what extent has the response contributed to the objective of saving lives and reducing morbidity?

The humanitarian community in Ethiopia is unable to track the collective effectiveness of its drought response due to a lack of outcome monitoring and sufficiently disaggregated information on outputs. This evaluation draws conclusions regarding the overall goals of the response, but because of the lack of secondary data, it cannot draw conclusions on whether or not individual clusters achieved their stated objectives.

There is a dominant narrative in the humanitarian community in Ethiopia that lives were saved during the different droughts and that assistance averted a famine in 2015. Despite issues with data availability, this evaluation found evidence that lives were indeed saved, though it is impossible to quantify how many. 58 percent of the affected people surveyed and several focus group discussion participants suspected that (more) family members would have died without assistance. SAM treatment rates were within internationally defined standards, and there are reports pointing to improved food consumption in households.

At the same time, the humanitarian community could have saved more lives with timelier and better-quality assistance. There is evidence that the arrival and distribution of food and supplementary feeding at the woreda level was at times heavily delayed, and drought-affected people pointed to quality issues with food assistance. More importantly, however, insufficient quantities of assistance were delivered, and there were gaps in the services provided.

### **Recommendation 2: Make the Response More Accountable**

2.3. Strengthen accountability to affected people and response monitoring

### **Recommendation 2: Make the Response More Accountable**

2.3. Strengthen accountability to affected people and response monitoring:

- Provide affected communities with accurate and up-to-date information.
- Conduct an annual in-person survey of affected people.
- Offer a phone-based, inter-agency complaints mechanism.
- Anchor these aspects in the protection strategy.

2.2 To what extent has the response contributed to the objective of protecting and restoring livelihoods?

The drought response was only partially successful in restoring affected people's livelihoods and were often not able to prevent affected people from becoming less resilient to droughts and other crises over time. This is due to the rapid succession of several droughts; a response that did not sufficiently focus on livelihood interventions, especially in agriculture and WASH; and a lack of funding for livelihoods and resilience interventions.

#### **Recommendation 4: Prioritize Resilience and Support Alternative Livelihoods**

Development actors, in cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia, should increase their investment in resilience and livelihoods; ensure that relevant development programs focus on geographic areas prone to drought; and align development planning instruments such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework with the forthcoming resilience strategy. The humanitarian community in Ethiopia, at the same time, should make a renewed effort to shift the focus of the response to resilience and not be discouraged by the difficulties it faced when it previously tried to do so:

- 4.1. Ensure that the 2020–2025 multi-year strategy for resilience and durable solutions includes concrete, joint humanitarian-government development programs focused on reducing drought risk.
- 4.2. Replace food distributions with cash wherever possible and preferred by affected people.
- 4.3. Increase resources allocated to supporting drought-affected pastoralists in developing alternative livelihoods and strengthening systems for those who remain pastoralists.
- 4.4. Strengthen the emergency capacity of FAO as the lead agency of the agriculture cluster and of other agriculture cluster members and their footprint in Ethiopia.

2.3 To what extent was assistance provided according to need and reached the most vulnerable, according to the principles of humanity and impartiality?

The official prioritization of geographic areas (woredas) in need of assistance largely matches observed drought patterns and food insecurity levels. However, the prioritization had only a limited influence on the allocation of assistance. The priorities defined in the humanitarian planning documents were also very broad. Interviewees therefore found additional prioritization exercises as well as assessments conducted by individual organizations more useful for targeting interventions. A recurrent controversy was whether humanitarian assistance should only target those facing recent shocks, or whether assistance should extend to those who have not yet recovered from previous shocks.

#### **Recommendation 2: Make the Response More Accountable**

- 2.1. Continue and complete efforts to strengthen needs assessments.
- 2.2. Agree to define response priorities based on the severity of needs.

	<p>The drought response primarily focused on food – which only partially covered the sectors which affected people would have prioritized. Livelihood assistance in particular was identified as a gap. Agriculture was indeed one of the most underfunded sectors. Other critical drought response sectors – such as nutrition, WASH, and health – were also massively underfunded in some response years.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 4: Prioritize Resilience and Support Alternative Livelihoods</b></p> <p>4.3. Increase resources allocated to supporting drought-affected pastoralists in developing alternative livelihoods and strengthening systems for those who remain pastoralists.</p> <p>4.4. Strengthen the emergency capacity of FAO as the lead agency of the agriculture cluster and of other agriculture cluster members and their footprint in Ethiopia.</p>
<p>2.4 To what extent were cross-cutting issues such as gender, age, disability, and the environment given adequate consideration in the response?</p>	<p>The prioritization of the response largely matched the level of need. However, affected people surveyed were clearly more satisfied in Afar and the Somali region than in Oromia. By contrast, interviewed aid workers perceived regional imbalances as particularly affecting Afar. Within regions, evidence of a suspected bias of delivering assistance to easily accessible areas is inconclusive. No data was available to triangulate perceptions that areas affected by conflict received more assistance.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 2: Make the Response More Accountable</b></p> <p>2.1. Continue and complete efforts to strengthen needs assessments.</p> <p>2.2. Agree to define response priorities based on the severity of needs.</p> <p>2.3. Strengthen accountability to affected people and response monitoring.</p>
	<p>The majority of affected people perceived the assistance provided as fair and as not leaving anybody out. However, due to weak targeting systems, humanitarian assistance did not always target the poorest segments of society. Findings on other vulnerable groups are mixed.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 2: Make the Response More Accountable</b></p> <p>2.2. Define response priorities based on the severity of needs (rather than what type of shock or emergency people experienced, how recently they experienced it, or what their status is).</p> <p>2.3. Strengthen accountability to affected people and response monitoring.</p>
	<p>Planning processes did not give much consideration to different vulnerable groups, and interviewees provided several examples of situations in which the response was not adapted to specific needs. Nevertheless, women on the whole rated the response more positively than men. In contrast, people with disabilities perceived the response more negatively.</p>	
	<p>During focus group discussions and in interviews, several examples of other unintended negative effects on women, the private sector, and the environment were mentioned.</p>	
	<p>Environmental damage was also brought up as a side-effect – primarily plastic pollution from small jerry cans and waste at Djibouti port, where some imported relief goods rotted due to logistical problems. Several interviewees pointed to the fact that environmental considerations were not part of the inter-agency discussions, and that few organizations paid attention to this issue.</p>	

2.5 Did the response have any unintended, positive or negative effects on drought-affected people, local conflict dynamics, or national systems?

A very strong majority of the affected people surveyed did not see any unintended negative effects of the drought response. However, people's growing dependency on aid was seen as a major issue.

The affected people survey supports the prevailing assumption that the scale of the assistance provided reduced the potential for conflict. Yet affected people also provided some examples of how assistance (or the lack thereof) fueled tensions.

During focus group discussions and in interviews, several examples of other unintended negative effects on women, the private sector, and the environment were mentioned.

### 3. Sustainability: Did the response help to build resilience?

3.1 To what extent did the response help to strengthen government service provision at the point of delivery?

Efforts to support government response capacity have focused on staff training as well as financial and logistical support. This evaluation found some evidence of strengthened government response capacities as a result, particularly in nutrition, health, and logistics. Emergency departments and joint humanitarian-government units within government ministries supported capacity-strengthening efforts. However, critical gaps at the point of delivery remain, especially with regard to targeting and food distribution. Attempts to advocate for reducing the distance between food distribution points, for example, have not been successful. The main reasons for the limited success in capacity building at the point of delivery are the high turnover of trained staff and the limited focus on and accountability for actions taken at the sub-national level.

### Recommendation 4: Prioritize Resilience and Support Alternative Livelihoods

4.2. Replace food distributions with cash wherever possible and preferred by affected people. Where market conditions are currently not conducive to cash distributions, develop a plan for transitioning from in-kind to cash and complement distributions with initiatives to strengthen and stock local markets. Ensure that humanitarian cash distributions and cash for work activities are well coordinated and harmonized with each other, as well as with the PSNP cash system.

### Recommendation 3: Strengthen Early Action

3.2. Prioritize the establishment or strengthening of emergency units within relevant line ministries and regional emergency operations centres of the Ethiopian government through capacity-building activities.

3.2 Is there any evidence that the response helped affected people cope better with subsequent or future droughts?

The drought response was often not able to prevent affected people from becoming less resilient to droughts and other crises over time. This is due to the rapid succession of several droughts; a response that did not sufficiently focus on livelihood interventions, especially in agriculture and WASH; and a lack of funding for livelihoods and resilience interventions.

**Recommendation 4: Prioritize Resilience and Support Alternative Livelihoods**

Development actors, in cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia, should increase their investment in resilience and livelihoods; ensure that relevant development programs focus on geographic areas prone to drought; and align development planning instruments such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework with the forthcoming resilience strategy.

The humanitarian community in Ethiopia, at the same time, should make a renewed effort to shift the focus of the response to resilience and not be discouraged by the difficulties it faced when it previously tried to do so:

4.1. Ensure that the 2020–2025 multi-year strategy for resilience and durable solutions includes concrete, joint humanitarian-government development programs focused on reducing drought risk.

4.2. Replace food distributions with cash wherever possible and preferred by affected people.

4.3. Increase resources allocated to supporting drought-affected pastoralists in developing alternative livelihoods and strengthening systems for those who remain pastoralists.

4.4. Strengthen the emergency capacity of FAO as the lead agency of the agriculture cluster and of other agriculture cluster members and their footprint in Ethiopia.

3.3 To what extent were adequate links to recovery and development actors and interventions created?

The use of crisis modifiers in Ethiopia is widely lauded as good practice in terms of linking humanitarian and development interventions. Some clusters also managed to attract funding from development budgets for emergency interventions.

**Recommendation 3: Strengthen Early Action**

3.4. Make it a standard to include crisis modifiers amounting to 20 percent of the program budget for use in severe crises in development programs in areas prone to drought. Ensure that related decision-making processes are quick and allow for flexibility to shift to those districts more acutely affected by the crisis.

