

Real Time Evaluation of the Drought Response in the Horn of Africa

13/08/2006 – 20/10/2006
REGIONAL SYNTHESIS

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Regional map

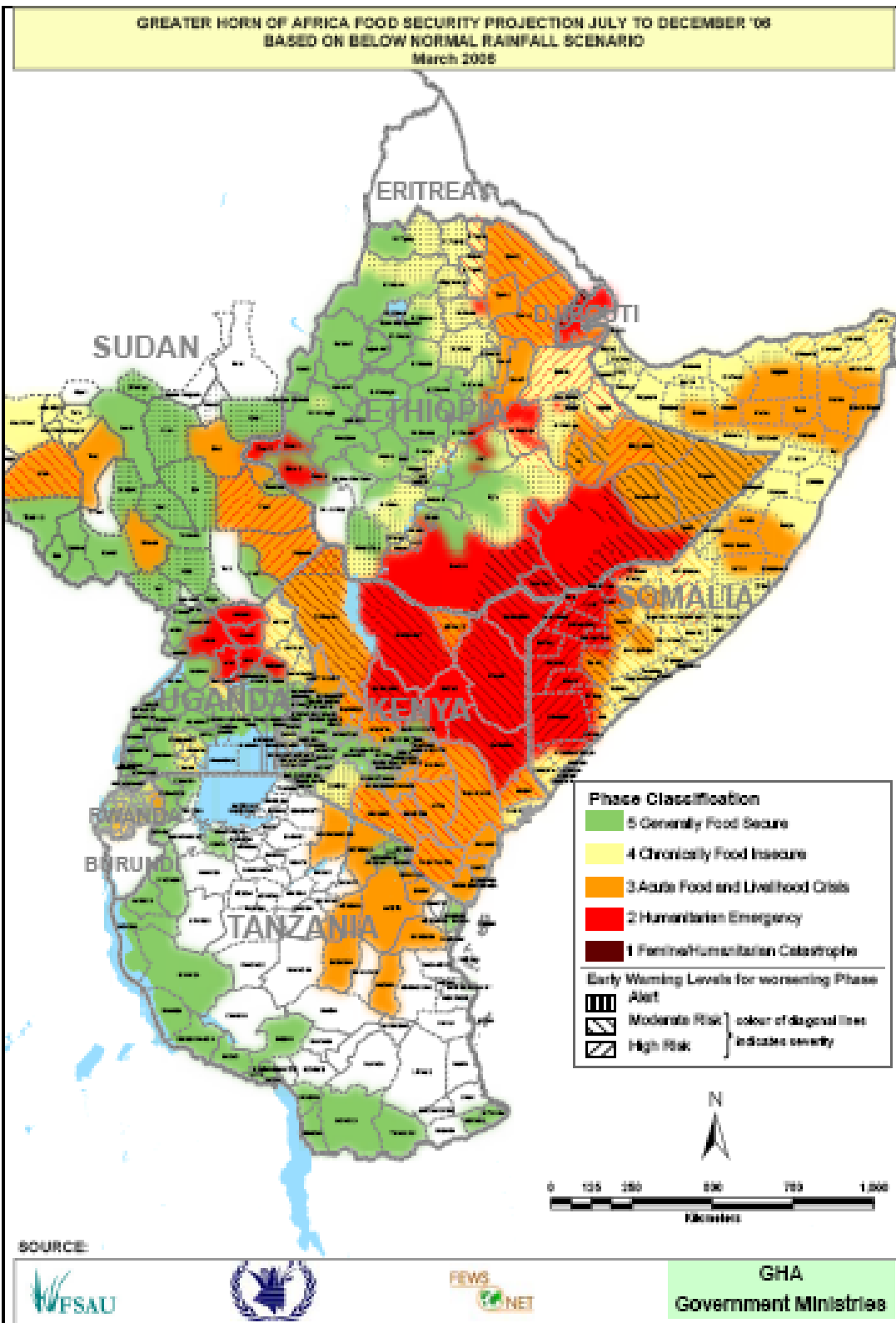


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1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings	Recommendations
Emergency Response	
Disaster Prevention and Preparedness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countries with viable governments were well prepared to scale up commodity-based responses, depending on pre-existing mechanisms; responses to health and nutrition, water and sanitation and livelihood-based needs were largely ad hoc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant United Nations agencies, NGOs and donors should work with governments in the region to promote existing initiatives toward the establishment of contingency plans and related funding. This includes tabling of the Kenya National Disaster Management Policy and a review of the Ethiopia National Disaster Prevention & Preparedness Fund. [ALL]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparedness for rapid onset disasters was very patchy in the region. Local Red Cross Societies played a critical role as ‘first responders’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of national Red Cross societies in DPP should be supported by other agencies and national governments in the Region as well as by the Red Cross movement; this will include training and full government support to the dissemination of IHL and humanitarian principles. [ALL STAKEHOLDERS]
Early Warning Systems	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems in the region are effectively collecting and disseminating a wide range of EW data, but there is still inadequate information exchange between systems and across the region on population and livestock movements as well as trade and commodity flows. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more institutionalized approach to EWS between countries and adoption of a classification system within the region that draws on a common set of indicators and methodologies and flags humanitarian emergencies and livelihood threats as they develop/happen. [DONORS, GOV'TS AND UN]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessment data in EWS still focus considerably on agricultural variables, exclude settled destitute communities and are not gender sensitive nor are they gender disaggregated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EWS should be modified to include pastoralist, urban and relevant gender-based indicators. [DONORS, GOV'TS AND UN]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutritional assessment of children in pastoral societies is recognized as problematic and collection and analysis of evidence from the Region is underway to improve the use of this information in needs assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutritional assessment systems should be reviewed and, if necessary, modified in light of results from the current meta-analyses. UNICEF should extend its support of this work to include dissemination of these results among all countries of the Horn via national offices in Kenya and Somalia and the ENCU in Ethiopia. [UNICEF & MOHs].
Resource Mobilization	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource mobilization in all recent emergencies has been weighted toward food aid rather than non-food responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash based responses to food insecurity should be piloted in dry areas to determine their relevance and effectiveness in the Horn before the next drought emergency. [DONORS, NGOS]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society/ the private sector are now playing a critical role in resource mobilization during emergency responses, particularly in Somalia and Kenya. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN and civil society organizations, including the media, should expand their fund raising strategies to target key civil society elements in affected countries and among their overseas populations. Their role should be explicitly acknowledged and methods sought to include it in the larger appeal framework. [UN, NGOs, media, government]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donors are recognizing early and flexible funding needs as well as the primary importance of contingency funding mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donors should consider and pilot alternatives to appeal-based funding including block grants, funding of a national contingency fund (when established), and flexible drought

