

**EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR'S
KEY MESSAGES ON HORN OF AFRICA
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I. Key Messages

1. Increased humanitarian assistance is having a significant impact in the Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle regions in Somalia - these areas remain fragile and are now at pre-famine rather than famine levels. Mass vaccination campaigns have reduced cases of measles by almost 50 per cent, more than 2.5 million people are receiving regular food aid and 1.2 million people have access to clean water. However, we will only be able to sustain these improvements if the current level of assistance continues. Indeed, with the onset of rains, we can expect a rise in disease. Even as we scale up operations, the situation is expected to get worse and the crisis to continue well into 2012.
2. The Horn of Africa continues to face the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, with four million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance just in Somalia. While the *Deyr* rains in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are welcome, especially for crops and livestock, heavy rainfall is hampering aid distribution and disrupting planting. We are concerned by the potential for outbreaks of waterborne and other diseases. We need to continue safe water and sanitation activities including waste disposal and disease surveillance for millions of people to prevent further cases of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea around the region.
3. Malnutrition and mortality rates in many parts of southern Somalia remain the highest in the world. Three million people are in southern Somalia where access remains a major challenge. We need to ensure we can continue providing food, water and sanitation, shelter and emergency nutrition and health care aid well into next year.
4. We are deeply concerned by the impact of the intensification of the conflict in Somalia, which threatens to increase internal displacement and may also reduce the ability of aid organizations to provide life-saving assistance to people coping with famine. The conflict has also led to a sense of rising insecurity in neighbouring Kenya, raising fears of attacks against civilian targets and limiting the ability of humanitarian agencies to help refugees in Dadaab. All parties should refrain from actions that disrupt access and respect international humanitarian law.
5. It is thanks to the generosity of donors that we have been able to save tens of thousands of lives in the past three months. We need to continue to ask for support to ensure that we continue to save lives and reduce dependence on humanitarian aid. We also rely on our local and regional partners to ensure that as many people as possible can be reached.

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