#### 4. Partnerships and Localization: Did the response adequately build partnerships and involve local capacities?

4.1. To what extent did international humanitarian actors appropriately manage the partnership with the government of Ethiopia at federal, regional and local level?

Overall, however, the missing links between humanitarian and development interventions remain a major concern, despite repeated discussions, policy initiatives, and advocacy efforts to address this issue. Coherence between development and humanitarian interventions was lacking in several of the examples analyzed for this evaluation, and important development programs did not focus on areas affected by the droughts.

Practical cooperation through the integrated humanitarian and government response, based on a partnership between the Ethiopian government and humanitarian actors, was generally seen as key to explaining successes in the drought response since 2015. At the same time, interviewees from both the Ethiopian government and humanitarian organizations identified gaps – for example, the relatively weaker relationships at the sub-national level, and tensions between national ownership and the humanitarian principle of independence.

The humanitarian community failed to address critical questions of accountability in its partnership with the Ethiopian government. Official data and internal accountability mechanisms have obvious limitations, yet there is no independent monitoring of the delivery and effects of assistance in key areas of the response.

The evaluation found divergent interpretations of whether the humanitarian community appropriately managed its advocacy to the government on sensitive issues. Critics – the majority of interviewees – argued that advocacy on these issues was too risk averse and that the humanitarian community should have taken a firmer stance – for example, on data, or on the arrests of humanitarian staff. Others felt that it was handled well – for example, in the case of the cholera or “AWD” response, in which interviewees believed that a firmer advocacy stance would have made the response more difficult. In later phases of the response, strengthened relationships at the federal level and escalating conflict in the country slowly opened space in which to address more contentious issues.

4.2. To what extent have national and local non-governmental and civil society organizations been involved in the response planning and implementation?

Few national non-governmental organizations were active in the drought response in Ethiopia – and those that were mostly acted as subcontractors for international NGOs or UN organizations. In the wake of the Grand Bargain localization commitment, international NGOs implemented several capacity-building initiatives. While some had lasting effects on individual national

#### Recommendation 4: Prioritize Resilience and Support Alternative Livelihoods

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2.1. Continue and complete efforts to strengthen needs assessments.  
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2.3. Strengthen accountability to affected people and response monitoring.

#### Recommendation 5: Further Enhance Coordination and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund

5.3 Lower the bar for national NGOs to access EHF funding. Support national organizations that have demonstrated their implementation capacity as

	<p>NGOs, most efforts were short-lived. Only three national NGOs accessed funding from the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund.</p>	<p>subcontractors in getting direct funding and strengthen their participation in relevant coordination fora. Extend the typical duration of projects funded by the EHF to one year, while continuing to require rapid implementation.</p>
<p>4.3. Is there any evidence that the response capacities of national and local non-governmental and civil society organizations were strengthened through the response?</p>	<p>In the wake of the Grand Bargain localization commitment, international NGOs implemented several capacity-building initiatives. While some had lasting effects on individual national NGOs, most efforts were short-lived. Only three national NGOs accessed funding from the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund.</p>	
<p><b>5. Coordination: Was the response well coordinated?</b></p>		
<p>5.1. How effective were coordination mechanisms at the strategic, inter-cluster, and cluster/sector levels?</p>	<p>Drought coordination improved between 2015 and 2018. The introduction of the cluster system in 2015 strengthened international response coordination as compared to earlier droughts. However, there is much room for improvement in strategic coordination. Repeated attempts to turn the Humanitarian Country Team from an information-sharing into a decision-making body have met with limited success. The coordination structure in Addis Ababa is also perceived as too onerous, whereas coordination fora at the regional level do not have sufficient decision-making power, except in the Somali region.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 5: Further Enhance Coordination and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund</b> 5.1 Regularly dedicate EHCT meetings to a more self-critical analysis of collective response gaps and agree collective action on these issues. Hold these meetings without the presence of donors, but ensure representatives of regional coordination fora are present during these discussions. Discuss agreed follow-up actions at the subsequent meeting including donors (enabling them to follow up with capitals on funding gaps), as well as relevant government bodies and share minutes with regional coordination fora.</p>
<p>5.2. Is there any evidence that coordination helped to avoid duplications and to fill gaps?</p>	<p>Investments in a greater number of dedicated cluster coordinators and information management capacities have improved coordination within sectors. Cluster performance still varied, however, and depended on each coordinator's capacity and length of deployment.</p> <p>Inter-cluster coordination was effective for specific and geographically contained emergencies – for example, during disease outbreaks and at the regional level.</p> <p>Within clusters, some gaps and duplications could be avoided. For the overall drought response, critical gaps between clusters remained. Efforts to strengthen the integration of food, nutrition, health, and water responses have not been successful, and uncoordinated minimum standards and cash-for-work rates had a negative impact on agencies' capacity to operate effectively.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation 5: Further Enhance Coordination and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund</b> 5.1 Regularly dedicate EHCT meetings to a more self-critical analysis of collective response gaps and agree collective action on these issues. Hold these meetings without the presence of donors, but ensure representatives of regional coordination fora are</p>

5.3. How effective was the collective resource mobilization effort in raising sufficient, timely and sufficiently long-term funding?

An overwhelming majority of 79 percent of the affected people surveyed for this evaluation received assistance more than two months after the start of the drought, and 41 percent had to wait for five months or more. While this response time was sufficient to prevent many deaths, it could not prevent an increase in the number of children admitted for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and dropping out from school, particularly in Afar and the Somali region.

The humanitarian community in Ethiopia invested in a substantive resource mobilization effort for the El Niño drought in 2015. Funding arrived late but at a high level in 2016. Resource mobilization efforts for the Indian Ocean Dipole/La Niña in 2017 were less successful, mainly due to underestimated needs in the initial 2017 humanitarian requirements document. For 2017 and 2018, it was not possible to discern how much funding went into the drought response as compared to the displacement response.

With ample early warning information available, the main reason for the late response was the humanitarian community's delayed reaction to warning signs. In all the phases of the response analyzed, alarm bells went off – and triggered funding – only after harvests failed and malnutrition rates went up. Assessment and government approval processes also took too long. In addition, individual phases of the response were delayed due to late government recognition of the emergency, intervening political dynamics, slow funding decisions, and/or competing humanitarian priorities.

present during these discussions. Discuss agreed follow-up actions at the subsequent meeting including donors (enabling them to follow up with capitals on funding gaps), as well as relevant government bodies and share minutes with regional coordination fora.

5.2. Create an inter-cluster review process to ensure multi-sector projects are included in the Humanitarian Response Plan in all areas where this is important. Aim to allocate 50 percent of the EHF and a significantly increased share of other donor funding to multi-sector projects in a specific area (for example, combining health, nutrition, and food interventions) and use the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group as the forum in which to make recommendations on allocation decisions to the Humanitarian Coordinator.

**Recommendation 3: Strengthen Early Action**

3.1. When relevant early warning information is published, dedicate an EHCT meeting to analyzing this information and defining immediate priorities for early action, assigning clear responsibilities for follow-up, recommending what share of resources of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund should be allocated to anticipatory action, and tracking implementation.

Representatives of regional coordination fora should participate in this meeting, contributing regional perspectives on the situation and necessary actions.

3.2. Prioritize the establishment or strengthening of emergency units within relevant line ministries and regional emergency operations centers of the Ethiopian government through capacity-building activities.

3.3. Shift to anticipatory, unearmarked, multi-year funding for drought responses. Donors should speed up the implementation of their Grand Bargain commitment to provide more unearmarked funding and continue to support advance financing systems. UN organizations urgently need to pass on their existing flexibility to their implementing partners.

3.4. Make it a standard to include crisis modifiers amounting to 20 percent of the program budget for use in severe crises in development programs in areas prone to drought. Ensure that related decision-making processes are quick and allow for flexibility to

shift to those districts more acutely affected by the crisis.

Bilateral funding was the most important funding source, but interviewees criticized it as unpredictable, heavily earmarked and not always aligned with the priorities set by the humanitarian community. They dealt with resulting delays and gaps through internal emergency funds of humanitarian organizations, crisis modifiers of development programs, and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund. Interviewees appreciated the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund mainly for its strategic gap-filling role. Some interviewees criticized its short-term focus and its tendency to support sector-focused responses. The ability of the CERF to enable timely response was seen as limited. CERF applied lessons from earlier drought responses globally in 2019 by launching an anticipatory drought funding pilot.

Significant investment has gone into improving drought early warning systems in Ethiopia over the past several years. However, a few weaknesses remain. First and foremost, in their current form, early warning reports are not suitable for passing on warnings to people in drought-prone areas. Second, their focus on agricultural indicators delays the detection of droughts in pastoral areas. Despite these weaknesses, the available information was sufficient to predict the scope of the different droughts early on. However, the humanitarian community struggled to adequately process and act upon the information.

