

Alert

Kenya

Deteriorating Drought Situation in Kenya

Geneva, 11 July 2011

1. Brief description of the emergency

According to a recent UN OCHA report on the current drought situation in the Horn of Africa, 2011 has been the driest year since 1995. Various media organisations including the BBC report the lowest level of rainfall in 60 years. The ACT Kenya Forum (AKF) members have been monitoring the drought situation and its meeting of 6th July, underlined the worrying prevailing situation in the country especially in arid and semi arid areas.

The food security situation has deteriorated for most households. In all the arid and semi-arid regions grazing pastures have dried up. This situation is a result of the failure of the 2011 rains worsened by the unfavorable October to December 2010 rains which severely limited the replenishing of water sources and regeneration of pasture.

The situation has reached a point where communities can no longer survive without external support. Whilst the current emergency is severely felt in North and Eastern Kenya (Marsabit, Moyale, Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, and Turkana), areas reporting serious food deficits include the southeastern marginal districts of Kitui, Makueni, Mwingi, Tharaka and Mbeere and the coastal region to include Malindi, Kwale, Kilifi, and Taita Taveta.

2. Impact

According to the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG), June 2011, approximately 3.0 – 3.5 million people are affected by the drought, and 2.4 million are food insecure (FEWSNET May 2011). Acute malnutrition (GAM) has reached 37% in some parts of north east Kenya, double the 15 % emergency threshold according to FEWSNET, and UN-OCHA reports malnutrition rates of twice normal levels in most of the affected areas.

In addition to food shortages due to failed crops and increasing food prices, and in particular maize (*Kenya's staple food*), the drought is affecting human and livestock water supplies. The number of households requiring water sourced from trucks has increased substantially, particularly in Marsabit,

Mandera, Isiolo, Wajir, eastern southern parts of Turkana and parts of Garissa. Water-related conflicts have been reported in Mandera, Wajir, Isiolo, Tana River, Baringo, and West Pokot.

Depletion of grazing resources has resulted in widespread migration of surviving livestock into areas outside of the pastoral areas, including movement into Uganda from Turkana and West Pokot; into Ethiopia from parts of Marsabit and Moyale; into Isiolo and Meru North, from Moyale, Marsabit, Wajir, Garissa, and Samburu; and toward the mixed farming zones in Tana River, Baringo, and Laikipia. As livestock get weaker and are unable to produce milk, their market value decreases and pastoralists have less income to buy food.

Currently the value of livestock, which is the main asset for many households in the worst affected areas, has depreciated and livestock markets have collapsed. Many people have less purchasing power than before which is compounded by increasing food prices. People's livelihoods have already been destroyed and there is great risk of large scale loss of human life to hunger.

Urgent interventions are required in the areas of food security, water provision, livestock and livelihoods and conflict mitigation.

3. National and international response

On 30 May 2011, Kenyan President, Mwai Kibaki, declared a national drought emergency, mandating the Ministry of Special Programs to urgently distribute food and relief supplies to a targeted 1.7 million people per month in northern and eastern Kenya. The President also directed the Government of Kenya (GoK) Ministry of Finance to facilitate the urgent importation of maize to augment grain reserves. The GoK allocated approximately \$7 million to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and approximately \$12 million to the Ministry of Livestock Development for emergency drought response and pastoralist assistance interventions. On June 14, President Kibaki doubled monthly GoK relief allocations of maize, beans, and rice in response to the increasing impact of the disaster.

The European Commission is giving €5.67 million to address the upsurge of refugees arriving at the Dadaab camp in Kenya. The U.S. Government has provided nearly \$119 million to support drought-affected populations in Kenya. Of the total, USAID/OFDA has provided nearly \$5 million to support agriculture and food security, economic recovery and market systems, humanitarian coordination, nutrition, risk mitigation, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) initiatives.

Other efforts from international humanitarian agencies such as World Food Programme and Oxfam among others are ongoing in various parts of the country.

4. ACT Alliance response

Many of the ACT Forum Kenya (AFK) members are currently involved in various response efforts especially those targeting the provision of relief food, water trucking, constructing and rehabilitating water sources, livestock destocking and limited cash voucher transfer to enable families to access food from local traders, peace building activities, provision of fodder for livestock and destocking.

5. Planned activities

The following are the planned activities agreed by AFK members informed by the needs in the affected areas. AKF is designing a 12-month intervention divided into two parts; 6-month relief

support and 6-months of rehabilitation and recovery activities. These activities include: Emergency food aid including maize milling and beans, cooking oil, supplementary feeding and salt; water for domestic use to include provision of water for vulnerable groups in water-stressed communities, water for domestic use (20L per person per day), jerrycans for water collection for vulnerable groups, and strategic reservoirs such as tanks at schools for community water distribution. To protect livestock, the first three months will cover provision of water and fodder, animal vaccinations, animal branding to reduce conflict as herds mix, and destocking. AFK will also engage in advocacy activities related to its areas of work. For the last six months of the intervention the AFK activities will focus more on recovery and rehabilitation activities.

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.

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