

ChildFund Alliance Calls for Urgent Attention to the Drought and Famine in East Africa and Beyond

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ChildFund Alliance is calling for increased donor attention to the worst humanitarian disaster since the Second World War.

Twenty million people are in need of food assistance across Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria, according to the World Food Programme. Widespread crop failure, livestock death and decreased production of milk and meat have led to crippling food insecurity in this area. A combination of drought, political instability and conflict has caused hundreds of thousands to flee their homes, and tens of thousands have crossed borders. The crisis is expected to worsen in the coming year and expand to neighboring countries.

“Children are particularly vulnerable as these populations are displaced, because family separation leads to increased risk of gender-based violence, exploitation, child marriage, school dropout and child labor,” said Meg Gardinier, Secretary General of ChildFund Alliance. “In addition, the child protection issues in South Sudan are staggering. The scale of displacement and family dislocation is enormous, and with the history of civil war children also face the risk of being recruited into the armed services.”

The bulk of ChildFund’s response has focused on Kenya and Ethiopia, where it has a long-standing presence. Most funding comes from individual sponsors and various government agencies’ aid programs. In Kenya, ChildFund has received World Food Programme funds for coordinated drought response. In regions where it has no presence, ChildFund has stepped in to raise funds for partner agencies.

“ChildFund Alliance member agencies are committed to responding, even where we don’t have a physical presence,” said Gardinier. “But a major impediment in this catastrophe is the lack of donor attention, as is often the case in slow-onset emergencies that do not receive a lot of media attention. In the meantime, children and their families are at growing risk of hunger, malnutrition and stunting.”

The following ChildFund Alliance members are collecting donations to support work in the Horn of Africa. Please support them.

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