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## Annex 2: Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
AWD	Acute Watery Diarrhea
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EHCT	Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team
EHF	Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EQ	Evaluation Question
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWS Net	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPPi	Global Public Policy Institute
HEIG	Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group
HRD	Humanitarian Requirements Document
IAHE	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced People
iMMAP	Information Management and Mine Action Program
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	International Phase Classification
JEOP	Joint Emergency Operations Program
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
NDRMC	National Disaster Risk Management Commission
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RPRP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SMAC	Strategic Multi-Agency Coordination Meeting
SNNPR	South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
STAIT	Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team
TSF	Targeted Supplementary Feeding
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollars
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

## Annex 3: List of Interview Partners

Last name	First name	Position	Organization
Abadi	Hagos	Mekelle Field Office Manager	Save the Children
Abdella	Kadim	Director, Food Security	ADPFSPLO
Abdi	Ali		Regional Health Bureau
Abdi	Dr. Abdurahman	Health Cluster Coordinator	
Abdi Abas	Ahmed	Branch Secretary	Ethiopian Red Cross Society - Somali Branch
Abdi Ali	Mohamed		Save the Children
Abdi Doud	Ahmed	Regional PSNP Coordinator	Somali Regional Agriculture Bureau
Abdille	Zeynab	Chair	Mother & Child Development Organization (MCDO)
Abdulahi	Dr. Abdiaziz	Animal Health Directorate	Regional Livestock Bureau
Abdullahi	Hassan	Pastoral Development Director, Chair Disaster Risk Management Agricultural Task Force	Regional Livestock Bureau
Abera	Zemer	Emergency Program Manager	Mercy Corps
Abraha	Mikiale	Nutrition Program Officer	UNICEF
Abrar	Mohammed	Regional Manager	AMREF Health Africa
Aden	Towfik	Program Operations Manager	Save the Children
Aden Ismail	Abdirahman		Save the Children
Alebachew	Oumer	Disaster Management Coordinator	Ethiopia Red Cross Society, Afar Regional Branch
Ali Ahmed	Hussen	Regional Program Officer Afar	UNFPA
Ali Gardo	Valerie	Director	APDA
Alvarez-Sala	Jorge	WASH Specialist	UNICEF
Amsalu	Habtamu		Dan Church Aid (DCA)
Arthur	Kristin	Protection Cluster Coordinator	UNHCR
Asfaw	Dinkneh	Country Director	GOAL Ethiopia
Asfeha	Tesfaye	North region office technical program coordinator	World Vision International
Atrafi	Hélène	Durable Solutions Coordinator	Resident Coordinator's Office
Atsbaha	Atsbaha	Team Leader	Bureau of Education
Atsbaha	Redae	Head of field office	OCHA
Atsbha	Gebreselassie	Deputy Department Head	Ethiopian Orthodox Church Inter Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC)
Aynalem	Nigusse	Officer in Charge	RDPPB/DRM/EWA
Balata	Solomon	Planning and Budgeting Coordinator	Regional Livestock Bureau
Baron	William		Mercy Corps
Bategereza	Dr. Aggrey	WHO Ethiopia Health Emergencies Team Lead	WHO
Bekele	Tadesse	Senior DRM Advisor	NDRMC
Belay	Wayouma	Project Coordinator	Hundee
Benalfew	Yemisrach	Programme Officer   Migration and Protection	Embassy of Switzerland
Bihi	Abdulahi	Regional Manager Somali Region	Concern Worldwide

Brown	Edward G.	Country Director	World Vision
Burgeon	Dominique	Director, Emergency and Rehabilitation Division	FAO
Chala	Abebe	Project Office Coordinator	Dorcas
Chuma	Aeneas	UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative and UN Humanitarian Coordinator	
Cullis	Adrian	Tufts and FAO (former)	
Dakkak	Henia	Chief, Humanitarian and Fragile Contexts Branch a.i.	UNFPA
De Beko	Segolene	Head of Office	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)
De Sousa	Alexandra	Deputy Head of Office	UNOCHA
Denge	Guyo	Executive Director	Community Initiatives Facilitations and Assistance (CIFA)
Dereje	Gelila	Assistant Protection Officer	UNHCR
Devereux	Lesley Ann	Grants Coordinator	GOAL Ethiopia
Dradri	Simon	Head of Area Office	WFP
Duba	Godana	Head	Zonal DRM
Dube	Clara	Head of Office	UNICEF
Elamin	Rasha	EVAW / Humanitarian Specialist	UNWOMEN
Eziakonwa-Onochie	Ahunna	Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator (former)	
Farah Abdi	Faysal	USAID - PRIME Project Coordinator	Mercy Corps
Fay	Áine	President	Concern Worldwide / Interaction
Fitsum	Degemu	Head of NGO Affairs Coordination Desk	Finance and Economic Development Office
Gabramaskar	Hagos		Action Aid
Ganga	Perseverence	Head of Sub-Office Semera	WFP
Garat	Abdirahim	Field Coordinator	VSF-Suisse
Gebrehana	Gezahegn Kebede	Country Director	Oxfam - GB
Gebru	Gebreegziabher	UN Agencies Cooperation Team Leader	Ministry of Finance & Economic Development
Gemechu	Deed	Programme Coordinator	Helpage
Getachew	Rahel	Information Management Officer	OCHA
Gezae	Solomon	Officer in Charge	WFP
Girmay	Abiy	WHO Preparedness	World Health Organization
Godana	Abdirashid	Program Coordinator	Community Initiatives Facilitations and Assistance (CIFA)
Haaji	Dr. Jowhar Yusuf	Vice Bureau Head	Regional Health Bureau
Haile	Nigist	Head of Field Office	FAO
Hailemariam	Kidist	Business Development & Communication Manager	SOS - Sahel
Halake	Roba	Humanitarian Response Manager	Save the Children
Hamedo	Hera	Regional Coordinator	FAO
Handley	Paul	OCHA (former)	Head of Office
Hassan	Mustafa	Monitoring and Evaluation	Regional Livestock Bureau
Hassan	Abdinasir	Area Manager Jijiga	Danish Refugee Council
Heissler	Karin	Chief, Child Protection	UNICEF
Hilding	Sarah	Operations and Advocacy Division OAD	OCHA

Ibrahim	Mohamed	RPLRP Coordinator	Regional Livestock Bureau
Jaldessa	Jarso	Field Office Coordinator	HEKS - Swiss Church Aid
Jatani	Abarufa	Project Manager	Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation
Johnson	Kelly	PSNP Donor Coordinator	World Bank
Julmy	Stephanie	OCHA (former)	
Kalayu	Getachew	Head, Planning and Coordination Department	REST - Relief Society of Tigray
Kamwaga	Stanislaus	WASH Cluster Coordinator	UNICEF
Karp	David	Regional Bureau for Africa	UNHCR
Kebede	Biruk	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	OCHA
Kefford	Stuart	OCHA (former)	Member of the STAIT mission
Kibur	Martha	Evaluation Specialist	UNICEF
Kiernan	Deirdre	Emergency Specialist for Eastern and Southern Africa Desk	UNICEF
Kristin Arthur		Protection sector coordinator	UNHCR
Kunwar	Kamal	WASH Coordinator	UNICEF
Kurbis	Brian	Senior Humanitarian Advisor, Ethiopia (Acting)	USAID/OFDA
Kutschenreuter	Drew		IOM
Kuuyuor	Titus A.	Senior Resilience Advisor	UNDP
Lawson-Marriott	Sibi	Head of Programme	WFP
Leaity	Grant	Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes	UNICEF
Lee Steward	Esther	Country Director	DRC
Lemma	Gebregziabher	Emergency Officer	UNICEF
Lench	Tsegaw		Action Aid
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## Annex 5: Evaluation Analysis

- 1 **Method and Limitations.** Twelve evaluations and reviews were analyzed in depth. Eleven of the documents reviewed covered the same timeframe as the IAHE (2015–2018). The 2012 IASC Real-Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to the Horn of Africa Drought Crisis – Ethiopia was analyzed as a benchmark to understand whether lessons were learned and incorporated in the El Niño and IOD drought response.
- 2 The team’s ability to develop a strong evidence base from the analysis evaluations and reviews was limited by a number of factors. First, some of the evaluations were agency and/or sector specific and focus less on exploring the inter-agency aspects of the drought interventions. Second, not all of the documents studied are independent evaluations – they include real-time reviews and lessons-learned reports based on light self-assessment exercises. The analyses and recommendations of some are only indicative and provisional. Third, in the absence of outcome-level figures, it is difficult to unequivocally support the evaluations’ assertion that lives were saved as a result of the joint humanitarian drought response.
- 3 The team studied the following evaluations and reviews:
  - IASC Real-Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to the Horn of Africa Drought Crisis – Ethiopia, February 2012
  - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Ethiopia Drought Mid-Term Evaluation Report, 2016
  - STAIT Mission 2016 – Ethiopia Lessons Learned from the El-Niño Drought, 2015–2016
  - Logistics Cluster Ethiopia El Niño Drought Response Lessons Learned Report, January 2018
  - External Evaluation of Oxfam's 2017 Drought Response in Ethiopia – Final Evaluation Report, April 3, 2018
  - Independent Review of the Value Added of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in the Countries Affected by El Niño, March 2018
  - Ethiopia: An Evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2012–2017), January 2019
  - Ethiopia Shelter/NFI Cluster Evaluation (2015–2016)
  - Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Support for Enhanced Resilience, January 2019
  - El Niño in Ethiopia, 2015–2016 – A Real-Time Review of Impacts and Responses, March 2016, USAID/AKLDP
  - Comprehensive Review of 2016–17 ECHO Horn of Africa Drought Response, March 2019
  - Humanitarian Food Assistance 2018: Process Evaluation Report, May 2019 (DRAFT version)
- 4 **Summary finding.** The evaluation analysis clearly shows that key lessons from past responses were not incorporated in the El Niño and IOD response. The fact that similar issues are repeatedly flagged as challenges for effective and timely responses points to a systemic problem. Concerns over the quality and reliability of needs assessments; the absence of early action based on early warning; the very weak focus on livelihoods, recovery, and resilience; and the lack of attention to gender and other cross-cutting issues come up repeatedly. On the lack of gender integration, the 2012 IASC Horn of Africa Real-Time Evaluation even mentions that this issue was also flagged as a challenge in the 2006 RTE.
- 5 Coordination between the Ethiopian government, UN agencies, and other humanitarian actors was much better during the El Niño and IOD response than in previous drought responses, and the systematic joint humanitarian response succeeded in delivering a response “just in time” to avert a famine. However, the response-coordination system achieved little in terms of building and maintaining national partnerships: national NGOs were handled as subcontractors rather than decision-making partners. Generally, cluster performance in terms of timeliness, appropriateness, and scale-up has relatively improved, although there is still much more room for improvement. The increased use of crisis modifiers and flexible funding modalities as well as the integration of moderate and severe-acute malnutrition treatment were identified as encouraging improvements.
- 6 **Conclusions per evaluation question.** The following are the main conclusions drawn from the evaluation analysis for each of the five evaluation questions. The rating after each paragraph indicates

how many previous evaluations which discuss that particular sub-question have reached the same or a similar conclusion.

