**Facts & Figures**

Almost 17 million people in the Horn of Africa affected by food insecurity & water scarcity

10.7 million people need urgent food assistance: 5.6 million people in Ethiopia, 2.9 million in Somalia & 2.2 million in Kenya (source: various UN, govt.)

Over 2.3 million refugees in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia & Uganda (source: UNHCR)

**European Commission humanitarian assistance in 2016:** €267 million
**Initial 2017 budget:** €132 million

**Total EU Funding (Member States & Commission):** over €1 billion since 2011

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**Key messages**

- **Severe drought** has taken hold in parts of the Horn of Africa (HoA) region following a long dry spell. Some affected areas in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia were yet to recover from the 2015-16 El Niño- drought when rains failed again. 16.8 million people across the region face food and water shortages and it is predicted that the next rainy season, from March to May, will again disappoint. 10.7 million people need urgent food assistance.

- The accumulated effects of consecutive failed rains in 2015 and 2016 are being compared to conditions in 2010-11 when 260 000 Somalis died and hundreds of thousands sought refuge in Ethiopia and Kenya. The UN has issued a famine warning for Somalia where more than half the population is now food insecure. Kenya has declared the drought a national disaster and has appealed for support.

- Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda are among the world’s top 10 refugee host countries. Uganda is now the largest refugee recipient country in the region with over 1 million people, mainly fleeing the violence from South Sudan. Most refugees have fled conflict, hunger and water scarcity in Somalia and South Sudan. The number of South Sudanese refugees in the region has passed the 1.5 million mark. 900 000 Somali refugees live in camps and urban centres in Ethiopia and Kenya.

- Kenya has announced its intention to close the Dadaab refugee camp where Somali refugees have been hosted for over 25 years. 260 000 Somalis still reside there today. With 1.1 million internally displaced, refugees from Yemen and insecurity across swathes of the drought-affected area, conditions in Somalia are however not conducive for a mass return.

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Queuing at a water point in a camp for internally displaced Somalis, Banadir region ©Concern
Humanitarian situation and needs

The prolonged drought is particularly severe in Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia as well as northern Kenya and parts of its coast. Some 17 million people are affected by food insecurity and water shortages which are expected to worsen in the coming months as the dry season progresses. The March-to-May rainy season is expected to yield below-average rains, dampening prospects of good harvests. Water levels are fast declining and are at an all-time low in certain areas. Vegetation is sparse. Livestock deaths, high food prices and reduced incomes are being reported.

The drought comes on the heels of the erratic weather occasioned by the El Niño weather phenomenon in 2015-16. In Ethiopia, it left 10 million people in need of food aid and prompted the biggest drought response operation in the country’s history. Although livestock died massively, a large-scale famine was avoided. Today, some of the same areas continue to experience drought after four consecutive failed rainy seasons.

With water points fast drying up pastoralists are trekking further afield in an effort to keep their animals alive. Competition for pasture and water increases the risk of conflict between different communities. The lack of water also drives people to unsafe water sources and contributes to poor hygiene. Water-borne diseases, including cholera and acute watery diarrhoea, are a major concern. Over 45 000 suspected cases were recorded in 2016, and active transmission is ongoing in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. When animals die, children are deprived of milk and become more prone to illnesses and malnutrition in a region with already high acute malnutrition. Assistance is required to provide acutely malnourished children with life-saving treatment in 2017, 3 million and 363 000 children in Ethiopia and Somalia respectively.

Somalia is facing drought conditions comparable to 2010-11, which led to declared famine, with up to 260 000 deaths and hundreds of thousands of refugees. Emergency financing and early action are needed to prevent a similar scenario unfolding. Emergency food assistance, including cash transfers, is a priority in Somalia and in the drought-affected areas of Ethiopia and Kenya. Ensuring access to safe water and preventing livestock deaths are also vital, together with programmes addressing malnutrition. Increasing numbers of Somalis, including a high percentage of severely malnourished children, are crossing into Ethiopia.

Aid for the drought-affected people is complicated by the remoteness of certain areas as well as ongoing violence in Somalia. The conflict threatens the independent and impartial delivery of humanitarian assistance. All parties to the conflict are therefore urged to provide unimpeded access to people in need.

