EXECUTIVE BRIEF
HORN of AFRICA DROUGHT
2011
4 August 2011

HIGHLIGHTS

- 12.4 million people are in urgent need of assistance in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.
- Neighbouring countries – South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda – all require support to ensure the crisis in the Horn of Africa does not spill over their borders.
- FAO funding gap as of 4 August 2011: USD 111.8 million.

PRIORITY AGRICULTURAL CHALLENGES

- protecting livestock assets by preventing livestock disease outbreaks to ensure the continued functioning of vital livestock export markets.
- enabling farmers to plant during the coming rainy season to ensure the availability of food in the next season.
- increasing households’ access to food through cash-for-work that has a longer-term benefit in terms of rehabilitating vital agricultural infrastructure.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Horn of Africa is currently facing a severe food security crisis that threatens the lives and livelihoods of over 12 million people. The crisis is the result of a combination of poor, erratic and failed rains over two rainy seasons, a marked increase in the price of food stuffs, and continued conflicts that have forced millions of people in the region to flee their homes. In five regions of southern Somalia – southern Bakool, Lower Shabelle and, since 3 August in the agropastoral areas of Balcad and Cadale districts of Middle Shabelle, the Afgoye corridor IDP settlement, and the Mogadishu IDP community – famine conditions now exist, forcing increasing numbers of people to seek assistance in Mogadishu and in neighbouring countries.

Agriculture is a core survival strategy in the Horn of Africa and serves as the main source of food and income for an estimated 80 percent of the region’s population. This crisis requires strategies that simultaneously focus on saving lives and livelihoods, while building longer-term resilience. Providing support through agriculture and livestock not only provides essential food, but an income for families.

In other parts of the region, conflicts and rising food prices have contributed to worrying food security situation, such as in the Sudan and newly independent South Sudan. At the same time, two poor rainfall seasons have placed the food security and livelihoods of pastoralists in northern Uganda at risk.

MAIN THREATS TO FOOD SECURITY

DROUGHT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Djibouti
Two consecutive failed seasons (2010/11 Heys/Dada and 2011 Diraaq/Sougum) affecting the northwest and southeast border zones, coupled with staple commodity inflation, have sharply increased the number of food insecure individuals and households in Djibouti. With a mean purchasing power of USD 0.68/person/day, household incomes are under severe stress, especially due to increases in flour prices, reflecting rising trends in international prices.

Ethiopia
Adverse weather conditions and poor or insufficient rainfall disrupted planting, limited the area planted and damaged the performance of the Belg and long-cycle Meher crops, including maize and sorghum. As a result, many farmers were forced to replant. At the same time, during the first half of 2011, in the south and southeast of the country, pasture shortages led to weakened livestock body condition, low livestock productivity and elevated livestock mortality.

Kenya
Much of Kenya’s arid and semi-arid lands witnessed two or three consecutive poor or failed rains, with some parts receiving only 10 to 50 percent of normal rains. Pastoral, agropastoral and marginal agricultural areas now face a state of crisis, with rapid deterioration of the situation over the dry season. Livestock body condition has deteriorated as a result of reduced pastures, while some areas have experienced exceptionally poor crop harvests, resulting in rising levels of food insecurity.
Somalia

On 20 July 2011, the United Nations declared a state of famine in parts of southern Somalia, with a likely risk of this spreading further across southern Somalia. The total failure of the Deyr (October to December 2010) and poor performance of the Gu (April to June 2011) rains resulted in crop failure, reduced labour demand, poor livestock conditions and excessive animal mortality. The decline in cereal availability and ongoing trade restrictions pushed local cereal prices far above average, causing a sharp deterioration in the livestock-to-cereal/wage-to-cereal terms of trade and reducing purchasing power across all livelihood zones.

CURRENT SITUATION IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

South Sudan
- Erratic rains and prolonged dry spells have been reported in some states. This could significantly affect anticipated harvests.
- Depleted pastures, due to poor rainfall, have forced herders to migrate with their animals in search of grazing and water. This could increase the risk of outbreaks of violence over access to resources.
- The main impact of the drought in the Horn of Africa is likely to be felt in the rising price of foodstuffs and reduced flows of commodities from Kenya and Ethiopia, as well as Uganda.