**1. Relevance.** Do the planning documents reflect the needs and priorities of people affected by the droughts?

7 *What is the quality of the needs assessment information used for response planning?*

- There were significant constraints to government early warning and needs assessment processes as well as issues with the quality of the assessment information produced. Assessments primarily serve as fundraising rather than as planning tools. Major issues include the inability to trigger early response to food security crises based on meteorological forecasts and livelihoods indicators, as opposed to waiting for a failed harvest before sounding the alarm. Seasonal assessments trigger humanitarian assistance, and these rely on late indicators (such as failed harvests and malnutrition) rather than indicators that would enable early warnings. In addition, the level of assessment is uneven across different sectors, with a more “systematic” approach to food security than to other sectors. Nutrition surveys are rarely conducted, and few analyses of the underlying causes of malnutrition have been conducted. (5/8)
- Effective and timely action was hindered by the requirement that multi-agency assessments must go through a political approval process before data can be disseminated. (8/8)
- There is a strong need for a credible evidence base to prepare, plan, and respond, because information and analysis are not sufficiently available. There are issues with the quality of the data gathered and analyzed. Figures at the *woreda* and regional levels are disputed by the federal government, and the trend is for the Ethiopian government to underestimate needs and reduce beneficiary numbers to unrealistic levels, resulting in missed opportunities to moderate hunger. (8/8)
- The overall strategy and geographic targeting were relevant, focusing on those areas worst hit by the droughts. (6/8)

*"In addition to the absurdity of waiting for a failed harvest before sounding the alarm is the fact that the current bureaucratic systems can add 3 months' further delay to collate and analyze the data from the different areas."*

*Comprehensive Review of 2016–17 ECHO Horn of Africa Drought Response, March 2019*

8 *To what extent do the planning documents reflect the identified needs and priorities of affected people, including those of vulnerable groups?*

- Based on the HRD, individual programs conducted assessments and consultations with affected communities prior to launching their drought-response interventions in order to align their responses with the needs of these communities. For the most part, the type of support provided within an already identified sector (i.e., the implementing agency's sector of operation) was consistent with the expressed needs of the affected communities. However, there were also exceptions in which a top-down approach came into play and community consultation did not inform program design. For example, water trucking did not address communities' felt needs for access to reliable and permanent water sources. (5/5)
- Joint humanitarian assessments led by the government are often gender blind; there are gaps in sex-disaggregated baseline information, needs, and priorities. (2/5)

9 *To what extent were lessons from the El Niño response incorporated into later response plans?*

- The response mechanisms of the El Niño and IOD drought response were practically identical to those of earlier drought responses; lack of information and analysis remained a challenge. Very little progress was made in utilizing the increasingly sophisticated satellite available; the cumbersome and time-consuming official early warning structures remained largely unchanged; analyses continued to rely on the wrong indicators; and the process remained highly politicized. The humanitarian response was also delayed by the same factors as in previous droughts (2011–2012), such as the slow bureaucratic processes for recognizing the emergency and waiting for “official” early warning rather than responding based on an analysis of the inevitable trajectory of livelihoods and humanitarian indicators; a lack of preparedness on the part of operational agencies; and limited willingness among donors to divert development resources to scale up support where

it was critically needed. This shows that lessons on preparedness were not sufficiently taken into consideration. (2/4)

- The response sought to take gender issues into account, but program design was not much informed by gender analysis. Gender policy is understood but not followed. (3/4)
- Capacity-building efforts have led to great improvements in the government-led humanitarian logistics system. Ethiopia's ability to cope with the humanitarian demands generated by the El Niño and IOD crises was greatly enhanced by efficiency gains in procurement and distribution, with lead times reduced by and estimated 74 percent. (3/4)

## 2. **Effectiveness.** Did the response achieve its intended results?

### 10 *To what extent has the response contributed to the objectives of saving lives, reducing morbidity, and protecting and restoring livelihoods?*

- The joint humanitarian response was largely successful and did save lives – mostly on time – but it failed to save livelihoods. The response provided critical life-saving support through the decentralized health and nutrition systems, and favorable effects were seen in children as a result of supplementary feeding. Support for livestock and livelihoods, however, was not well funded. Livestock support arrived late, after substantial livestock mortality was reported in both the lowlands and the highlands, and good practice advice – such as the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards – was not always followed. While the provision of water for humans and livestock via water trucking provided a short-term solution, it raised the question of sustainability. (8/8)
- While the intervention targeted existing vulnerabilities in the communities, there is a need to continue to improve timeliness in delivering the necessary support. There is a collective delay in addressing identified needs at an early stage, with significant time elapsed between assessment and the actual delivery of services (e.g., due to slow, non-agile funding processes; procurement and logistics issues; delays in staff recruitment; late activation of the Logistics Cluster; and issues with EHCT's strategic leadership). The overall performance of the humanitarian response in terms of saving lives suggests that the sector managed to respond "just in time" to save lives and avert famine, but not in time to avoid the erosion of assets. (8/8)

*"If indicators were looked at and taken seriously, activation [of the Logistics Cluster] could have taken place earlier [...]. The information and the services provided would have been more meaningful if the activation took place earlier."*

*Logistics Cluster Ethiopia El Niño Drought Response Lessons Learned Report, January 2018*

### 11 *To what extent was assistance provided according to need, and to what extent did it reach the most vulnerable, according to the principles of humanity and impartiality?*

- Resource constraints and targeting weaknesses are the main challenges to effectiveness. Humanitarian agencies do not undertake targeting autonomously, so they sometimes accept lower-than-normal standards in order to align with government requirements. Resource constraints, which require prioritization even among those in need, are the main challenge to the principle of humanity. (1/2)
- Humanitarian access was good, except when it came to reaching certain groups of internally displaced persons. (1/2)
- The lack of beneficiary lists for over 1,200 FDPs in the Somali region has been a major limitation on effective monitoring and accountability. (1/2)
- Within drought-exposed areas, Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) support was more targeted to remote areas. In *woredas* where the PSNP is operational, non-PSNP households are prioritized for HFA. The combination of HFA and the PSNP shows that targeting largely supports the poor in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and SNNPR; in Afar, however, the richest quintile are more likely to benefit from either the PSNP or HFA, as compared to the poorest households. (1/2)
- There is no predefined schedule for HFA transfers; transfer rounds are launched when there are sufficient resources for full disbursement of that round. As a result, rounds are usually more than 30 days apart. There are also regional variations in the per person disbursement levels/rations with respect to grains and pulses. The official monthly per person rations are set at 15 kg of grains, 1.5 kg of pulses, and 0.45 liters of cooking oil; the average household received 2.5 months' worth of payments in grain, one-third of a month's worth of payments in pulses, and 1.6 months' worth of payments in cooking oil. Considering that HFA disbursement duration varies between 3 and 12

months, this suggests that most households are not receiving their full entitlements. Per person payment levels with respect to grains are much higher in Afar relative to other regions. Pulses are more likely to be distributed in Amhara and Tigray, as compared to other regions. (1/2)

- The average HFA beneficiary received their payments in four installments. Households in Afar and the Somali region received more installments than HFA households in the highlands. The data suggest that there is considerable rotation of HFA beneficiary households even within one calendar year. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some of the last payments in 2016 were delayed and were only paid in January 2017.

*"WFP attracts criticism for not reporting against beneficiary lists, but in practice this situation has been tolerated by the federal government and humanitarian partners collectively, and it requires joint action to insist on systematic beneficiary registration."*

*Ethiopia: An Evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2012–2017), January 2019*

12 *To what extent were cross-cutting issues such as gender, age, disability, and the environment given adequate consideration in the response?*

- Cross-cutting issues received very little consideration in the response, and when the response sought to integrate gender into the program, this was not informed by a gender analysis. Gender considerations were mainly boiled down to having broadly equal numbers of female and male beneficiaries and/or making interventions that target women/girls. The timing of program activities did not specifically take into account the various roles women and men play in society and in households. Addressing protection in the drought response was relevant in view of the exacerbated vulnerabilities of certain groups, but it was not established as a routine area on which to respond and report. There are no collective AAP and PSEA mechanisms in place, and there are challenges in the roll-out and uptake of accountability mechanisms. (4/4)
- The draft HFA 2018 Process Evaluation Report (May 2019) indicates that the average HFA beneficiary travels about two hours to their payment site. The travel time in non-PSNP *woredas* is about half of the travel time in PSNP districts. More than 17 percent of the beneficiaries had to travel more than three hours to their payment site. About 15 percent of the beneficiaries had to spend the night at the payment site. About 24 percent of HFA beneficiaries in non-PSNP *woredas* incurred costs obtaining these payments, either because of the need to stay overnight at the payment site or during travel to or from the payment site. Very few households reported that they were harassed or robbed during travel. In addition, knowledge of correct payment levels was poor in non-PSNP *kebbelles*. Only 27 percent correctly identified the correct amount of grains, and less than 4 percent knew the correct amount of pulses and cooking oils. Interestingly, nearly 60 percent of the respondents in non-PSNP *woredas* said that HFA transfers do not include pulses.