The Horn of Africa hosts 2.3 million refugees. Ongoing crises in Yemen, South Sudan and Somalia account for the majority of refugees. As there is no end in sight to the conflicts in these countries, which are at the same time experiencing severe food shortages, the mass return of refugees is not an option. On the contrary, more displacement and refugee flows are to be expected. A long-term effort on the part of the international community is needed to help the host countries cater for refugees’ basic needs and, where possible, offer them more long-term prospects.

The European Union's Response

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) has provided over €1 billion to its partners in the Horn of Africa since 2011. In 2016 alone, the European Commission allocated over €267 million in humanitarian aid, including a €163-million package for countries in the Horn most affected by El Niño. In 2017, an initial budget of €132 million has been allocated to the region.

These humanitarian funds are aimed at delivering food assistance, health and nutrition care, clean water, sanitation and shelter to those whose lives are threatened by drought and conflict. Across the Horn of Africa, providing assistance and protection to uprooted populations, be they internally displaced, refugees or returnees, is a priority. In

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addition, increased emergency financing is now required on the part of all donors to allow for immediate action and avoid famine.

The European Commission funded food assistance is delivered partly in-kind, but also increasingly through cash where markets are well-stocked. The trucking of water to communities without any water source has become a necessity in some areas. ECHO also supports the treatment of severely malnourished children across the region.

In Ethiopia and Kenya’s arid lands, the European Commission is funding consortia made up of different partners, each with a specific expertise. The aim is to help strengthen the resilience of communities against recurrent drought and other climate hazards. Different types of complementary assistance are provided, ranging from early response mechanisms in case of drought or animal disease outbreaks, e-vouchers for water or other goods, the promotion of better linkages with governmental disaster departments, and the creation of livelihood opportunities.

In both Ethiopia and Kenya, the Commission’s humanitarian and development aid departments are striving at a more coherent aid approach for acute situations that have become longer-term or predictable, for instance recurrent drought or protracted refugee situations. Humanitarians helping the most vulnerable need to contribute to longer-term resilience strategies, while development partners need to take into account the needs of the most vulnerable groups, including refugees and internally displaced people.

With the high numbers of forcibly displaced people in the Horn of Africa, a priority is to help them to become less dependent on aid and more self-reliant. All returns of refugees to their home countries should be voluntary, informed, safe, dignified and sustainable.

**Examples of humanitarian projects in the Horn of Africa**

In Ethiopia’s Siti zone, one of the hardest hit by the drought, 70 000 people were displaced in 2016, after water points dried up and people lost their livestock. OXFAM has worked to provide communities with water by digging and repairing dozens of water boreholes. Each borehole serves an average of 5 000 people. 60% of the water is used to keep the animals alive. The organisation also trucked water as a last resort to communities without any other water source and supported 3 800 households with animal feed.

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The European Commission supports WFP’s cash transfer programme to refugees in Uganda. Cash transfers were first piloted in Uganda in 2014. Initially refugees were hesitant, but cash transfers have gained popularity. With cash in hand, refugees are able to buy their preferred food, which gives them more choice and enhances their sense of dignity. Cash transfers also reduce the selling of food aid items at throw-away prices and stimulate the local markets. The European Commission is committed to using the most effective and efficient system in the provision of humanitarian assistance. ©EC/ECHO/Bertha Wangari
A consortium of three NGOs lead by Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (VSF) is working to strengthen the resilience of communities in five counties in Kenya’s arid north. The programme helps communities prepare for and deal with emergencies such as drought, natural disasters and livestock disease outbreaks. The pastoralist Turkana people are given tools to prevent outbreaks and monitor the health of their livestock through a network of 'community disease reporters' who are linked up with the local veterinary services. In addition to creating better linkages between communities and local authorities, the programme also helps health facilities to better respond to spikes in acute malnutrition. ©EC/ECHO/Anouk Delafortrie

Humanitarian access in the Hiraan region of Somalia is constantly hampered, and the area has been plagued with critical levels of malnutrition for many years. With EU support, thousands of children under-five, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women, received treatment and care for malnutrition. Initially, more than 10 000 children suffered from severe acute malnutrition and more than half of them would most likely have died without treatment. Save the Children also responded to worsening food insecurity in the districts of Beletweyne and Mataban. Cash transfers for food and other basic needs during the extended hunger gap benefited 4 000 families, which prevented more children from becoming undernourished. ©UNICEF/Sebastien Rich

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