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International Organization for Migration

the migration agency

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IOM is an intergovernmental organization established in 1951.

IOM is:

- 125 Members and 94 observers including 18 States and 76 global and regional IGOs and NGOs;
- More than 440 field locations;
- Over 6,600 staff working on more than 2,000 projects;
- US\$ 1 billion expenditures in 2008.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

As an intergovernmental body, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to:

- Assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration;
- Advance understanding of migration issues;
- Encourage social and economic development through migration;
- Uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.



Life Saving Assistance to conflict-induced IDPs in the Gambella Region - Ethiopia

Background

Over the years, the Gambella region in Ethiopia has experienced various forms of internal displacement of different ethnic groups. Displacement has primarily been induced by recurrent flooding and through inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts. Cross border cattle raiding and attacks of nomadic pastoralist from Sudan also remain a major cause for displacements in Gambella.

In early 2009, the region again witnessed a series of attacks from cattle rustlers crossing the border from Sudan with the aim of raiding cattle from Gambella agro-pastoralists. Witnesses reported that attacks were more violent than previously. During the attacks several people were killed, households items destroyed and more than 500 cattle looted.

The victims of the attacks were displaced from their villages, and several others fled in fear of the raids coming their way. The displaced fled to nearby communities and settled along the areas main river. The displaced families were forced to sleep in the open, with no shelter, no household items and no livelihood opportunities. In total, more than 20.000 people were displaced.

Out of the total number of displaced people, 1959 households were identified for immediate NFI household kits and shelter needs, as they were forced to sleep on the open plains, without any shelter or household items.

Responses

As co-lead for the Emergency Shelter/Non-Food Items/Camp-Coordination and Camp Management cluster in Ethiopia, IOM was requested by the regional government to coordinate a response to provide the displaced with shelter and non-food items such as kitchen utensils, blankets and soap. Distributions were carried out in June and July by implementing partners.

As part of its responsibility as co-cluster lead for the Emergency Shelter/Non-Food Items/Camp-Coordination and Camp Management cluster in Ethiopia, IOM works with partners to identify best practices and improve emergency responses in the sector.

During the distribution in Gambella, IOM piloted a recently drafted checklist for Non-Food Items distribution and Gender Mainstreaming, developed in cooperation with the Gender Capacity Building Advisor to the Ethiopia Humanitarian Community. The checklist aims to better mainstream gender considerations in NFI and Shelter projects in Ethiopia.

The checklist was introduced in a half day work-shop to implementing partners prior to distribution, and among the priorities identified was to ensure equal access to distribution for men and women, give priority access to pregnant and lactating women at distribution sites and ensure equal participation in distribution committees for men and women.

Results

During the project, 1959 kits of Non-Food items and shelter material was distributed in the affected regions. Each household was provided with a Non-Food Item kit consisting of: two blankets, one plastic sheet for emergency shelter, two jerry cans, ten bars of soap, one plastic basin, two plates, two cups, one plastic jug, one cooking pot, one ladle and one bag for carrying the items.

Prior to distributions, partners worked with the displaced communities and local authorities in identifying beneficiaries and establishing community distribution committees to oversee and ensure fair and equal access to distributions.



“IOM Special Liaison Mission in Ethiopia is co-lead of the CCCM/NFI/Emergency Shelter cluster, and participates in coordinated humanitarian responses and provides migration services in emergency or post-crisis situations as appropriate and as relates to the needs of individuals, thereby contributing to their protection”.



To ensure that lessons learned from the distribution were adequately recorded and to follow-up on the situation of the displaced, a post-distribution evaluation was carried out by IOM, implementing partners and other stakeholders.

The evaluation showed that the plastic sheeting distributed provided much needed shelter for the affected families and that kitchen utensils were widely used. Jerry cans were used to store safe drinking water reducing the risk of water born diseases.

As a result of the specific focus on gender mainstreaming, the evaluation also showed that the special needs of women had been taken better into account during the distribution. Women were the main recipients of assistance and distribution committees had comprised both women and men.

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