*"In reality, gender is often diluted in the name of mainstreaming and very much relies on gender experts as opposed to it being the responsibility of everyone."*

*External Evaluation of Oxfam's 2017 Drought Response in Ethiopia – Final Evaluation Report, April 3, 2018*

**3. Sustainability.** Did the response help to build resilience?

13 *To what extent did the response help to strengthen government service provision at the point of delivery?*

- Significant contributions were made to strengthening the government's logistical capacities. The resulting efficiency gains in procurement and distribution reduced lead times by an estimated 74 percent. Specifically, WFP provided supply chain capacity-building support to NDRMC, focusing on strengthening process, information flow, and the creation of a commodity tracking system. The Logistics Cluster Logistics Capacity Assessment became an important source of information on the logistics infrastructure and services in Ethiopia. In addition to the deployment of logistics staff and operators throughout the national supply chain, NDRMC hub augmentation took place in Adama and Dire Dawa. WFP's contributions also helped to put better targeting of supplementary feeding programs on the national agenda by piloting an improved "second generation" approach, which has paved the way for an integrated approach to the management of malnutrition. (3/4)
- Efforts to strengthen the Ethiopian government's capacities to conduct food security assessments are not carried out in a coordinated manner, which reduces their impact on resilience. WFP's

contributions to early warning analyses by supporting NDRMC's use of LEAP software has not yet fulfilled its main objective – to trigger an early response to food security crises. (2/4)

14 *Is there any evidence that the response helped affected people cope better with subsequent/future droughts?*

- The response was less successful in maintaining multi-sectoral linkages and ensuring that emergency activities are connected to longer-term interventions. Most drought interventions were short-term projects without realistic exit strategies. These projects included relevant resilience aspects, but their scale was not commensurate with the expressed needs of affected communities. The system suffers from weak interconnectedness between programs that are agile and can easily shift between development and humanitarian work. The scarcity of funding has limited the potential for innovation in resilience building. The effects of minimal livelihoods/resilience investments on affected people were not clearly evident. (8/8)
- The Ethiopian government's improved capacity to identify, diagnose, and treat acute malnutrition in children has contributed to resilience building. Trainings provided to health workers, community-based animal health workers, and hygiene promotion volunteers have contributed to community learning and behavioral change, thus enhancing community resilience. (4/8)

15 *To what extent were adequate links to recovery and development actors and interventions created?*

- Despite some agencies' efforts to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus, there is no unifying conceptualization of resilience or of how the two systems can work together effectively and coherently. The "silo" approach in both humanitarian and development organizations as well as within the different departments or units of the same organization constrains these organizations' ability to follow the integrated approach required to enhance resilience. (6/6)
- The Ethiopian government's two parallel and complex systems fall under two different line ministries and do not necessarily operate in a coordinated, harmonized way. There were significant delays and inconsistencies in delivery. These two systems also have different funding sources, financial reporting mechanisms, and targeting rules. Despite the absence of a coordinated approach, the combination of PSNP and HFA interventions protected people against shocks, specifically protecting the loss of life and assets and preventing famine, with HFA used to top up PSNP transfers and extend coverage. HFA is used to extend the safety net as widely as possible in highland PSNP localities. However, PSNP under-coverage in the lowlands remains a major concern, especially considering the high levels of vulnerability in these areas. (4/6)
- Though they vary across and within regions, there are harmonization and operational linkages between the PSNP and the regional/*woreda* structures that cover humanitarian assistance, including support in the form of formal agreements between different sectoral offices; *woreda* trainings; harmonized targeting; uniform transfer processes and reporting; and the use of PASS software. However, household knowledge of PSNP–HFA harmonization is poor. (2/6)

*"Clearly, strong coordination and joint planning is needed between the PSNP and UN during 'normal' periods when PSNP regular transfers will coincide with some level of relief food assistance, and during emergencies when PSNP transfers under the contingency fund or risk financing mechanism need coordination with emergency food aid.*

*El Niño in Ethiopia, 2015–2016 – A Real-Time Review of Impacts and Responses, March 2016, USAID/AKLDP*

**4. Partnerships and Localization.** Did the response adequately build partnerships and involve local capacities?

16 *To what extent did international humanitarian actors appropriately manage the partnership with the Ethiopian government at the federal, regional, and local levels?*

- The close working relationship between the Ethiopian government and the humanitarian community and their combined efforts to deliver assistance were key to the overall success of the response. Integrating response activities with government systems and structures, although not without its challenges, has proven beneficial in providing opportunities for dialogue, advocacy, and pathways for sustainability, and this could not have been accomplished without long-term engagement and working relationships with various line ministries, agencies, and regional governments that are built on trust. (4/5)

- Relationships with government structures at the regional, *woreda*, and *kebele* levels are relatively weaker than those at the federal level; there are low levels of communication, and there is a disconnect in the involvement of regional authorities in the planning phase. (1/5)

17 *To what extent have NNGOs and CSOs been involved in response planning and implementation?*

- Though the scope and breadth of NNGO participation in drought response planning and implementation was not at the level it should have been, a few international organizations successfully collaborated with well-positioned and capacity-rich NNGOs. This allowed them to reach vast and remote areas, and contributed to the coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and connectedness of the response. (4/4)
- However, the response coordination system did not accomplish much in terms of building and maintaining national partnerships: NNGOs were handled as subcontractors rather than partners and were not involved in decision-making processes. (2/4)

18 *Is there any evidence that the response capacities of NNGOs and CSOs were strengthened through the response?*

- The few collaborations that international organizations fostered with NNGOs not only contributed extensively to the successful implementation of the program, but also helped strengthen the drought-response capacities of the NNGOs. (2/4)

**5. Coordination.** Was the response well coordinated?

19 *How effective were coordination mechanisms at the strategic, inter-cluster, and cluster/sector levels?*

- Coordination between the Ethiopian government, UN agencies, and other humanitarian actors was significantly better during the El Niño and IOD response as compared to previous drought responses. The systematic joint humanitarian response succeeded in averting famine. The performance of clusters in terms of timeliness, appropriateness, and scale-up has improved relative to previous responses. However, the same coordination challenges that hindered effective response pre-2015 continued to be problematic during the 2015/2016 and 2017/2018 droughts. The cluster system had become more decentralized and closer to the field, but information exchange has not improved much, and the flow of essential data remained slow. Late cluster activation led to significant delays in logistics and disrupted the supply chain in the initial stages of the El Niño response; coordination gaps between the PSNP and the humanitarian sectors resulted in inconsistencies; there were weakness in coordination between NDRMC and some line ministries; and UN cluster lead coordination was less than optimal. OCHA and cluster lead agencies managed coordination based on quick thinking and an ad-hoc arrangement rather than a systematized approach. Given the scope of the crisis, the UN system was seen as severely stretched, with its coordination structures inadequate to cover the needs comprehensively. In some cases, rapid scaling up and the resources and time this required negatively impacted the coordination of some stakeholders. (7/7)
- Specific findings on coordination:
  - The WASH cluster was identified as an example of a relatively successful arrangement which set up effective systems that were customized to the specific contexts of the country and the crisis situation.
  - The activation of the logistics cluster took place about a year after the El Niño alert, “due to the slow-onset of the emergency and due to discussions with Government of Ethiopia on the scale and requirements of the response.” It was not part of the 2016 HRD and was only activated for a short period, from March to November 2016. Once activated, the cluster had to hit the ground running, with the Cluster Coordinator and Information Management Officer arriving within the first week of activation.
  - Donor presence in cluster meetings tends to turn them into a reporting platform rather than partner-coordination meetings.
  - The “UN-centric” image of the logistics cluster was presented as a deterrent against some partners participating in cluster coordination meetings.
  - There is a tendency to equate the regularity of cluster meetings and the active participation of partners with cluster achievement.
  - Zonal-level task force coordination is less systematic than regional coordination.

- The ICCG met on a regular basis to harmonize operational responses across sectors and was generally well organized, often making decisions which were clearly communicated to partners. (2/7)
- The EHCT played a major coordination role on behalf of international actors. However, clearer and more strategic direction from the EHCT could have strengthened the overall El Niño response, and action could have been taken earlier to respond in a more coordinated, predictable way. The relationship between the EHCT and ICCG was generally solid, with some room for improvement. More could have been done to emphasize the role of the EHCT as a strategic decision-making body. Communication between the EHCT and donor coordination groups, such as the HRDG and the DAG, could be clearer. (1/7)

20 *How effective was the collective resource-mobilization effort in raising sufficient, timely, and sufficiently long-term funding?*

- The Ethiopian government demonstrated more willingness to contribute to the drought response by reallocating unprecedented levels of government funds to the El Niño response. (3/3)
- CERF was reactive rather than proactive in the El Niño crisis, as it requires a high level of certainty about needs in order to allocate funding, and funding arrived after the onset of the drought. However, it filled funding gaps by funding neglected sectors and activities – such as gender and protection – and helped provide a timelier response (WFP’s advance food purchase; UNICEF’s timely supply of therapeutic foods and drugs for SAM treatment). (1/3)
- Other crises occurring globally (Syria, Yemen, and South Sudan) as well as in Ethiopia (displacements due to conflict) competed with the drought response for donor attention. This is one of the underlying issues that hindered a timely response and also made it difficult to secure long-term funding to address recovery and resilience needs. (2/3)
- The use of crisis modifiers and flexible funding provided relatively timely assistance as compared to typical humanitarian projects, demonstrating how development funding and programs can be successfully adapted to address humanitarian needs. However, this type of arrangement was not consistent or predictable across different donors, many of which added significant bureaucratic processes that delayed the delivery of assistance by up to six months and provided very limited resources as compared to the emergency appeal amount. Most donor funding processes are not in line with crisis dynamics and are disconnected from climatic calendars. (3/3)
- The PSNP, like crisis modifiers, demonstrated how contingency arrangements could be used during emergencies. With a level of resources that is much higher than emergency relief, the PSNP devoted resources to drought-affected populations months before relief aid arrived. However, PSNP contingency transfers were not sustained into late 2015, and regular transfers from 2016 were delayed. Also, despite the high levels of food insecurity and vulnerability in the lowlands, the lowland PSNP only provided limited contingency support to these vulnerable areas. (2/3)

*"The growing levels of inequality, the depth of poverty and the size of the resilience gap are so great that expectations that the current level of aid investments in resilience will reduce future humanitarian needs is largely unrealistic."*

