MERCY CORPS RESPONDS TO EPIC HORN OF AFRICA HUNGER CRISIS

The Horn of Africa – a region that includes Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia – is suffering its worst drought in six decades. Both fall and spring rains failed, rivers are at their lowest levels in recent memory and the land is bone dry. Livestock are dying in massive numbers. These extreme conditions, together with food price spikes, inflation and disrupted trade borders, have led to a severe hunger crisis affecting 12.5 million people.

Rural people are fleeing to Mogadishu, desperate for food and water.
Photo: Cassandra Nelson/Mercy Corps

Programs To Help Children and Families
Mercy Corps has been working in the region for years and has teams up and running in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. We are already helping 1,021,148 people in the region survive through emergency food distributions, clean water delivery and cash-for-work activities that allow people to earn much-needed income.

Our programs are under way across the region including our response in Somalia’s capital city, Mogadishu. And new relief programs are in the works. We are focusing our efforts in villages and towns to help prevent people from fleeing in desperation to over-populated camps where their lives will only worsen. In keeping with Mercy Corps’ approach, we are helping communities both survive the massive shock – and build back better.

Ethiopia Crisis Response
• With the drought looming for nearly a year, our team is helping 30,000 Ethiopians gain access to food, water, income, nutrition and health education and better farming resources.
• We have delivered clean water to more than 80,000 people in the Gashamo district of Somali region and installed water tanks for better storage.
• We have provided emergency food distributions – including corn-soy flour and cooking oil – to help feed 41,000 people in the Somali region. We are responding to a sharp spike in malnutrition in the region’s Gashamo district, serving an additional 7,000 people. We also are distributing Plumpy’nut nutritional supplements for infants.
• Our mobile health and nutrition teams in the Somali region have screened 37,000 people for malnutrition. Our clinics give immunizations, food supplies and health advice. They refer the most seriously undernourished to two stabilization centers supported and trained by Mercy Corps.
• Our team has provided 550,000 vaccinations and treatment to help valuable animals survive.
• We are supporting local livestock traders to buy weak cattle, goats and sheep from herders who would lose everything if the animals died. Herders and their families get a fair price for their animals – money that helps them survive.
• We’re helping local people earn an income, despite the drought: We’re training farmers and giving them seeds so they can grow drought-resistant crops; running cash-for-work projects that let people earn a fair wage building projects to help their communities survive the crisis; and giving grants and training to cooperatives of local people to help keep their businesses going.

Kenya Crisis Response
• Mercy Corps has started lifesaving programs in 33 drought-ravaged villages.
• We are helping 195,749 people gain access to water. We’re trucking in hundreds of thousands of liters and we have delivered six 10,000-liter storage tanks.
Where there are existing water systems, we’re bringing in emergency fuel to keep water pumps running for people and animals. So far, we have provided 12 water holes with enough fuel to generate water for 141,838 people.
• We are providing water for 9,000 animals, since rural families too often share the precious water

Last year, Mercy Corps helped 19 million people turn crisis into opportunity.
they have with their valuable livestock.
• In the region of Wajir, we began distributing cash grants totaling $20,000 to over 650 families who badly need the money to buy food.

**Somalia Crisis Response**
• One-third of the population faces starvation.
• Mercy Corps is helping 400,000 Somalis survive, providing water, food and opportunities to earn vital income through cash-for-work projects.
• In Mogadishu we have launched relief efforts to help 15,400 people. We have trucked 924,000 liters of chlorinated water to a camp in the capital.
• In Central Somalia, we launched the Cash-for-Work program, employing more than 640 people to clear roads. This program allows them to earn money to, in turn, provide for their families and aid in local commerce.
• We will distribute kits with pots, utensils, plates and blankets to 2,000 families in displacement camps. We also plan to begin hygiene and sanitation campaigns.
• We began distributing vouchers for 1,000 families to purchase .5 kg of meat per day. This helps increase the protein intake of malnourished families, and supplements the cereals they receive in food aid packages.
• We will construct a water system to supply the medical wards, kitchen and laundry at Mogadishu’s main hospital.
• Our emergency operations build on our strong record of helping people in this war-torn country access food and water and increase their incomes. We’re also working to provide education to Somali children, improve governance and build more peaceful communities.

**How the Horn of Africa Crisis Came About**
The region’s drought crisis has been growing steadily for months. When normal fall and spring rains failed and rivers dropped to historic lows, traditional herders who rely on livestock for their families’ survival saw their animals begin to die of hunger and thirst. Food prices rose, inflation struck and trade was hindered. Tens of thousands of Somalis fled to the border areas of Ethiopia and Kenya in desperation.

**Long-Term Crisis is Expected**
The Horn of Africa drought and hunger crisis is expected to be a growing and a long-lasting disaster, worsening over many months. The crisis is looking to be at least as devastating as – and likely worse than – the 1980s Ethiopia and Sudan drought and famine that killed 1 million people and galvanized Westerners to help via the LiveAid global music event.

**How to Help**
Mercy Corps is now accepting donations to help the people of the Horn of Africa. Your gift to our Horn of Africa Hunger Crisis fund helps meet the needs of families affected by the disaster.

To make a donation online:
https://www.mercycorps.org/donate/fighthunger

To send a donation by mail:
Mercy Corps
Horn of Africa Hunger Crisis/Dept NR
PO Box 2669
Portland, OR 97208

To set up a personal fundraising page:
http://www.mercycorps.org/projects/hornofafrica

For updates on our work in the Horn of Africa:
http://www.mercycorps.org/projects/hornofafrica

**MEDIA INQUIRIES**
Joy Portella
Director of Communications
jportella@sea.mercycorps.org

**Mercy Corps**
45 SW Ankeny Street
Portland, OR 97204
503.896.5000
800.292.3355
mercycorps.org

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