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The appeal process risks becoming institutionalized as a funding mechanism for a broad range of needs, limiting its usefulness in emergency response 	<p>mitigation funding [DONORS]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Options for CERF like proactive funding mechanisms for NGO should be explored and donors should ensure that their support to the UN CERF would not dry up funds required for non UN humanitarian action.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The CERF has been most effective as a gap filling funding mechanism in situations where recipients had either contingency funds or pre-positioned resources which could be replenished when CERF funding became available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Approval and allocation processes for CERF funding should be expedited. [UN Humanitarian Coordinator]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The HRF has been a highly effective funding mechanism for NGOs, both local and international. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The HRF should be established in Kenya [UN OCHA]
Coordination	
<p>The cluster approach had some limited value in Somalia (particularly mobilizing resources) but placed considerable demands on participating organizations; it was not implemented in other countries of the region, where established government driven coordination mechanisms existed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The cluster approach should be extended with care and full cognizance of the guidance to leave in place existing mechanisms and integrate as appropriate. [UN Humanitarian Coordinator.]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National level coordination mechanisms were critical to the responses in Kenya and Ethiopia, where these functioned at all levels, from central government to the districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ National and UN-based coordination mechanisms should define a role for community-based local level coordination mechanisms and actors. The livelihoods approach being developed in Ethiopia may provide a local mechanism for this. [GOV'T, NGOS]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Coordination continued to be a 'top-down' process, with information flows largely from periphery to centre. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ OCHA filled gaps in the information gathering and coordination functions at different levels in Ethiopia and Somalia. 	
Quality of the Response	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Humanitarian access is in many areas still a problem due to logistical and security issues. The UN agencies are specially paralyzed by DSS procedures and decisions, which tend to bunkerized the UN agencies in the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Revision of DSS way of work and the development of inter-agency and agency specific strategies for acceptance is essential.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Response was led by food aid; other responses were patchy in quality, timeliness and coverage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Internal advocacy should be undertaken by donors on the funding balance, particularly with regard to non-food mitigation and vulnerability reduction. [DONORS]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ More emphasis was placed on livelihood support (in the agriculture and livestock sectors) through the FAO regional Plan of Action, although resource constraints and timing limited its effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Other sectoral strategies for relief and recovery which include the participation of a wide range of actors should be developed at regional level in consultation with donors in preparedness for future interventions [UN, NGOS, DONORS]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Nutrition responses were largely reactive, dealing with symptoms of a broad failure of health services for women and children as much as lack of food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Funding for nutrition responses should always include accompanying support for health services and closely targeted food aid; implementing agencies should ensure that their protocols for nutritional programmes include collaboration with the MOH, UNICEF and WHO. [DONORS, UN, NGOS]

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Water and sanitation responses were ad hoc, more sustainable in better resourced situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ National DPP plans should follow locally developed standards by adapting international standards to local situations. In the wat/san sector, programming should go beyond fulfilling minimum needs to focus on sustainability and community participation. [GOV'T]
<p>Reducing Vulnerability: Longer Term Responses</p>	
<p>Recommendations</p>	
<p>Where national plans exist, these should be adopted and funded, including the National Policy for Arid and Semi-Arid Lands in Kenya and the accelerated extension of the PSNP to vulnerable areas in Ethiopia, with an emphasis on the long term goal of sustainable livelihoods. Enhanced health and education services should be included in any long term plan. These plans will address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock marketing and access to income sources for agro-pastoral populations • Infrastructural development • Essential services, especially health care and education • Alternative livelihoods for settled populations in dry areas • Environ preservation and management of natural resources 	

2. CONTEXT

2.1. The regional context

Most of the area affected by the 2005-2006 drought is classified as arid or semi-arid. It comprises widespread pastoral and agro pastoral systems as well as more classical farming systems in riverine areas and a larger fringe of rain fed agriculture with low and unpredictable productivity. In the entire affected area, pressure on natural resources due to population growth and environmental degradation are overwhelming the carrying capacities of these ecosystems. Deforestation for marginal cultivation, trade in wood and charcoal, overgrazing around watering points and small urban settlements, and depleted or polluted underground water are frequent features in the Horn.

Highly resilient pastoral population have been able over centuries to extract calories and money from the shrubs and thorns of arid lands through careful management of livestock and water. Camels living on thorny shrubs and extremely resistant small ruminants are able to survive in very difficult circumstances as long as they can follow the water and grass frontier. Mobility has been an essential ingredient of their productive processes. It is now limited by international borders, inter-clan conflicts and competition between farming communities and pastoral groups over riverine grazing areas, now being turned into agricultural fields. Agro-pastoral and farming communities, with different but more limited coping mechanisms, are also very vulnerable to water deficits.