*El Niño in Ethiopia, 2015–2016 – A Real-Time Review of Impacts and Responses, March 2016, USAID/AKLDP*

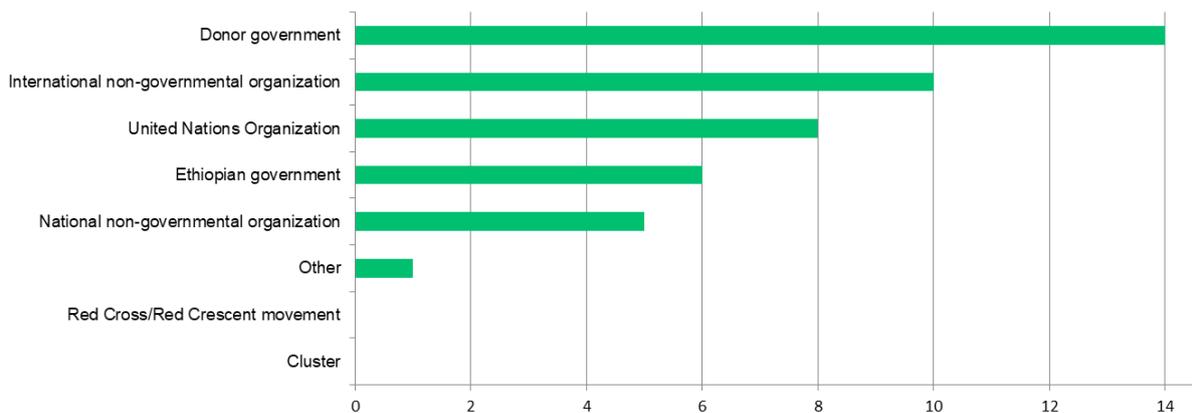
*"Clearly, strong coordination and joint planning is needed between the PSNP and UN during 'normal' periods when PSNP regular transfers will coincide with some level of relief food assistance, and during emergencies when PSNP transfers under the contingency fund or risk financing mechanism need coordination with emergency food aid."*

*Comprehensive Review of 2016–17 ECHO Horn of Africa Drought Response, March 2019*

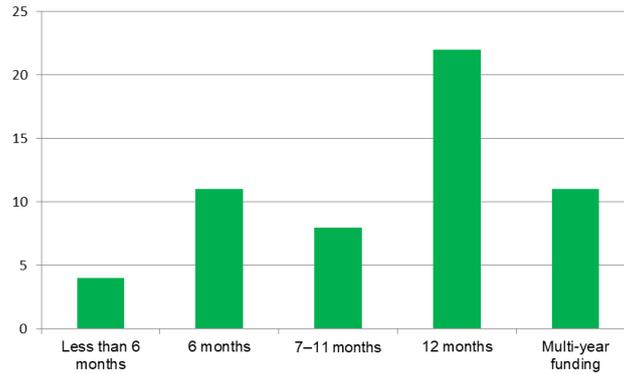
## Annex 6: Aid Worker and Donor Survey

- Method.** The IAHE included an online perception survey of aid workers, donors, and Ethiopian government officials who participated in disaster response between 2015 and 2019. The UN OCHA Ethiopia office distributed the survey to current and former staff involved in the drought response, as well as through the humanitarian coordination system (the clusters and the EHCT). To distribute the survey as widely as possible, cluster coordinators were asked to share the survey invitation with all current members; the IAHE Advisory Group was encouraged to disseminate the survey; interviewees were asked to do the same; and the UN OCHA Ethiopia office sent two reminders.
- Response rate and use of results.** Despite all of these efforts, the response rate was extremely low. 66 aid workers and donors filled in the survey. Of these, 9 had not been involved in the 2015–2018 drought response, which left only 57 valid responses. Respondents were also given the chance to skip questions, because the evaluation team expected that not all of them would have the same level of exposure to all aspects of the response. This means that the number of responses was even lower for some questions. The number of responses was not sufficient to include the survey results in the evaluation as evidence – let alone to disaggregate the results (as planned) by organization type, sex, and region. This evaluation therefore only used the results as additional evidence where they demonstrated a very clear tendency. This annex includes information on the respondent profile, the graphs showing the results of each question, and categorized open responses.
- Respondent profile.** 46 respondents were involved in the El Niño response and 43 in the Indian Ocean Dipole and its aftermath – meaning that 32 respondents were involved in both. Most respondents worked in Addis Ababa (21) and the Somali region (11), with 1–4 respondents each in Amhara, Afar, Tigray, Oromia, SNNPR, and other Ethiopian regions, or a regional hub such as Nairobi. 68 percent of respondents were male, 32 percent female. Most respondents worked with organizations focusing on several sectors (15), agriculture (7), and food (5). The respondents primarily occupied managerial roles (27), followed by technical roles (11). The respondents were spread across different types of stakeholders (with the exception of clusters and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement). The biggest respondent group was donors, followed by INGOs and UN organizations.

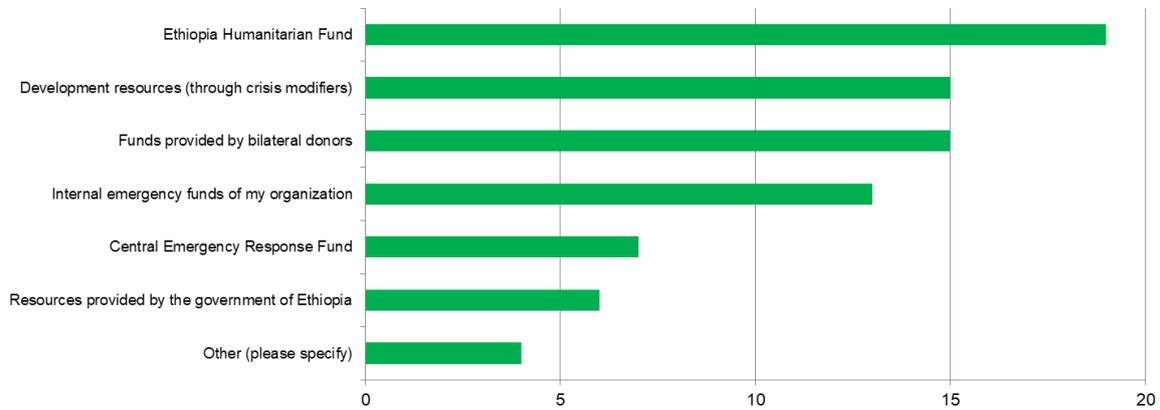
Which type of organization have you been working with during the drought response?



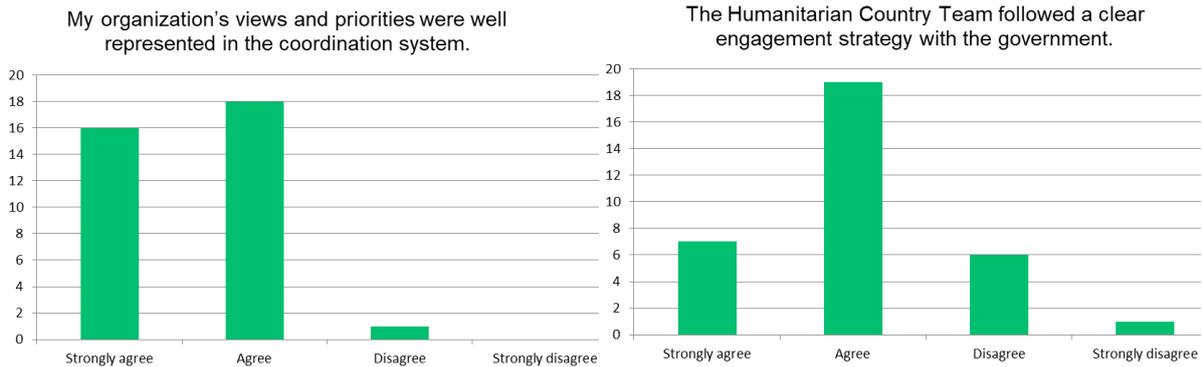
**4 What was the duration of the main funding contracts your organization used to respond to the droughts?**

