

ChildFund Alliance responds to drought and famine in the Horn of Africa

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Millions of people in the Horn of Africa are facing hunger, displacement and loss of livelihoods due to severe drought in the region. In the affected countries – Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda – more than half of those impacted are children.



A young

Ethiopian girl fetching water. (c) Nick Fox/Shutterstock.com

A famine has been declared in Unity State in South Sudan, the first time a famine has been declared anywhere since 2011. A famine is declared only when certain measures of mortality, malnutrition and hunger are met:

- at least 20% of households in an area face extreme food shortages with a limited ability to cope;
- acute malnutrition rates exceed 30 percent; and
- the death rate exceeds two persons per day per 10,000 persons.

The combination of drought, political instability and conflict in parts of the region is especially lethal.

“The urgent situation in the Horn of Africa is largely being ignored by the media,” said Meg Gardinier, Secretary General of ChildFund Alliance. “Yet the lives and livelihoods of millions of people are in jeopardy. Children are at greatest risk.”

Conditions are expected to worsen in the coming year and expand to neighboring countries. The situation is chronic, recurring and protracted.

“Children are particularly vulnerable in situations like this,” said Josh Chaffin, senior advisor, child protection in emergencies at ChildFund Alliance. “When lots of people are on the move, the risks of gender-based violence, including child marriage, sexual violence and exploitation, increase, particularly where children are

separated from family members. We are also hearing that large numbers of children are dropping out of school in Somalia and Kenya, and reports of increased child labor in Kenya.”

Members of ChildFund Alliance, a global network of 11 child-focused development organizations, are responding to the drought and providing lifesaving assistance in many of the affected counties.

Ethiopia: Based on assessed needs, ChildFund will focus on emergency WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), nutrition, emergency food assistance, education, agriculture and child protection in 14 woredas (districts) across four states: Oromia, Amhara, SNNP and Afar. ChildFund expects to reach more than 115,000 people, of whom more than 60 percent will be children. ([Read a joint statement](#) by ChildFund International and Christian Children's Fund of Canada.)

Kenya: ChildFund will focus on three main areas of intervention – food security; health and nutrition; and WASH. It will work with local partners in the affected regions to mobilize community participation, ensuring that all eligible groups affected are adequately supported. ChildFund will also continue its collaboration with key stakeholders in the response, including county governments, the World Food Program, community-based organizations, NGOs and Kenya Red Cross. This collaborative effort will ensure a coordinated and effective response.

South Sudan: In response to the famine, which has put more than one million people at risk of starvation, ChildFund has launched the Africa Food Crisis Appeal, working with partners to provide emergency food aid to the worst affected communities. ChildFund is also assessing the situation in the crisis-affected areas, including Unity, Central Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria states, with a view to providing emergency relief in collaboration with local partners.

Uganda: ChildFund is monitoring the situation to see if its participation in the response is warranted.

“Emergency funding is essential to address the drought in the Horn of Africa,” said Gardinier. “In addition to critical funding for food and water, we must not overlook the need to support child protection, which is so often neglected in disasters. We call on the international community to respond to this crisis before it is too late.”

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