

## 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](mailto:jportella@sea.mercycorps.org)

### Mercy Corps

45 SW Ankeny Street  
Portland, OR 97204  
503.896.5000  
800.292.3355

[mercycorps.org](http://www.mercycorps.org)

Oct. 10, 2011

You must be the change  
you wish to see in the world.

~ Gandhi



Be the change