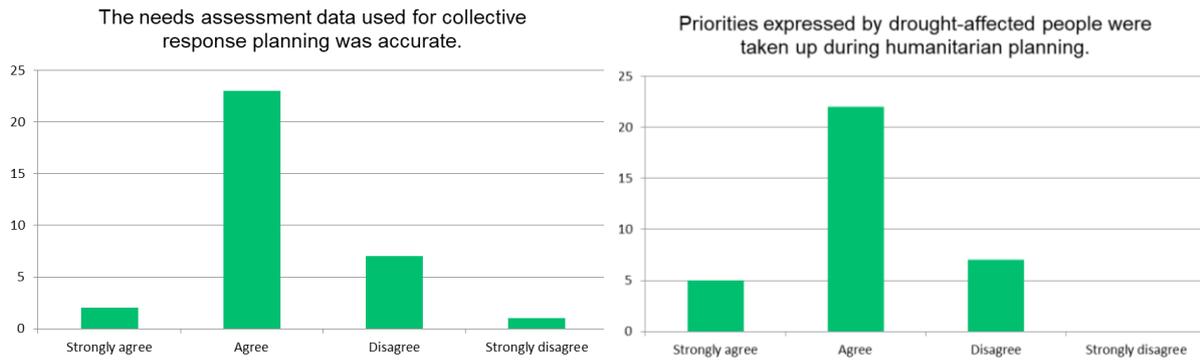


**5 Which funding mechanisms were most important in enabling a timely response?**

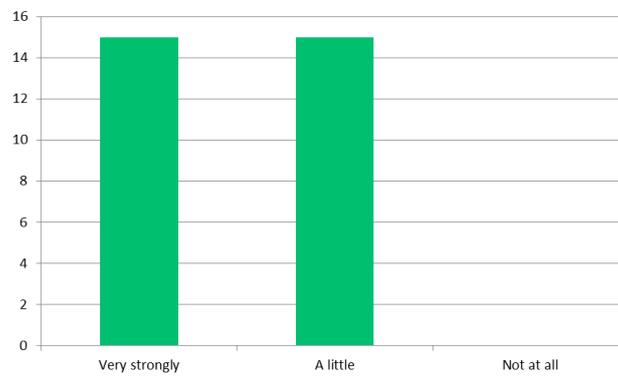


**6 Based on your experience with drought response in Ethiopia, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

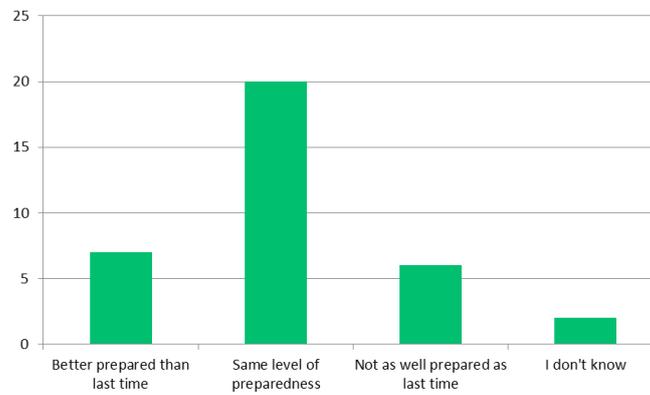




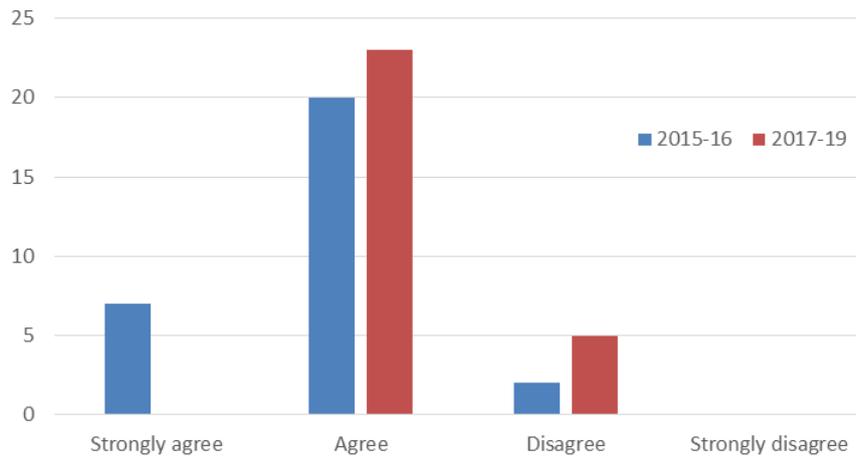
**7 To what extent were lessons from earlier drought responses in Ethiopia implemented in recent drought responses?**



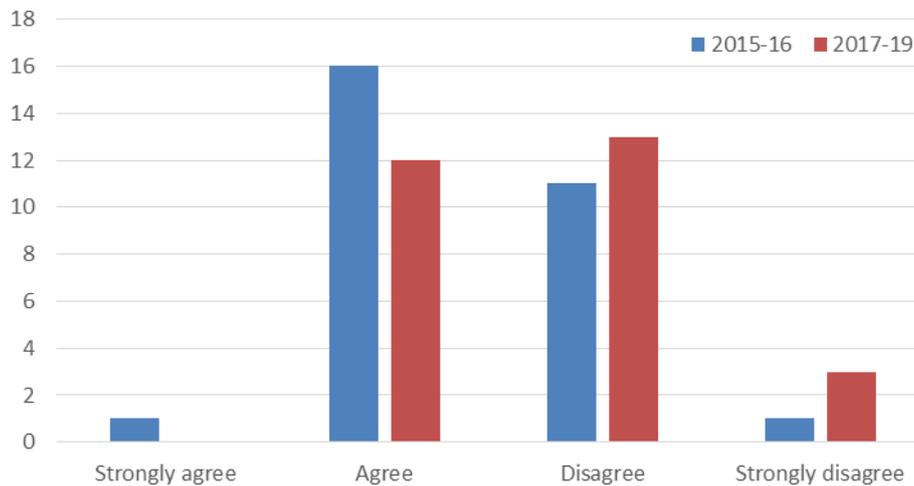
**8 Compared to the last drought, how would you assess the humanitarian community's preparedness for the next potential drought?**



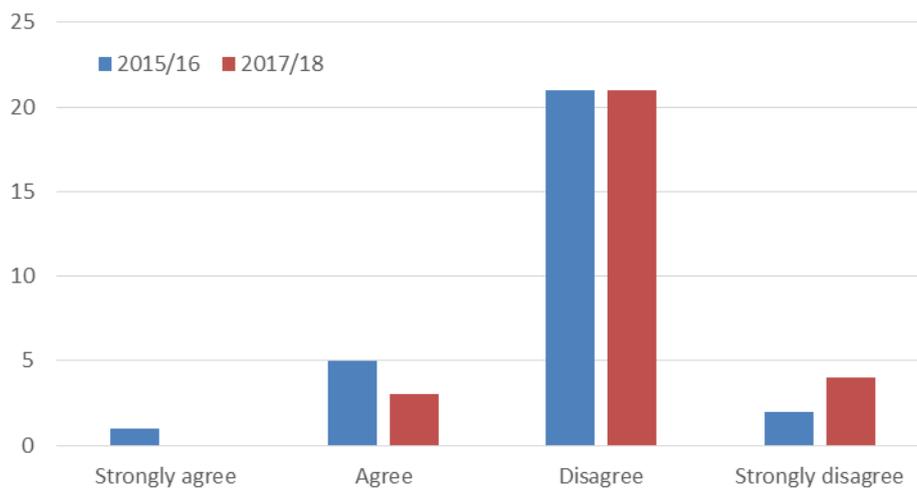
9 **Level of agreement: Drought assistance reached those most in need.**



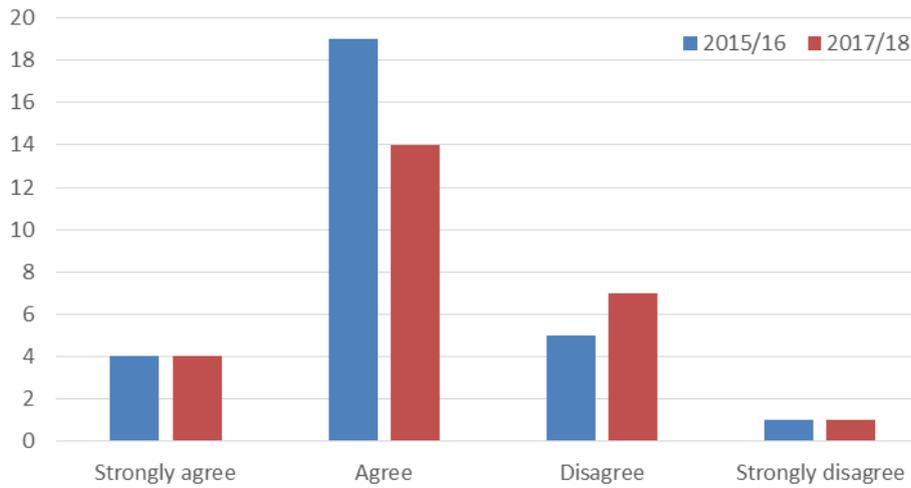
10 **Level of agreement: The drought response contributed to making people more resilient in the event of a future drought.**



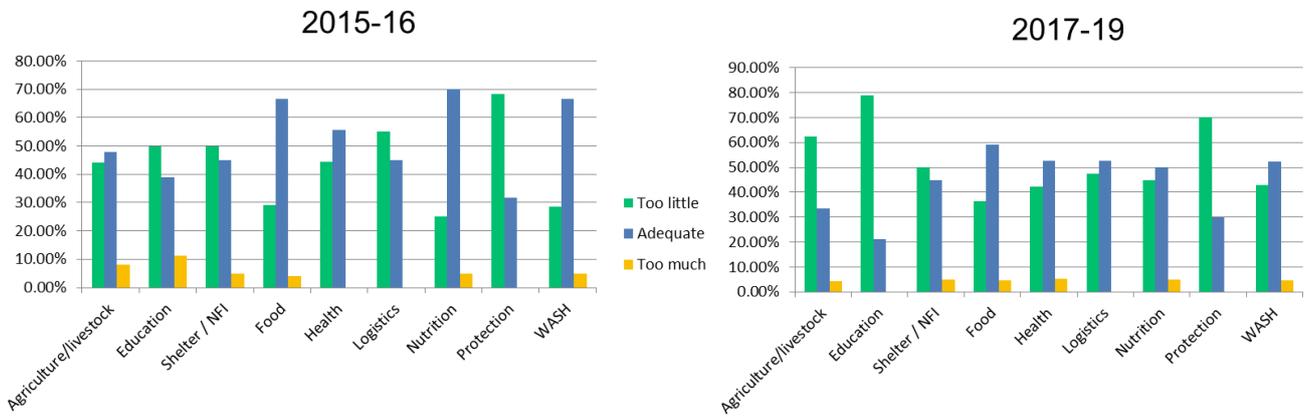
11 **Level of agreement: Aid dependency was avoided**



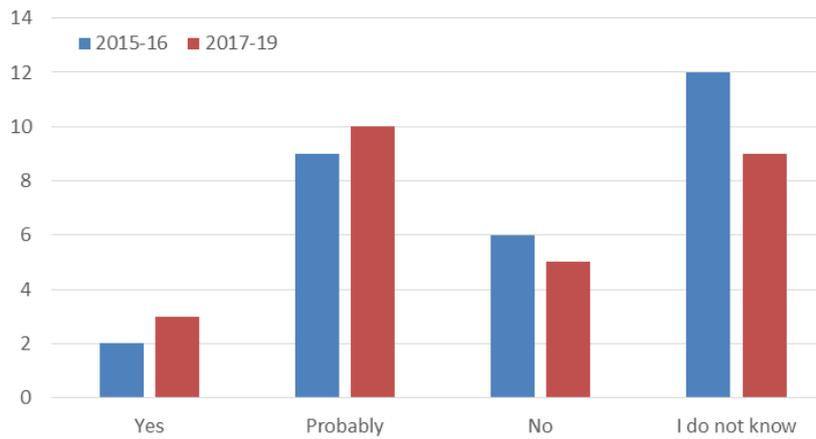
**12 Level of agreement: The drought response did not fuel inter-community conflict.**