Chronic poverty is widespread in the entire drought affected area with an ongoing process of destitution; this drought is just a peak in a series of bad years. Disasters of all kinds are a regular occurrence in these arid and semi-arid lands: droughts, floods, animal and human epidemics and international and local conflicts increase vulnerability in areas where survival is an everyday challenge.

In countries with stable governments, investment in the peripheral and semi-arid areas has been neglected and these areas have been neglected and marginalised over decades. The current renewed interest in arid and semi-arid lands brings about some cause for optimism, but the remoteness and toughness of the environment have had a disincentive effect, limiting trade and other contacts, and making it difficult to retain qualified staff in these difficult duty stations.

Local resource-based confrontations and internal conflicts can easily become regional in view of the traditional cross-boundary relations and movements. Political destabilisation in one part of the Horn can easily impact in other parts: the ongoing instability in Somalia illustrates these effects among countries of the region. This is not without repercussions on the food security situation and on the capacity of aid actors to respond to drought and flood induced crises.

The drought of 2005-2006 affected all countries of the region. Its epicentre was in northern Kenya (see Annex 1: Map of the Horn), and its impact was exacerbated in Somalia by civil conflict. Livestock migrations from both countries into Ethiopia strained already weakened livelihood systems.

With the degradation of the natural environment and economic pressures, there has been a growing trend away from pastoralism, leading destitute households without other resources to settle in peri-urban areas and trading centres where they can access aid and basic services.

2.2. The Real Time Evaluation

The Real Time Evaluation process was initiated in May by UNICEF and members of the UN system interested in capturing a quick initial vision of what went well and what went less well in the response to the 2005-2006 drought in the Horn of Africa. The involvement of a maximum group of stakeholders in the process took some time. Governments of the region felt they would benefit from the RTE, despite some early reluctance. A team of three independent international consultants and three national experts was recruited. The field process started in mid August with visits to Somalia (Aug. 16-23), with time in Nairobi with UN, donor and NGO staff, Ethiopia (Aug. 31 – Sept. 15 and Kenya (Oct. 1st – 21st). This course of events, put back a few months from what would have been the ideal timing of an RTE, raised of course a few questions on the RTE nature of the exercise.

Field visits were made to several locations of South Central Zone of Somalia, to Somali Region and Borena Zone of Ethiopia and to Marsabit and Mandera Districts of Kenya. Selection of field sites was guided by UN agencies in-country, and was somewhat opportunistic. In Somalia, safe access was a key factor, and UN and other international personnel have now been withdrawn from all the areas visited. In all three countries the team spent time and discussed issues with government authorities (in Kenya and Ethiopia), community leadership (in Somalia), the NGO and donor communities and the Red Cross movement, as well as the UN system in country.¹ At the end of each country visit, a national level feed back session was organised in order to present the team's main findings and recommendations and receive feedback. At the end of the process, the team presented its regional findings at the African Drought Risk Reduction conference organised by UNDP and UNEP in Nairobi.

The RTE took place under a series of constraints, some typical of 'real time' processes and some specific to the exercise itself. An RTE typically achieves a balance between the time available – normally short - the timing requirements – quick feed back - and the depth of the analysis requested – rigour but with rapid delivery of the conclusions and recommendations having priority over providing evidence for each. It should normally take place during the peak of activities, gathering information through observation, interviewing and group discussions. This evaluation took place while many of the acute emergency related activities were either being terminated or redirected. While in an RTE priority should be given to rapid injection of ideas and fresh views on an ongoing operation for staff too busy to reflect on their work, by the time of this evaluation many people were back to routine work, processes were in place, many lessons extracted and positions established.

An RTE usually deals with the ongoing activities and their accompanying processes, not with the root causes or long term strategies for vulnerability reduction. The TOR for this mission were wide ranging with complex expectations, reflecting the multi-agency nature of the evaluation management committee and the expected feed back to the IASC, where views may diverge on several issues of the UN Humanitarian Reform. To understand these issues once on site, the RTE team needed to become familiar with a very large amount of documentation - over one gigabyte – on the background and current situation and on UN operations in three countries.

Other constraints were more typical of 'real time' processes. Time was very short: the mission allowed 5 – 11 days for each field visit and 2-3 days for preparation and presentation of preliminary findings after leaving the field on each of three visits. Field locations were limited by security concerns (Somalia), flooding (Ethiopia) and the availability of UN staff on the ground. These factors led to partial and selective coverage of the affected areas, while limited time posed challenges in absorbing the large quantity of background information sufficiently to utilize it

¹ UN, NGO and donor offices serving Somalia were visited in Nairobi.

effectively during the exercise. Options were limited for triangulation where information was inconsistent, while pressure was present to reach evidence-based conclusions rapidly.

The RTE process was steered by an interagency committee chaired by UNICEF (which provided substantial financial and logistical support to the process) and comprising representatives of OCHA, FAO, WHO and UNFPA, who provided feedback on findings electronically throughout the evaluation. Three country reports and a synthesis report have been prepared. The mission received full support from UN agencies and national authorities in the field. NGO and Red Cross colleagues also spared no effort to respond to the many questions raised by the RTE team.

3. 2005-2006 DROUGHT: Background to the Responses

The Horn of Africa has been the focus of many large scale humanitarian aid operations and there is a committed group of national officials and local and international agencies with a wealth of experience in the region. This has been particularly important in shaping the response during the period under review.

