

Aid agencies back UN's \$7 billion appeal for Horn of Africa food crisis

Image not found or type unknown



Somali women assemble a makeshift shelter within the Ifin Camp for internally displaced people outside Baradere town, Gedo Region, Jubaland state, Somalia, March 13, 2022 [Feisal Omar/Reuters]

United Nations, May 25 (RHC)-- Humanitarian agencies are calling for full funding of the United Nations' \$7 billion appeal for the Horn of Africa during a pledging conference that begins on Wednesday, citing a growing crisis and the need for urgent lifesaving intervention.

The region is facing the worst drought in 40 years, with more than 43.3 million people in need of assistance in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. More than half of those lack access to sufficient food, according to the United Nations.

The UN is convening a high-level pledging event on Wednesday at its headquarters in New York, where member states and partners will be encouraged to commit financial support to the Horn of Africa crisis.

The International Rescue Committee said that until now, the appeals have received less than a quarter of the needed donations. "Efforts to combat food insecurity need to be urgently scaled up across a wider group of governments, international financial institutions and climate actors," said IRC President and CEO David Miliband.

Ports in Ukraine were closed, reducing the quantities of food aid that could be shipped. But aid organisations like the Norwegian Refugee Council have said a focus on the Ukraine crisis has reduced the funding available for work in the Horn of Africa.

Other humanitarian organizations say time is running out as affected communities have gone for months with little or no food. "It's beyond urgent ... We have averted famine before, and we can do it again ... People are already dying and there's no time for declarations," Deepmala Mahla, CARE International's vice president for humanitarian affairs, told the press.

A famine is yet to be declared in Somalia, where more than six million people are going hungry, but some humanitarian and climate officials have warned that trends are worse than in the 2011 famine in Somalia in which approximately 250,000 people died.

Formal famine declarations are rare because data to meet the benchmarks often cannot be obtained because of conflict, poor infrastructure or politics. Governments are also wary of being associated with a term of such grim magnitude.

Local nongovernmental organisations like Somalia's Hormuud Salaam Foundation say sustained funding is needed. "For lasting change, we must equip local organisations and local people with the tools to face the inevitable climate shocks of tomorrow," the foundation's CEO, Abdullahi Nur Osman, told the Associated Press.

Persistent conflicts in some of the affected areas, combined with climate change effects, have exacerbated the crisis. Parts of Somalia and Ethiopia are currently experiencing flooding during the ongoing rainy season and millions of people have been displaced.

The affected areas, mostly occupied by herders, had seen prolonged dry seasons that left livestock, which are a source of livelihood, dead. Parts of Somalia are grappling with insecurity due to the al-Shabab rebel group that has carried out numerous large-scale attacks.

Northern Ethiopia experienced conflict for more than two years as regional forces clashed with national forces. Hundreds of thousands of people died and the situation remains fragile, seven months after a peace deal was signed.



Radio Habana Cuba