**13 How do you judge the overall prioritization of sectors in the drought responses?**

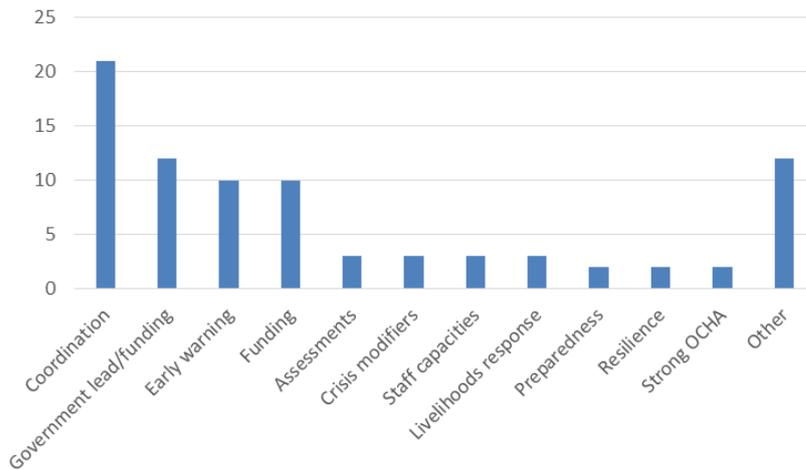


**14 Did any geographic areas in Ethiopia receive too much or too little assistance, relative to the severity of drought needs?**



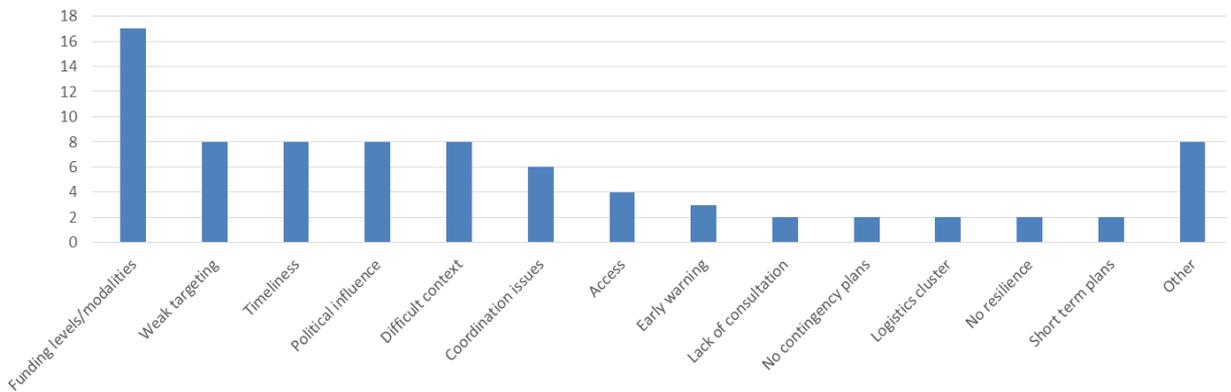
**15 What are the three main factors that enabled an effective response to the droughts in Ethiopia?**

(Open responses were categorized; other = categories with only one mention)



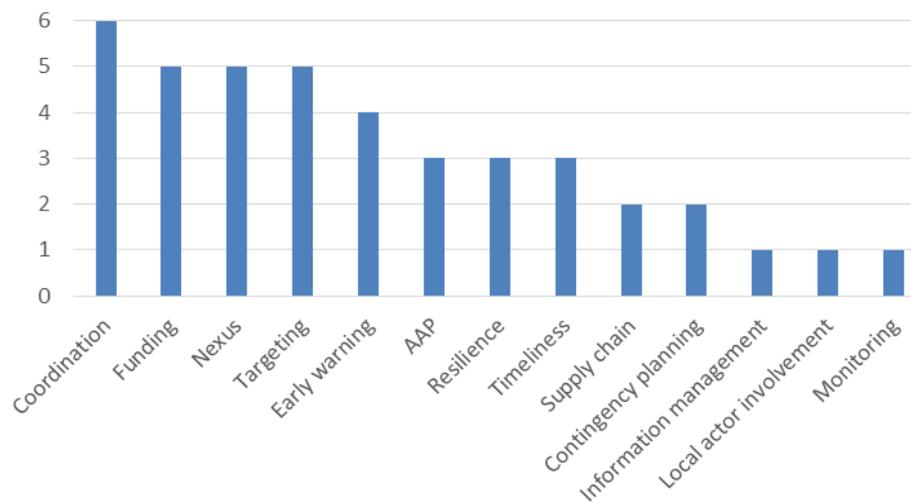
**16 What are the three main factors that hindered an effective response to the droughts in Ethiopia?**

(Open responses were categorized; other = categories with only one mention)



**17 If you could change one thing to improve the humanitarian community’s collective response during a future drought, what would it be?**

(Open responses were categorized)



## Annex 7: Affected People Survey

- 1 **Objectives.** The aim of the affected people survey was to gather primary data on the perceptions of affected communities of the drought response of the international community between 2015 and 2018. Survey questions cover household characteristics, perceptions of affected people about the quantity, quality, relevance, effectiveness, fairness, and impartiality of the assistance. It also invited affected people to share recommendations for drought responses and to indicate how they would prefer for evaluation findings to be shared with them.
- 2 **Methods.** The survey was carried out as a face to face survey with individual respondent. Four regions (and six geographic areas within these regions) were selected to carry out the survey: Tigray, Afar, Oromia, and the Somali region. These regions were chosen to ensure that all included regions were strongly affected by one or several droughts since 2015; and that the sample include both agricultural and pastoralist areas, areas perceived to have received different levels of coverage, and areas with different governance structures. Within these regions, a total of 18 *Woredas* (districts) were selected, 3 in each of the smaller regions of Tigray and Afar and 6 each in the larger regions of Oromia and the Somali region. *Woredas* were selected the cover areas differently affected by the droughts and the assistance provided. Within each *Woreda*, in most cases two *kebelles* (municipalities / villages) were selected together with *Woreda* officials, to include a well- and a less-well covered village.
- 3 In each *Kebelle*, the team used a purposive sampling strategy to select individuals to be included in the survey. To select participants, enumerators asked *Kebelle* officials for a list of all people residing in the area (where available), from which individuals fitting the selection criteria were chosen at random. In each region, the enumerator teams included at least two female enumerators to facilitate the participation of women. In each *Woreda*, the team aimed to interview at least:
  - 20 individuals whose households have received humanitarian assistance in 2015–2018 and 4 who have not received assistance but were considered as needing assistance;
  - At least 7 male heads of household and 7 female heads of household;
  - At least 3 individuals over 65 years of age;
  - At least 3 individuals belonging to the youth age bracket as defined in Ethiopia (15-29 years);
  - At least 3 individuals with disabilities or chronic mental or physical illnesses (including at least 1 woman);
  - At least 3 individuals living in households with a family size greater than 5 (of which at least 1 has not received assistance).
- 4 In total, 528 affected people participated in the survey. Of these, 205 were women, 63 were individuals with a disability, 133 were classified as youth (between 18 and 29 years of age), and 88 were aged 60 or above. The total number of respondents was 72 in Tigray, 91 in Afar, 175 in Oromia, and 190 in the Somali region.
- 5 **Conflict sensitivity.** To ensure the evaluation was conducted in a conflict-sensitive way, the team took the following steps: NDRMC and regional NDRMC issued a letter explaining the objective of the survey for *Woreda* and *Kebelle* leaders; all participants were ensured that their participation was voluntary and based on informed consent; responses were treated anonymously and no names or other immediately identifying information was recorded; enumerators from the region were selected; any primary data shared will not include any identifying information (including *Kebelle* and *Woreda* names); files containing primary data are stored in a protected way.
- 6 **Implementation.** The questionnaire was translated into the respective regional languages (Tigrinya, Somali, Afaan-Oromo, and Afaraf) and tested in cooperation with the enumerator teams. Three teams with two enumerators each were recruited for each region. Only experienced enumerators were chosen, drawn from pools of enumerators implementing surveys for the Central Statistical Authority and/or universities. To avoid conflicts of interest, the evaluation team selected enumerators who have not worked for a humanitarian organization in the area targeted by the survey. An evaluation team member trained enumerators before their deployment in evaluation objectives, protection-sensitive survey techniques, and their responsibilities toward the people surveyed. To do so, the team adapted existing enumerator training materials from the IAHE Advisory Group members and amended it to the objectives of the evaluation.

- 7 The surveys were conducted face-to-face with individuals, typically in their home setting. No incentives were provided for survey participation. Responses were recorded on paper and subsequently entered into SPSS and analyzed at aggregated level, as well as disaggregated by region, sex, age, and disability status of the respondents. Debriefings with the enumerator teams were held.
- 8 Anonymized, raw data on the survey results are available from the evaluation team upon request.

## Annex 8: Evaluation Instruments and Terms of Reference

The instruments used for gathering data for the evaluation can all be found in the Inception Report. It is available at <https://www.gppi.net/media/Inception-Report-Inter-Agency-Humanitarian-Evaluation-of-the-Drought-Response-In-Ethiopia.pdf>.

The original Terms of Reference for the evaluation are available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/inter-agency-humanitarian-evaluation-drought-response-ethiopia-terms-reference>.