In Kenya and Ethiopia the national response was relatively rapid, but patchy, limited in scale due to the weakness of contingency funding, and dependent on existing resources and infrastructure. Emergency water interventions and de-stocking programmes did begin as early as December 2005 in some locations on a small scale.

The response to the drought affecting the Horn of Africa in 2005-2006 has been most significant in relation to food aid. With established national programmes – relief aid and the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, and access to the Strategic Grain Reserve and the ongoing WFP EMOP in Kenya – scaling up was rapid. The food component of the response was greater than non-food activities, both in absolute terms and in the proportional response to funding appeals, although the presence of the PSNP reduced the size of Ethiopia's relief food budget.²

The whole region represents a logistical challenge to emergency response. Roads are often in very bad condition, impassable during rains, and the distances are vast. The security conditions are difficult due to regular conflicts in these areas. The transaction costs to properly establish a programme and ensure the appropriate links with the different stakeholders are extremely high and this was raised in all three countries, but particularly in Somalia, as a reason for the limited coverage of interventions.

4. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND EARLY WARNING

4.1. Disaster prevention and preparedness (DPP) mechanisms

The whole region has been regularly subject to disasters and it is not surprising that governments of the countries of the Horn have developed quite sophisticated disaster preparedness policies. In Kenya these have taken the form of two legislative initiatives: a national disaster management policy and a national policy for the development of arid and semi-arid lands, both awaiting parliamentary action. In Ethiopia the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPPA) manages a national mechanism for ensuring timely response, including extensive guidance to implementers on policy. There is also a long term interest in the international community in DPP in the Horn and the Nairobi office of the International Secretariat for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) is

² See *Saving lives through livelihoods: critical gaps in the response to the drought in the Greater Horn of Africa*, HPG Briefing Note, May 2006, Figure 2: Funding appeals and contributions, for a comparison of food and non-food funding levels in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia.

very active in this sector. The Humanitarian Office of the European Commission ECHO is currently setting up budget lines to support DPP through its partners, while USAID disburses funds earmarked for famine prevention.

The disaster preparedness policies of regional governments have two key elements:

- the need to have contingency plans – ensuring that they are sufficiently diverse and flexible to be able to cope with the multitude of disasters regularly affecting the region, and that they are revised regularly;
- the related need to have contingency funds readily available for implementation of responses (see following chapter on resource mobilisation).

The effective functioning of EWS and DPP depend on these two elements; well resourced contingency plans greatly increase the effectiveness of responses.

The mitigating effect of ongoing relief and recovery interventions, established before or during the drought of 2005 should not be minimized. Throughout the region, national level structures are in place to respond to evolving crises through enhanced data collection for EW (Somalia) and mechanisms for commodity management and distribution and accelerated response to water needs (Kenya). The presence of large scale food aid programmes in all three countries ensured that a scaled up response could be implemented relatively rapidly.

The Red Cross as the national level ‘first responder’ and in its international role through the International Committee, is a key actor in the region. The activities of national Red Cross societies, the International Federation and the ICRC provide very important disaster preparedness and response measures in various sectors, including conflict situations, with dissemination of International Humanitarian Law and other protection activities.

4.2. Early Warning Systems (EWS)

3.2.1 Early Warning Data

EWS have long been operating in the different countries of the region through the Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) in Somalia/Nairobi, the Early Warning Department of the DPPA in Ethiopia and the Arid Lands Resource Management Programme (ALRMP) in Kenya. These systems all currently assess food security through a broad livelihoods analysis providing good opportunities for information sharing and broader cross-border analysis. The systems also draw upon climatic (satellite generated information on rainfall and vegetation), agronomic (crop status), economic (market prices) and behavioural (movements of people and livestock) indicators, supplemented in the case of Somalia and Kenya by sentinel site monitoring of the nutritional status of small numbers of children. The EWS operate well, providing critical and timely data across sectors, collected with a high degree of sensitivity. There is a concern, however, that data based on historic projections or qualitative analysis may have a large margin of error, not always understood by users in the field. The nutritional data are difficult to link with livelihood-based food security indicators, a limitation acknowledged in both Ethiopia and Kenya.³ The issue of most appropriate methodologies and standards for nutritional assessment of under fives in pastoral societies has arisen in all three countries. Questions about the use of standard WfH and MUAC measurements are currently the focus of further study. Given the reliance of all EWS data, despite their relative ‘lateness’ this question has wider implications for drought response

³ Ongoing exercises such as the Demographic and Health (Kenya and Ethiopia) and Multiple Indicator Cluster (Somalia) surveys are providing critical explanatory data on factors related to nutrition and nutritional status in a replicable way.

The issue of most appropriate methodologies and standards for nutritional assessment of under fives in pastoral societies has arisen in all three countries. Questions about the use of standard WfH and MUAC measurements are currently the focus of further study. Given the reliance of donors on child malnutrition data to trigger responses, despite their relative 'lateness', data quality has wide implications for drought response.

Concerns were raised in the region about the apparent biases of EWS toward rural and agricultural livelihood systems and their disregard of gender issues. Given the importance of migration to settled areas as a coping mechanism and the critical role of women in household livelihoods, these gaps are important, and limit the effectiveness of EWS.

Taking the Horn as a whole the regional level is essential to effective early warning, but probably not sufficiently addressed, apart from data collected by experts in remote sensing and climatic data. Cross border movements of human, herds and cereal products are an important feature of pastoral and agro-pastoral areas and an integral part of their coping mechanisms. They often represent the first indications of expected changes in conditions and are therefore central to regional early warning systems. In this drought, movement of livestock from Kenya into Ethiopia were noted early.

