

Alert

Somalia

Drought situation in Somalia

Geneva, 08 July 2011

1. Brief description of the emergency

Somalia has been at war since 1991, and despite a number of peacekeeping missions and other efforts that have been undertaken, the country remains gripped with conflict, resulting in thousands of Somalis fleeing to neighbouring countries. In Northern Kenya, the Dadaab complex was established in 1991 to accommodate a total of 90,000 refugees, 20 years later it is hosting over 370,000 refugees. The refugee population in Dadaab has grown by 85 per cent in just three years, putting immense pressure on humanitarian response, environment and straining host community and refugee relations. Services to both the existing refugees and the new arrivals continue to be hampered by the inability of agencies to effectively respond either due to resource limitation or because of structural encumbrances such as the congestion in the camps. The camps have been congested for many years, with two-three families sharing a compound, but since January 2011, new arrivals have been settled outside the camp boundaries where they cannot be guaranteed protection and on areas prone to floods.

2. Impact

Since the Kenya – Somalia border officially closed in 2007, more than 200,000 refugees have arrived, at an average of 5,000 new arrivals registered every month. However, since January 2011 the numbers increased from 5,000 to over 30,000 per month with increasing numbers of 1,300 to 1,600 arriving every day in the first week of July. The total number of refugees registered between January – May 2011 is **46,852**, of which 98% (**45,970**) are from Somalia.

Out of the total 6,548 under five children screened at the reception centers in the three camps during June, a significant number is severely malnourished with medical complications and were referred to supplementary/therapeutic feeding programme and stabilization units in Ifo, Dagahaley and Hagadera hospitals respectively.

Between 6th June and 6th July 2011; the statistics received in the camps are;

- a. New arrivals received at the reception centers: **38, 514 individuals**
- b. New arrivals registered at the registration centre: **20,025 individuals**
- c. The difference between a and b as at 6th July 2011: **18,489 individuals**

3. National and international response

Based on the continued growing number of new arrivals and the alarming levels of malnutrition, UNHCR, WFP, DRA and humanitarian agencies providing services to the refugees in Dadaab came up with a plan to decentralize the reception of the new arrivals to the three camps. This plan is focused on identification and recognition of the asylum-seekers at reception centers in the camps that will provide faster access to medical screening/interventions and easier access to registration at Ifo registration center, which will allow the refugees to access humanitarian assistance as quickly as possible. To implement this plan an Emergency Response Technical Team comprising of all agencies and led by UNHCR was instituted to come up with emergency response activities to address the following gaps.

Identified gaps:

1. The slow pace of registering the refugees rendering persons in the camps who cannot fully receive services such as shelter/tent and therefore most are living in small unsafe makeshifts
2. Agitation and impatience from the new arrivals because of waiting for too long to get proper services
3. It has been noted that some few new arrivals have been going for reception more than once. It is alleged that some do so to get more non food items. It is difficult to identify such persons because they are not in the registration system.
4. As they arrive, most of the new arrivals are very hungry and may require more immediate attention than having to wait for a full day to be registered and then get the non food items and food items. The finger scanning by the DRA/UNHCR is causing more delays and therefore some are only getting registered on the 2nd day
5. Most lack clothing and are bare feet especially after walking for long distances. The Dagaahaley community through the religious leaders have been assisting with clothing and shoes but the gap is still big
6. Malnutrition particularly among the children
7. Water in the areas is also a challenge because the tapstands are few and so they have to walk for over 0.8 km and wait for more than 2 hours to fetch water due to long queues

4. ACT Alliance response & Planned activities

The ACT Somalia Forum members are Norwegian Church Aid, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, FinnChurchAid, Christian Aid and Lutheran World Federation, out of which LWF is not operating inside Somalia, but in Dadaab refugee camps.

ACT members are already heavily involved in the implementation of above mentioned activities. LWF is particularly doing camp management of three Dadaab camps; in addition to this LWF plans to extend its interventions, keeping within the mandates given by UNHCR.

An ACT joint rapid assessment will take place on July 12th to further understand the situation and prioritise needs to be able to respond appropriately. Presently ACT members are supporting coordination and information management to ensure speedy delivery of service to the increasing number of new arrivals. LWF is building a temporary structure where vulnerability assessment will be conducted. LWF will also give support to other agencies supplying water to the camp.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jean-Daniel Birmele, ACT Chief Finance Officer (Jean.Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org).

Thank you for your attention.

For further information please contact:

ACT Regional Programme Officer, Gordon Simango: gsi@actalliance.org (phone +41 22 791 6319)

Until Monday 11 July 2011 For:

ACT Regional Programme Officer, Katherine Ireri: kir@actalliance.org (phone +41 22 791 6040 or mobile phone +41 79 433 0592)

or

ACT Deputy General Secretary, Rebecca Larson rsl@actalliance.org (phone +41 22 791 6069 or mobile phone +41 79 376 1711)