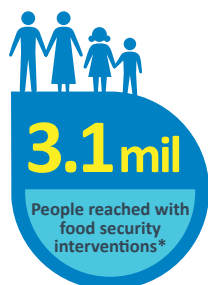


Food Security and Nutrition Update

Actions taken and required to keep Somalia free of famine

Photo credit: WFP/G. Goodwin

Donors, UN, NGOs and Somali society mounted a rapid and unprecedented response in 2017 to prevent famine in Somalia



In addition, **millions** have been assisted through **health, nutrition and WASH programming**. These efforts have saved lives – including over a million acutely malnourished women and children – and averted a famine this year. This situation could rapidly deteriorate if humanitarian assistance is scaled down in 2018. It is crucial to take stock, and to reflect on what has been done and what we must do next.

In the second half of 2017, food security conditions improved in many locations through large-scale humanitarian efforts but deteriorated elsewhere



SOURCE: SOMALIA Food Security Outlook, FEWSNET, FSNAU Nov 2017

The outlook for 2018 is grim, with *La Niña* increasing the likelihood of poor rains during Gu 2018 (April-June) – jeopardizing food production and rural livelihoods for a fifth consecutive season.

Donors, governments, NGO and UN actors have heeded early warning and implemented a rapid, large-scale multi-sector response effort

Early warning systems proved their value in mobilizing the necessary information, resources and responders to act in time, effectively and at scale. Through consensus and coordination, we spoke with one voice locally and internationally, and mobilized a **USD 1.2 billion response**. Partners – humanitarian, development, public and private – pooled their resources and strengths to expand and deepen the humanitarian footprint.

The speed, scale and effectiveness of the response to human and animal health threats owe much to state-level and private sector efforts, and existing networks of WASH, health and nutrition outreach teams and animal health workers. Many resource partners contributed flexible funding and topped-up their contributions. This allowed programmes to quickly adapt and scale up as needs shifted and increased on the ground.

Partners rapidly scaled up cash-based assistance, while introducing more integrated programmes and better ways of working

Registration systems, cash-based approaches with enhanced risk management and community feedback mechanisms have been scaled up, allowing humanitarian actors to implement with greater speed and accountability to affected people. Integrated Emergency Response Teams were mobilized – comprising health, nutrition and WASH specialists – to mitigate the acute watery diarrhea (AWD) outbreak and respond to rising malnutrition and mortality rates.

NGO and UN partners leveraged their strengths, linked efficient supply chains with an expanded network of partners and facilities, and reached **700,000 acutely malnourished children** over the past year. Cash-based interventions helped millions of people in rural, urban and IDP settings meet basic needs, while stabilizing local markets. In rural areas, unconditional cash transfers were combined with livelihood support packages so farmers could afford to feed and provide for their families while restoring their own food production. In urban areas, vouchers and cash for food were linked to unconditional cash transfers to meet multiple needs.

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Information sharing and collaboration across sectors were strengthened with the establishment of the Drought Operations Coordinator Centers

Coordinating structures – such as the Cash Working Group and the Logistics Cluster – are promoting common standards and facilitating the transport of life-saving assistance. At the same time, population tracking systems are in place that provide better insights into the nature of displacement and allow for more targeted responses. The urgency of the crisis has pushed us to work differently, take calculated risks and find better technical solutions to complex challenges. We must keep up the momentum.

We must take every opportunity to reduce the scale, duration and cost of the ongoing crisis

In the past year, over **1 million people** have been displaced. The limited radius of displacement in southern Somalia presents a rare and time-sensitive window to help people home early.

According to IOM Movement Trend Tracking from 10-16 November, all 141 people exiting Baidoa reported leaving in order to manage their farms, with 83% not intending to return to IDP sites.

There is unique opportunity and momentum to facilitate early returns and a need to make these returns durable.

A growing number of partnerships and consortia are being formed and strengthened to this end. No single line ministry, donor, UN agency or NGO can deliver the support required – from returnee identification in camps down to transport, housing, cash support and livelihood packages at the point of return. The displacement crisis is a complex challenge, requiring us to strengthen our ongoing collective response across urban and rural areas, including continued investments in basic services to address the multi-dimensional causes of malnutrition in the immediate and longer terms.



Internal displacement has reached over 1 million, further burdening IDP settlements where basic services are already stretched thin, putting people at greater risk of malnutrition and disease outbreaks. Photo: WFP/Kabir Dhanji

We must assist and prevent further displacement out of rural areas – home to three-quarters of people in IPC 4

Even during drought, each season of supported production can make a big difference. Providing livelihood assistance and cash in rural areas not only fights hunger but minimizes displacement and the sale of productive assets that ultimately feed people, including livestock. Animal health interventions are not only time-critical, but must reach a critical mass to prevent disease from spreading.

Increasingly, food security and resilience actors are coupling life-saving and livelihood protection efforts. Continued expansion of food security, nutrition, health and WASH interventions in these same locations will enable people to stay and create conditions for return for the willing and able. Even with all these efforts, it will take several seasons to rebuild rural livelihoods.

Scaled up humanitarian assistance must be maintained in 2018 to prevent famine

Newly displaced have joined the ranks of long-standing IDPs on the edges of urban centers throughout the country. **IDP populations will require continued assistance until conditions improve.**

Children are particularly vulnerable under such circumstances. Children with SAM have nine times the risk of death compared to those who are well nourished. Failure to deliver timely lifesaving services will put the lives of an estimated 232,000 children at risk in the coming months, while the survivors will likely develop long term physical and cognitive disabilities costly to personal and economic development of Somalia. Care and treatment for children with severe acute and moderate acute malnutrition is needed to save lives.

Concurrent investments in social sectors, such as health and WASH, will help address the underlying causes of malnutrition and lay the foundation for future systems building efforts.

Within priority areas, targeting will be further refined to ensure the most affected groups have access to food, income and basic services. Efforts to strengthen integration between severe and moderate malnutrition case-loads will be enhanced to ensure that households with malnourished children are deliberately targeted for cash/in-kind assistance, livelihood support and evolving safety net programmes.

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From left: Multi-sector and multi-actor responses are critical to tackle the immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition. Photo: UNICEF/Karel Prinsloo; Animal health interventions are time-critical to protect and preserve livestock assets that ultimately provide essential sources of food and nutrition. Photo: FAO

The humanitarian investment made now will lay the foundation for economic recovery and growth, and peace in the future

The current crisis has forged closer linkages amongst government, donors, and humanitarian and development actors, civil society and the private sector. The extensive networks of mobile money providers, Hawalas and traders already mobilized could be leveraged as a platform to support food security and rebuild resilience in the longer term.

There is great potential to develop **systems-based solutions to improve targeting**, with opportunities to create deliberate referral mechanisms between sectors and create pathways for households out of hunger, malnutrition and poverty, and to move towards a social protection system and safety net approach to reduce vulnerability to recurrent shocks.

To ensure that the next shock, whether big or small, does not lead us down this path again we must again **focus on building the resilience of households, communities, and institutions**.

Famine has been averted so far, but the risk remains.

6.2 million Somalis are acutely food insecure and in need. This is the same number reported in early 2017, when famine alerts prompted a massive international response. Now, in many ways, the situation is more severe.

Compared to early 2017, a greater proportion of people are edging towards famine in IPC 4 and malnutrition rates continue to rise. Within this timeframe, two additional seasons of poor rains have eroded livelihoods further. We are at a pivotal moment. For this response to end a success, we count on partners to keep up the momentum and investment to keep Somalia free of famine.