3.2.2 Dissemination Mechanisms

Early warning data, when available, was disseminated quickly to donors and NGOs. By late in 2005 awareness of conditions was high in the region. The delays in response were not due to lack of early information, but to operational, policy and political constraints. These included earmarks (food aid), security concerns (SCZ of Somalia), lack of viable partners able to respond immediately (Somalia and Kenya) and the need to go for 'safe' options (food aid) rather than mitigation responses with less assured results.

Regional advisors to the major donor countries have nevertheless taken a strong interest in strengthening the early warning component, and in utilizing tools like the Integrated Food Security & Humanitarian Phase Classification (IPC) system of the FSAU, to translate and communicate comparable analysis and information on all countries of the Horn. Monitoring of cross border movements poses a particular challenge, given the security conditions in the region. This is done effectively in disease surveillance⁴ with WHO assistance, and donors have invested in cross border trade monitoring in the region in the past. The political acceptability and the feasibility of a regional application of the FSAU system remains to be seen, in view of the position and roles of the different stakeholders in the development of EWS in the region

The top heavy structure of information systems, in which information moved from the local level to the capital (or to Nairobi, in the case of Somalia) with little feedback provided to the location where decisions were being made on the ground, was, however, noted. Given the security situation in Somalia improved two-way communication is more important than ever. Poor or non-existent telecommunications in these areas greatly increase the effort needed to transfer information.

⁴ The recent rapid detection of a case of polio (AFP) in a refugee population in northern Kenya indicates the effectiveness of these activities.

5. RESOURCE MOBILISATION

The contributions of individual citizens and the private sector to early response are becoming extremely important in the Horn. The responses of the Somali Diaspora⁵ and business community, of the populations of cities affected by flash floods in Ethiopia and the mobilisation of domestic resources in Kenya show the potential for civil society to mobilise significant resources quickly in response to an emergency. The press, too, played a critical role in Kenya of sounding the alarm on conditions in the drought affected areas to ‘jump start’ the political process.

In Ethiopia and Kenya, there are national contingency funding mechanisms in the annual budget, but they are small and are not optimally used. There are also national grain reserves, used in the response to the drought of 2005-2006. In the absence of contingency plans, early warning systems do not have direct links to the triggering of contingency funding, and the team could not find evidence of the use of these funds in either country.

In both countries there are also strong government led processes producing national appeals, through joint efforts by government agencies and the UN system. While the production of national appeals may be cumbersome and vulnerable to politicisation, they represent a clear trend toward national ownership over the funding process. In addition to the government appeal, Kenya is represented in the Regional Appeal and coordinates with OCHA on special appeals such as the flash appeal on the Somali refugee crisis in Kenya. In Somalia, in the absence of a government able to undertake this task, there is a full fledged CAP.

Factors affecting the timeliness of appeals included the complexity of the assessment processes, which involved local and national level agencies, civil society organisations, the UN and government. The presence of bimodal rainfall in the countries of the Horn was reported to have prompted donors to wait for the second rains in late 2005, to ensure that both seasons fail before acting. The repetition of appeals – in some cases over 20 –30 years, and their increasing frequency, including mid-year and flash appeals, may be feeding into donor fatigue.

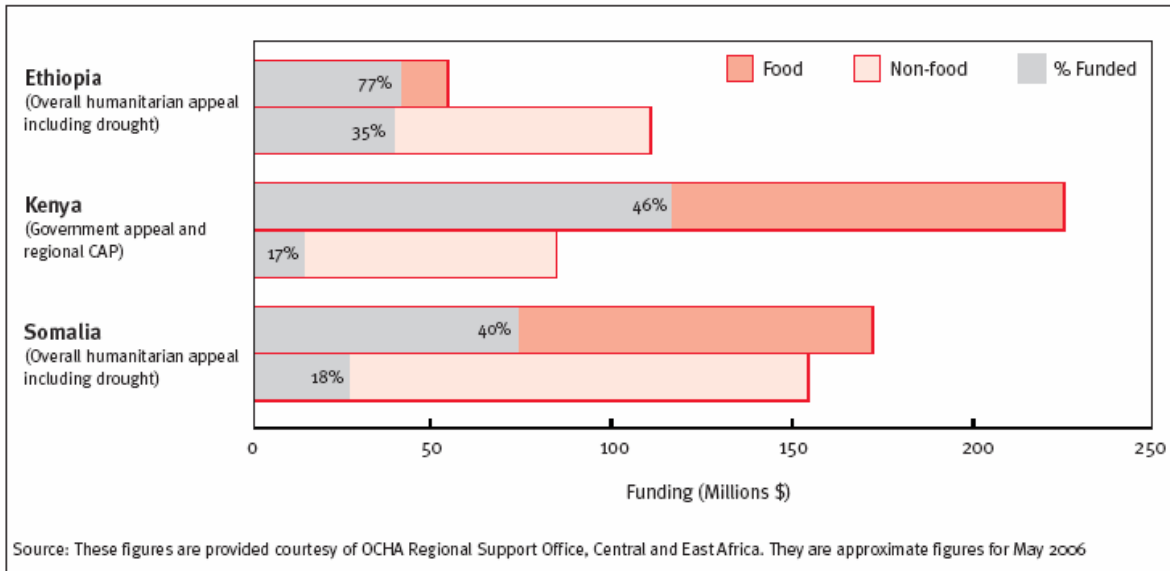
Appeals placed more emphasis in 2006 on supporting essential services, such as water and maternal and child health, and livelihood interventions than in previous years, but donors still reported having had difficulty in obtaining resources centrally until the ‘CNN effect’ of malnourished children became evident in their home countries.

