

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

1. The Horn of Africa is experiencing the most severe food crisis in the world today. Over ten million people in drought-stricken areas of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda are severely affected, with no likelihood of improvement until 2012. This is a 30 per cent increase since the beginning of 2011. The situation is continuing to deteriorate, and the number of people in need will continue to increase. In some areas, 2010-2011 has been the driest period in 60 years.
2. Child malnutrition rates in the worst affected areas are more than double the emergency threshold of 15 per cent, and are expected to rise. Almost half the children arriving from southern Somalia in refugee camps in Ethiopia are malnourished, and those arriving in Kenya are little better. High mortality rates among children are reported. Eleven districts in Kenya also report malnutrition rates above the emergency threshold. Supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes are struggling to keep pace.
3. Food prices have risen substantially, pushing many moderately poor households over the edge. Retail food prices have been rising since the below-normal short rains in late 2010. They are also affected by global increases. The price of grain in affected areas in Kenya is 30 to 80 per cent more than the five year average. In Ethiopia, the consumer price index for food increased by almost 41 per cent in May 2011, as compared to the same month last year. Price increases have now reached other markets in the region. In Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Somalia further price increases are expected, but might ease somewhat following the long rains harvests later in the year.
4. Drought related displacement and refugee flows are increasing. Every month on average in 2011, some 15,000 Somalis flee their country and arrive in Kenya and Ethiopia. While conflict has been a fact of life for them for years, it is the drought that has taken them to breaking point. Many have walked for days, are exhausted, in poor health, desperate for food and water, and arriving in a worse condition than usual. Overcrowding in Dadaab, the largest refugee settlement in the world, is severe and is resulting in refugees not getting the assistance they need. There is reportedly an upsurge in sexual violence against women. The arrival of refugees is also putting

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pressure on limited resources in Ethiopia and Djibouti. In addition, drought is exacerbating school drop out rates, disease prevalence in both humans and livestock, and tension and conflict due to competition over scarce resources.

5. In all affected areas, the response must be scaled up. Governments, donors and aid agencies need to do more to prevent a further deterioration of the situation. On average, aid programmes are less than 50 per cent funded. Humanitarian operations in parts of the region are also limited by insecurity and inadequate access in some areas. We also need to see increased support for longer-term recovery and disaster risk reduction activities in areas that are now experiencing increasingly frequent and devastating droughts in order to promote greater resilience and full recovery.

II. Internal Guidance

If asked only

Q: Why is the response inadequate?

A: This is the case for a variety of reasons: inadequate funding for some interventions; insecurity; restrictions on agency programmes (e.g. in Somalia); lack of access; inadequate funding for recovery/development.

Q: What proportion of the population is affected?

A: In the countries concerned, the majority of the population is not experiencing a humanitarian crisis. However, in Somalia, one in three children is already malnourished, and the number of people affected so far in the Horn of Africa, 10 million, is equivalent to almost the entire population of Tunisia or Czechoslovakia.

Q: Who is responsible?

A: While there are many possible answers to this question, it is clear that those who are suffering and in need of aid are not responsible for their own plight.

Q: Why again? What about preparedness?

A: Various affected countries have made efforts at preparedness or mitigation. However, some are also suffering from a fundamental development deficit, the effects of current or past conflicts, the impact of the global food situation, in addition to environmental degradation and the possible impact of climate change.

Q: How concerned are you about the diversion of assistance in Somalia or elsewhere?

A: We take any allegations about diversion very seriously. All UN agencies have standardized monitoring mechanisms to minimize the possibility of any misuse, and are also obliged to report and be accountable to their donors.

Q: What percentage of the humanitarian appeals actually ends up helping people on the ground?

A: The administrative costs – meaning those costs for administration, maintaining offices, and not going directly to beneficiaries – range from 3 per cent to 13 per cent depending on the organization. For most CAP-funded projects the average is 6 – 7 per cent of the total programme costs. This means that more than 90 per cent of requested funding goes towards implementing programmes which deliver assistance.