Sudan
- Conflict in South Kordofan and along the border with South Sudan has resulted in population displacement, with farmers abandoning their homes and livelihoods, and reduced commodity flows to markets.
- The timing of the violence is of particular concern as it is both the peak agricultural season – meaning farmers are unable to plant at a vital time – and the lean period, leading to higher levels of food insecurity.
- The Greater Darfur area continues to be insecure, with households facing high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition and low levels of food production.
- The chronic food insecurity situations in the eastern Sudanese states of Blue Nile, Red Sea, Gedaref and Kassala has been exacerbated by the current extended dry spell and high food prices, as well as by the crisis in neighbouring areas of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Uganda
- An estimated 600,000 people are moderately food insecure – mainly in Karamoja and Acholi subregions of northern Uganda.
- The drought crisis in the Horn of Africa has had a localized impact in parts of eastern and northern Uganda with late rains delaying planting and therefore lengthening the lean season.
- The main threats to food security are: animal disease outbreaks, transboundary crop diseases, natural disasters, post-conflict recovery, and the risk of increased food exports from food secure areas in Uganda to countries in the region inducing additional price increase, with possible impacts on the food security of the most vulnerable in Uganda itself.

FAO CURRENT ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE DROUGHT

Djibouti
- Five new underground cisterns have been built and are operational (2 in Karta [Arta] and 3 in Alal-Af [Tadjourah]);
- In order to deliver immediate support, a call for re-stocking has been sent and answered (one company per region), and goats and supplementary feed (hay) are currently being collected for redistribution in Dikhil, Arta and Obock;
- A rapid water availability assessment was conducted on 26 July in Alal-Af and Asagueyla;
- Rehabilitation of gardens, wells and basins for fodder and vegetable production will start soon – this will mainly be in the rural north and southwest of the country, although a number of peri-urban farmers will also receive support; and
- A veterinary campaign will commence in the coming days.

Ethiopia
- Distributing vegetable seeds in Amhara, Oromiya, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) and Tigray;
- De-stocking livestock in Borena zone of Oromiya and SNNPR through ECHO- and CERF-funded projects;
- Farmer-to-farmer distribution of cereals and sweet potato cuttings in Amhara, Oromiya, SNNPR and Tigray;
- Fast-growing forage production and distribution of multinutrient blocks for livestock in Afar, Oromiya, SNNPR and Somali Regions;
- Livestock vaccinations to prevent livestock diseases in Amhara, Afar, Oromiya, SNNPR and Tigray Regions;
- Distribution of veterinary drugs and equipment in Amhara, Oromiya, SNNPR, Somali and Tigray Regions;
- Rehabilitation of water points in Borena and Somali Regions; and
- Monthly coordination of the Agricultural Task Forces and dissemination of agriculture and livestock information and response updates.

Kenya

In collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture and of Water and Irrigation, FAO is supporting the Government’s initiative to increase national food production through irrigated agriculture to mitigate drought and rising food prices. Through this initiative, FAO is supporting vulnerable households in marginal areas of eastern Kenya with inputs, particularly seeds and fertilizers (500 tonnes of improved assorted seeds to be distributed through input voucher schemes benefiting 322 groups and 13,000 households in eastern Kenya) for the short rains that begin in October.
FAO is also supporting the rehabilitation of community-based irrigation schemes in Nyanza, Rift Valley and North-Eastern Provinces through:

- improving irrigation infrastructure for seven irrigation schemes in Nyanza, Rift Valley and North-Eastern Provinces to place under production 2 800 acres of unused farm land;
- building the capacity of farmers and farmers’ institutions through farmer field schools (800 beneficiaries in Rift Valley, 500 in Nyanza and 400 in North-Eastern Provinces; and
- providing inputs as start-up production support to vulnerable households in targeted irrigation schemes (13 000 kg of rice seeds, 1 200 bags of fertilizer and 500 l of chemicals, benefiting 1 700 farmers).

**Somalia**

FAO Somalia identified an additional 14 000 cash-for-work beneficiaries in Lower Juba and Lower Shabelle, who are expected to start work on Saturday 7 August. In addition, FAO has:

- launched the procurement process for 1 500 tonnes of maize, 800 tonnes of sorghum, 120 tonnes of sesame seeds, 1 300 tonnes of triple superphosphate fertilizer, and 3 750 tonnes of urea fertilizer; and
- procured veterinary drugs and deployed seven veterinary teams (comprising Puntland veterinary professionals) to carry out animal treatments. The teams began on 18 July and are expected to cover seven districts of Puntland during August.