The recently established Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) is part of the ongoing UN Humanitarian Reform and is intended to allow for rapid “quick start funding” and to cope with critical gaps especially for forgotten crises. During the 2005-2006 drought response, it became accessible to UN agencies only three months into the emergency, in March 2006. The decision making and resource allocation processes at both country level (prioritisation of needs, identification of gaps) and New York (final approval and signature resting with the ERC in New York) are still being tested. During this still experimental phase, disbursements were delayed in some instances. The dual nature of the CERF (a mechanism for rapid reaction and a funding tool for gap filling) could not be fully tested and only the second type could actually be activated in the context of the Horn Response. While it was used effectively by those agencies with contingency funds or pre-positioned resources – able to use it to reimburse expenditures and procure replacement resources, it was not timely for early interventions to maintain livelihoods, in water and sanitation. UNICEF and WHO did use the CERF successfully in all countries of the region but NGOs reported that they felt it was not useful for their needs.

⁵ Remittances to Somalia in a “normal” year are in the region of four times the international aid budget. The number of people receiving remittances during the drought is reported to have increased by about 40%.

NGO and non UN agencies have expressed worries about the risk that donors will channel all their funds through the CERF, drying up funding opportunities for non UN actors. The fact that many NGO get funded through contractual arrangements with UN agencies as their “implementing partners” does not solve the more politically sensitive problem of the independence and impartiality of NGOs, especially in highly sensitive contexts where the role of the UN can be challenged by some of the actors of violence who can easily see the UN as one of the party to the conflict. Being financially dependant from UN funds can even create security risk for non UN aid agencies.

Figure 2: Funding appeals and contributions



The Humanitarian Response Fund, in place in Somalia and Ethiopia, has proven very effective in countries in which it operates. It is ‘NGO friendly’, with relatively simple funding modalities and it provides support to local NGOs, thus strengthening capacities in critical areas like SCZ of Somalia. CERF and HRF funding as of Sept. 2006 are shown below.

CERF and HRF Funding as of Sept. 2006

Somalia		Ethiopia		Kenya	
CERF	HRF	CERF	HRF	CERF	HRF
\$6,022,213 ⁶	\$2,113,697 ⁷	\$3,668,484	\$6,612,008	\$8,365,499	

Where donors have disbursed other resources through NGOs, they have in most cases favoured those with long field experience and a strong presence in the region, in order to limit transaction costs and ensure better security and good programme quality. Yet this has limited the possibility for new actors to get involved and possibly the magnitude of the response.

Some interviewees expressed the view that the needs linked to the drought in the Horn were revealed at the end of a year where international resources for humanitarian actions have been heavily tapped to respond to the crises triggered by South Asia Tsunami and the Pakistan Earthquake. Humanitarian reserves were at the lowest level possible when there were required in the Horn.

⁶ Source of these figures and all others except Somalia HRF: OCHA FTS.

⁷ Represents approved funding. Source: OCHA Somalia office

6. COORDINATION

6.1. Structure

Government authorities can play an essential role at all levels in setting policy, steering decisions, avoiding gaps and preventing duplication. The mechanisms in place, such as DPPA in Ethiopia and KFSM in Kenya have proved during the whole drought response to be essential elements of national ownership.

OCHA's presence and role differed in each country. In Ethiopia, for example, staff were deployed locally in one affected area, playing a coordination role, while in Kenya the office was established late in the emergency response and OCHA's role was very limited. In Somalia, the absence of viable central government has put emphasis on OCHA's role in coordination and administration of the CAP, cluster and HRF processes. In general, where the UN presence has spread in the field, particularly through the posting of advisors by OCHA and UNICEF, it is perceived as useful if well focused.

Multiple coordination mechanisms were found in country, linking government and UN agencies, in Kenya and Ethiopia. Apart from Somalia (which was selected as a pilot country), the cluster approach has been applied in a very limited way in the region, in view of the very strong pre-existing coordination mechanisms. In Somalia many NGOs felt that there was a significant overlap between the SACB and clusters and demands on their participation were unrealistic. Ensuring that the implementation of a sectoral cluster is not duplicating existing functioning coordination is essential. In health and nutrition coordination needs were expressed in all countries; progress is being made by UN agencies – UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA – Government and NGOs through a range of mechanisms, including both informal and formal consultation. Concerns include operational linkages between health and nutrition activities, ensuring (and developing) protocols for nutritional assessment and management of malnutrition and infectious disease control. The debate around the role of clusters in organizing humanitarian response, their advantages and shortfalls, is ongoing.

At the regional level, there is an OCHA-led attempt to coordinate fundraising and thematic lobbying at the regional level. UN agencies such as WFP, UNICEF and FAO together with NGOs have begun working on a joint initiative to better track humanitarian emergencies and livelihood threats as they develop and advocate for appropriate response through a Regional Food Security & Nutrition Working Group facilitated by FAO.

6.2. Processes

Decentralised structures proved essential to ensure field based, action oriented, needs driven coordination. In general, however, the linkages between different levels (national/district) remain weak. The team noted that women's representation in coordination mechanisms was limited, particularly in the field, where patriarchal structures in local communities may make it difficult even for women representing international agencies to participate fully. As would be expected, women were more present in health and nutrition activities. Gender mainstreaming is important but requires considerable sensitivity in these male-dominated societies. At the same time there is a risk that it remains political rhetoric rather than a programmatic and operational approach.

