

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

1. I am extremely concerned by the humanitarian crisis in parts of the Horn of Africa. More than 10 million people across Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are in need of urgent humanitarian aid due to drought, conflict and the food crisis. Many need urgent support in their own countries. In addition, thousands of people continue to flee across borders, seeking life-saving help and protection in neighbouring countries. We must take further action now to prevent a deepening of the crisis. This is not yet a famine, and most of the 130 million people in the four countries are not affected. The situation is, however, very severe in the affected areas.

2. Addressing malnutrition, especially among children, is the top priority. In the past two weeks, around 1,800 new refugees have been arriving in Kenya daily; 80 per cent of them are women and children. Approximately half the children arriving in refugee camps from southern Somalia are malnourished, and child deaths have been reported inside Somalia and among new arrivals at the camps. Kenya's Dadaab camps (the largest in the world) are dangerously overcrowded, preventing the proper accommodation of new arrivals. A new camp is needed to reduce the unhealthy and dangerous overcrowding. Agencies are working overtime to register the backlog of new arrivals.

3. The recent announcement from Al-Shabaab that they will re-open areas in Somalia under their control to humanitarian organisations is welcome. We are ready to scale up assistance in southern Somalia but need guarantees that humanitarian workers can operate safely and will not be taxed or targeted. At least 250,000 malnourished children have been cut off from outside help for far too long.

4. While people need food and nutritional help, this is not enough. Those affected need clean water, sanitation, health care, livelihoods support, protection and shelter. More funding is urgently needed. Recent additional donor attention to the crisis is very welcome. The UN's central emergency fund is preparing to allocate up to US\$50 million for drought related activities. Despite this, total unmet humanitarian needs in the region are estimated at over \$700 million.

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The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

Celebrating 20 years of coordinated humanitarian action

6. Drought is a recurring problem in the Horn of Africa. Longer-term measures that reduce vulnerabilities and risk have paid off, but population growth and lack of rainfall remains a constant challenge undermining those gains. Humanitarian partners have committed to a Plan of Action for the Horn of Africa that supports country-led and regional processes that aim to build the resilience of vulnerable people and ensure appropriate scale up of assistance in times of acute crisis. While responding to this current emergency, a twin-track approach that also addresses underlying causes remains a priority.

7. Affected countries themselves must continue to play their part. Kenya is supporting 800,000 of its own people in need and has dropped import duties on food. But national preparedness and risk reduction measures need to increase, to minimise the impact of climate change and increased frequency of environmental crises. Governments can also support relief operations by ensuring streamlined procedures for access and delivery of aid including border formalities.