![Delivery amounts 2006–2010](image)

**FAO PRIORITIES IN DROUGHT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES**

- providing farmers and herders in Somalia with the cash they need to buy food for their families through cash-for-work programmes
- safeguarding the remaining assets of drought-affected herders through animal health support
- enhancing local skills and capacities to overcome drought-related crises through training in improved production practices
- scaling-up the distribution of drought-tolerant crop and pasture seeds
- coordinating ongoing drought-related food security and nutrition interventions at the regional, national and community levels in partnership with government institutions, regional bodies, NGOs and other United Nations agencies

**ONGOING PROGRAMME IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES**

**South Sudan**

The main areas of intervention related to food insecurity include:

- working with the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries and other partners in rehabilitation and construction of water dams for livestock and to support small-scale irrigation for vegetable production in Jonglei state;
- working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and other partners in building the capacity of farmers in provision of rural agriculture advisory services using the farmer field school approach; procurement, pre-position and distribution of assorted seeds like sorghum and pulses for the second rain season to mostly returnees and resident farmers whose fields were affected by drought to replant;
- coordination and technical assistance to partners through co-leadership, with the World Food Programme, of the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster;
- assessing and responding to needs through food security monitoring and assessments; (iii) supporting improved crop production; and
- supporting alternative livelihoods, such as fishing.
Sudan
The main areas of intervention related to food insecurity include: (i) crop-based farming interventions; (ii) interventions to safeguard livelihoods of herders and fishing families; (iii) promotion of sustainable resource management; and (iv) coordination of Food Security and Livelihood Sector partners. Of particular interest in future coordination will be the Seed System Security Assessment currently being finalized, as well as the livelihoods study being conducted in Darfur.

Uganda
The main areas of intervention related to food insecurity include: animal health (vaccinations, training of community animal health workers, support to government veterinary offices); skills enhancement through farmer and agropastoral field schools; disaster risk management training for district officials, communities, partners; coordination of food security partners, assessments and analysis (including the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC]).

**FAO REGIONAL COORDINATION ACTIVITIES**

The current situation in the Horn of Africa region is evolving rapidly. Decision-makers therefore require frequent updates on the situation to inform coherent and coordinated actions in response to the crisis. At the regional level, FAO is working to provide an effective, multistakeholder food security and nutrition coordination mechanism for the emergency, response and recovery over the drought cycle in the affected countries. Thus, activities carried out by FAO’s Subregional Emergency Office for Eastern and Southern Africa seek to:

- strengthen the regional food security and nutrition coordination mechanism for information-sharing and response identification and prioritization;

**Activities:** providing technical and coordination support to the regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG); further establishing national coordination mechanisms to ensure a regional harmonized approach to country-level interventions; timely production and dissemination of relevant food security and nutrition information; developing disaster risk management/reduction guidelines and guidance specific to drought in the Horn of Africa; supporting policy development/revision and planning at regional level; emergency gender response training to inform concrete actions to capitalize on and address the different needs of men, women, boys and girls in pastoralist and agropastoralist communities affected by drought.

- provide stakeholders with regular and timely regional, consensus-based food security and nutrition situation and outlook updates and analysis; and

**Activities:** facilitating and supporting the production of regional consensus-based food security and nutrition updates; providing technical and coordination support for IPC analysis in the affected countries; providing technical surge capacity for ad hoc emergency rapid analysis for specific crisis areas facing rapid changes in the food security and nutrition situation.

- identify and prioritize food security and nutrition situation and outlook analysis-based regional responses.

**Activities:** facilitating and supporting the identification, prioritization, advocacy for and dissemination of regional cross-sectoral response guidelines and guidance (e.g. for agriculture, livestock, gender and drought; and globally-recognized standards for humanitarian interventions and responses); and providing technical advice and support for coordinated sectoral interventions.

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**TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO HELP AFFECTED FARMERS, HERDERS AND FISHERS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA**

If increased support is not secured in the next few weeks, the consequences for food security and agricultural livelihoods will be devastating:

- Many farmers will miss the coming planting season and may not be able to harvest again for six months.
- Livestock – an immediate source of food and income for many of those affected by the drought – will die in large numbers due to a combination of livestock disease, starvation and thirst. This of particular concern given the importance of livestock exports for many of those affected by drought.

**FAO SEEKS URGENT DONOR SUPPORT TO:**

- Respond to livestock threats in pastoralist areas through livestock de-stocking, feed and animal health interventions.
- Provide drought-tolerant emergency seeds and planting materials.
- Rehabilitate livestock water points.
- Help those most affected to help themselves out of this crisis by supporting stronger and more resilient livelihoods.
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