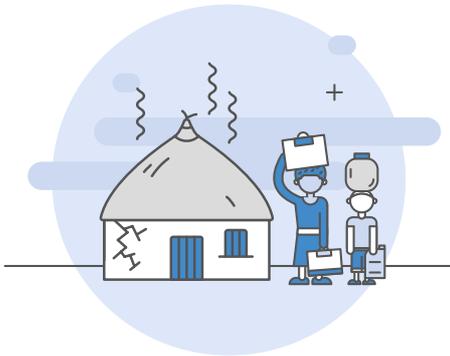


GREATER HORN OF AFRICA: HUMANITARIAN KEY MESSAGES



Photo: UNICEF South Sudan

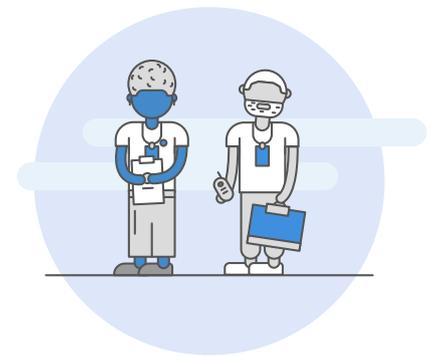
HIGHLIGHTS



The Greater Horn of Africa is experiencing first-hand the complex interplay between the global climate crisis, conflict and violence, with the most vulnerable people across the region suffering the effects.



Rising food and nutrition insecurity may force families to adopt negative coping mechanisms, including school drop-outs and early marriage.



Humanitarian actors are adapting, innovating and supporting action to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change. However, these efforts will take time, and in the interim, urgent and life-saving action is required.

KEY MESSAGES

- 1. Just two years after the devastating 2016/2017 drought, back-to-back droughts and floods in 2019 are driving rising humanitarian needs in the Greater Horn of Africa*.** Rainfall between March and mid-May 2019 was less than 50 per cent of the annual average across the region. Subsequently, heavy rainfall and flooding have impacted Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, affecting nearly 2.8 million people, displacing tens of thousands, and destroying large swathes of crops. While the unusually heavy rains in 2019 have primarily been driven by a strong-positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), the broader climate crisis means that extreme weather events are likely to be the new normal in the Horn.
- 2. The Greater Horn of Africa is experiencing first-hand the complex interplay between the global climate crisis, conflict and violence, with the most vulnerable people across the region suffering the effects.** The region has more than 8.1 million internally displaced people, and hosts more than 4.2 million refugees, most of whom were forced to flee their homes due to violence and conflict but are now also contending with severe weather. Many of the areas hardest-hit by floods in South Sudan—including in Jonglei and Upper Nile—have been conflict hotspots in recent years, meaning that people were already in desperate need before this latest shock. In Somalia, climatic shocks may exacerbate recruitment by extremist groups, according to a recent report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). In Ethiopia, drought and violence have overlapped in key regions, including Oromia and Somali region.

3. **Nearly 22.8 million people are severely food insecure (IPC 3 and above) in Ethiopia (6.7 million people), Kenya (3.1 million), Somalia (2.1 million), South Sudan (4.5 million), Sudan (5.8 million) and Uganda (600,000).** These numbers—in line with seasonal trends—are likely to increase from the beginning of 2020 until the peak of the lean season around the middle of the year, when the full impact of drought, floods and violence in 2019 will be felt.
4. **Millions of acutely malnourished children across the region are in urgent need of treatment.** In Kenya, eight counties have global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates exceeding the emergency threshold of 15 per cent, including three sub-counties (Laisamis, Turkana North and Turkana South) which had GAM rates above 30 per cent. In Ethiopia, there is a very high prevalence of acute malnutrition (above 15 per cent) in three woredas in Somali Region and one woreda in Amhara Region. In Somalia, the nutrition situation is most concerning in Somaliland and Puntland, while risks remain in South Central Region. In South Sudan, 44 counties have GAM rates above 15 per cent, including Renk County, which has a GAM rate of 32.1 per cent. In Sudan, there are 700,000 children severely malnourished.
5. **Consecutive droughts and floods have created conditions conducive to the spread of communicable diseases.** In Ethiopia, chikungunya, cholera, dengue and measles outbreaks all persist. In Kenya, a cholera outbreak is ongoing and cases of leishmaniasis have been reported in four counties in 2019. South Sudan is facing a significant measles outbreak, with an average of 75 cases reported per week compared to 12 during the same period in 2018, and Somalia continues to record new measles cases. These diseases place acutely malnourished children at an even higher risk of death.
6. **Rising food and nutrition insecurity may force families to adopt negative coping mechanisms, including school drop-outs and early marriage.** Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan have already reported significant new displacement due to the drought and floods, and there are concerns regarding increased school drop-outs, in a region where at least 12.4 million children are already out of school, including over 3 million in Somalia, 2.2 million in South Sudan and nearly 3 million in Sudan. Families may resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as child labour and child marriage. Climatic shocks significantly increase protection risks due to family separation, with male breadwinners moving in search of livelihoods, placing children and women at risk of gender-based violence, exploitation and isolation from humanitarian assistance. As highlighted in 2017, droughts in the Horn of Africa tend to increase older people's vulnerabilities, negatively affect their traditional roles and increase the household burdens they face. In the face of increasing shocks, people with disabilities are often marginalized and may be literally left behind.
7. **Building on lessons learned, humanitarian actors in the Horn of Africa are adapting, innovating and supporting action to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.** Cash is now a major modality in humanitarian response, empowering families, restoring livelihoods and helping communities to overcome shocks. At the same time, the vital role of local actors in humanitarian response has been better acknowledged and promoted. Greater funding is now channelled to local organizations and their work has been given increased visibility and recognition, although much more remains to be done. Protection has been made increasingly central in responses across the region, including through conflict-sensitive approaches. Investments have also been made in building resilience through promoting alternate livelihoods, raising awareness of practices harmful to the environment (e.g. charcoal production and trade), enhancing animal health, supporting community-managed savings and loans groups, and enabling longer-term access to clean water.
8. **However, these efforts will take time, and in the interim, urgent and life-saving action is required to buffer the most vulnerable people across the region against the cascading shocks they are facing.** In a region where the vast majority of people live well below the poverty line and many have been forcibly displaced, building resilience is a multi-year (and likely decade-long) endeavour. It is therefore critical that additional funding be allocated both to pursue longer-term action, and at the same time to enable humanitarians to respond to the most urgent needs of families and communities who are bearing the brunt of repeated shocks.
9. **Given the complexities and dangers of humanitarian operations in the region, funding must be made available to enable aid organizations to fulfil their duty of care to their staff.** Implementing safety and security measures—as well as supporting humanitarian organizations' capacity to negotiate access and build community acceptance—can be expensive, but is absolutely critical to the humanitarian response. Without this, aid workers are less likely to be able to access key areas affected by violence and/or conflict. As is well-known, inability to respond in conflict-affected areas can be the tipping point between a major food emergency and the potential for famine.

* For the purposes of these Key Messages, the Greater Horn of Africa includes: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.