Communities are rarely involved in the coordination mechanisms. While understandable, given the logistical constraints, this limits their long term effectiveness since they depend on local implementation. These limitations on participation represent 'missed opportunities' to build local capacities for community-based response, involving women and local authority structures.

7. QUALITY OF THE RESPONSE

This section will discuss broad trends in programme quality identified across the Horn response. More detailed analyses of programme quality issues: timeliness, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, are presented in relation to each sector in country reports.

7.1. Did we do the right things?

In the whole region, the response was multi-sectoral, even if heavily focused on food aid, reflecting the levels of resources available for different sectors.

Food was used to meet a range of needs, ranging from large scale loosely targeted distribution and supplementary feeding programmes to more targeted support to food for work programmes, school feeding schemes and support to IDPs.

Emergency provision of water, setting up or support of nutritional and health services, destocking programmes, animal health interventions, seed distribution operations, etc., were extremely useful, even if implemented late. With the exception of some short (one month) pipeline breaks, the flow of food aid to the most affected regions was reliable throughout the period under study.

Health services and preventive activities were important features of the response, although limited, both in coverage and in the range of activities, with a certain emphasis on ongoing vertical programmes, important but not always the highest priority during an emergency. It is clear that provision of water and food at schools encouraged retention and increased enrolments. New temporary or permanent facilities, part of the response in some areas, attracted children out of school. While this was not envisaged as a gender-related response, it had the effect of opening up access to schooling for large numbers of girls.

7.2. Did we do things right?

The relative lateness of the major part of the international response implies that many possibilities for disaster mitigation, especially reduction of asset depletion, were missed or not optimally done. Livelihood interventions and emergency support to the water sector took place, but the size of the response in these sectors was far from sufficient.

The well developed response mechanisms based on food relief - commodity logistics, targeting, monitoring, stockpiling by government - were impressive in their capacity to move food over great distances to large numbers of people throughout the region. But targeting remains problematic: large segments of the population were mobile, IDPs were not always authentic and the pull/push factor, the tendency of food aid to encourage settlement, is well established; sharing practices, strongly established in the whole area, (between communities, within communities and within households) lowered the potential impact of food aid. Historical concerns about large food aid programmes: diversion and sales of commodities, risk of dependency and poor targeting arose during the RTE. The complex relationship between family food supply and child nutritional status continues to be a serious challenge to donors, scholars and humanitarian actors. The evaluation team was repeatedly asked to reflect on a regional situation where child malnutrition has remained very high, and arguably is now chronic despite up to 20 years of continuous large scale food aid.

Nutritional programming was patchy, depending heavily on the presence of an implementing NGO in a severely affected area, and not always coordinated with the companion interventions in health and water in the same communities. The move toward community based therapeutic feeding, CTCs, was evident in all locations, and this is an encouraging tendency, although training and supervision for CTC staff were not always adequate. The logistical challenges of managing adequate supervision structures for caretakers of children under treatment were evident. Methodological debates on how to assess vulnerability and malnutrition levels in the specific pastoral environments of the Horn of Africa offer great opportunities for improvement in programming food aid and nutrition interventions.

Gender issues were by and large insufficiently tackled and gender sensitivity in need assessment, programme design, implementation and coordination remains largely inadequate, despite efforts made by several agencies.

Protection issues remain at stake, especially when conflict over resources and natural disasters are intertwined, which is the case of almost all parts of the Horn of Africa. This is especially important when specific groups, especially women, are made more and more vulnerable to aggression in contexts of slowly disintegrating pastoral societies.

8. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the combination of the high resilience of these populations, the significant responses from national governments and the mobilisation of the international community, no large scale famine or massive migration were observed in the Horn during 2005 – 2006. Yet what remains is to confront the challenges posed by the climatic evolutions and progressively eroded resilience in the a region where socio-economic indicators (health, nutrition, access to education) are often at the lower side of the international spectrum.

Government mechanisms (aside from Somalia) for response and coordination are now well established and utilized at all levels. Many lessons learnt from previous droughts have been implemented in the development of these systems.

Effective early warning alone does not ensure a timely or adequate response in slow-onset disasters (such as drought). The response is still too often too little too late, largely due to unsatisfactory and often too late resource mobilisation. The key to this may be reforms to a donor-based response system, as was proposed in one country, where linked contingency plans and funding were advocated. The reform of the UN system; with more emphasis been given to “proactivity”, with the E-CERF, can probably be a great leap forwards, as long as it comes together with some of the key recommendations of the Good Donorship Initiative (GHDI) and takes into account some of the key concerns of the non UN components of the humanitarian response system (i.e. the strengthening of the E-CERF should not dry up other funding options for non UN agencies).

Most important, however, is the linkage between emergency response and reduction of vulnerability. National policies have made much progress in the direction of defining longer term solutions to chronic food insecurity and very low quality of the social services (health, education, etc.) but implementation will be a costly and protracted process, easily derailed by instability.

The regional perspective is also essential, as both natural disasters and resource-based conflicts are more and more cross-border and have regional repercussions. Two initiatives have to be praised: The FAO Regional Plan of Action to respond to drought at the regional level (resources came too late for it to have a real impact on mitigating the effects of the drought). UNICEF is developing a regional Nutrition Information Project for the Horn, NIPHORN, intended to improve the quality of nutritional data used in EW, to train staff and to move toward greater uniformity in the use of nutritional data for programming throughout the region.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMERGENCY

9.1. Recommendations for the emergency response

9.1.1. Disaster preparedness and Early Warning Systems

For National Governments :

- Pursue existing efforts to make the EWS more effective and credible;
- Ensure regional connections in the Horn to be able to better identify cross boundary risks (drought, floods, locusts, human and animal epidemics.
- Ensure that disaster preparedness policies are in place and well resourced
- Increase the level of national and decentralised contingency funds; link these to formulation of comprehensive contingency plans for rapid and slow onset disasters

For UN

- Support efforts to strengthen existing early warning systems
- Ensure that there are regional connections between the different UNCT involved in cross boundary emergencies

For NGOs

- Push for a “CERF-like” contingency fund accessible to NGOs via expansion of the HRF or other mechanism
- Develop area specific contingency plans in a coordination manner

For The Red Cross and Red Crescent movement

- Pursue efforts for DPP through the strengthening of National Societies through the development of regional branches, the enlargement of the network of volunteers and the mobilisation of resources to ensure timely and quality response, when required.
- In view of the high frequency of resource based conflict, continue the efforts for the dissemination of IHL and humanitarian principles

For Donors

- Continue to support the development of effective, cost-effective and credible EWS
- Be sensitive to the early signal emitted by the EWS. Donors should not wait for disastrous nutritional figure to initiate a response.
- Support efforts at regional coordination among donors in assessment (adoption of Phase Classification system)

9.1.2. Resource mobilisation

For National governments

- Pursue the efforts for timely and credible Appeal processes in close coordination with the UN and Donor Community

For UN

- Pursue the efforts for timely and credible National and Regional Consolidated Appeal processes in close coordination with the Authorities , the aid community and the Donor
- Ensure that CERF is really used to bust initial response and not to fill gaps in CAP response

For NGOs

- Push for a “CERF like” Contingency fund accessible to NGOs

For The Red Cross and Red Crescent movement

- Pursue efforts to raise funds from the public and business communities in the affected Countries ;

For Donors

- Support the creation of an accountable and transparent national contingency funds
- Expedite resource allocations before situation deteriorates in order to facilitate mitigation interventions
- Balance commitments between the different sectors. In many instances, vital sectors such as water, health and livelihoods are dramatically under-resourced.
- Support contingency funds accessible by NGOs
- Commit to medium and long term funding for recovery

9.1.3. Coordination

For National governments

- Pursue the existing open attitude towards inter-agency coordination
- Continue to support decentralised coordination mechanisms

For UN

- Ensure that coordination is really “adding value” and not simply a mechanism to extract information from the other stakeholders
- Ensure that the Cluster Approach is use in subsidiarity with other mechanisms when they are in place and function adequately
- Ensure that the cross cutting issues are properly covered in the coordination mechanisms
- Strengthen field presence (UNICEF initiative welcome) when need. But need exit strategy
- UN agencies should adopt the FAO approach of developing a medium to long term regional strategy to build the reliance of those chronically at risk and ensure that interventions across the region are compatible and simultaneous with those across border

For NGOs

- Continue coordination with other actors, especially with government services
- Try to limit turn over

For The Red Cross and Red Crescent movement

- Strengthen presence in action oriented, need driven coordination

For Donors

- Continue to support coordination mechanisms
- Ensure that the recommendation of the GHDI are properly taken into action

9.1.4. Quality of the response

For National Authorities

- Ensure that technical protocols and guidelines are in place;
- Ensure that there are M&E capacities at the decentralised level
- Further develop gender policies and put them into implementation at all levels.
- Need to adopt appropriate rangeland management across the sub-region.

For UN

- Continue to enhance monitoring systems ;
- Ensure that security regulations do not paralyse humanitarian operations
- Strengthen technical field presence when it has an added value
- Support mechanisms (both within and outside the cluster approach) to enhance technical quality of the programmes, especially with regional exchanges on nutrition, water resource management, etc.
- Continue to support the research on nutrition issues in order to ensure progress in this sector

For NGOs

- Ensure that operating procedures are in line with national and international protocols
- Continue to pursue innovative, community centred, gender sensitive approach for early mitigation, relief and recovery activities
- Try to limit turn over

For Donors

- Support the creation of an accountable and transparent national contingency funds
- Expedite resource allocations before situation deteriorates in order to facilitate mitigation interventions
- Balance commitments between the different sectors

9.2. Strategic recommendations for vulnerability reduction

9.2.1. Focus on urban situations in the drought prone areas

A focus on the creation of absorption capacities in urban and peri-urban contexts will facilitate maintaining a balance between resources and pressures in the arid and semi-arid lands. Drought and resource-based conflicts indeed accentuate the trend of urbanization; there is a need to ensure that the normal migrants and the destitute farmers find jobs, livelihoods and proper services in the growing urbanised settlements of the drought prone.

9.2.2. Develop market for animal products

Develop marketing opportunities for animal products in order to increase the added value created by the livestock sector is an essential part of the reduction not of drought, but of its impact. This should include investment in a local processing sector for animal products (handicraft of leather, processing of dairy products, meat and cheese drying, etc.). Micro-finance schemes should be set up to support these activities

9.2.3. Develop a master plan for the transport and communication infrastructure

In order to stimulate the economy of drought-prone areas, attract quality staff to work there and address basic health issues, especially emergency health care, there is an urgent need to invest in the road network. Ensuring that the transport, road and communication networks are adequate will go a long way in improving the situation in these remote and difficult areas.

9.2.4. Set up and lobby for an action plan for the environment

Support the development and the spread of environmentally friendly technologies for energy production, especially for remote areas (solar and wind especially, but also wood saving stoves). These will reduce women's work load as well as preserving the environment. Set policies and design interventions to eliminate all the plastic bags in the vicinity of human settlements, following the example of other countries in East Africa, as they represent a health hazard for livestock and an economic threat for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities.