

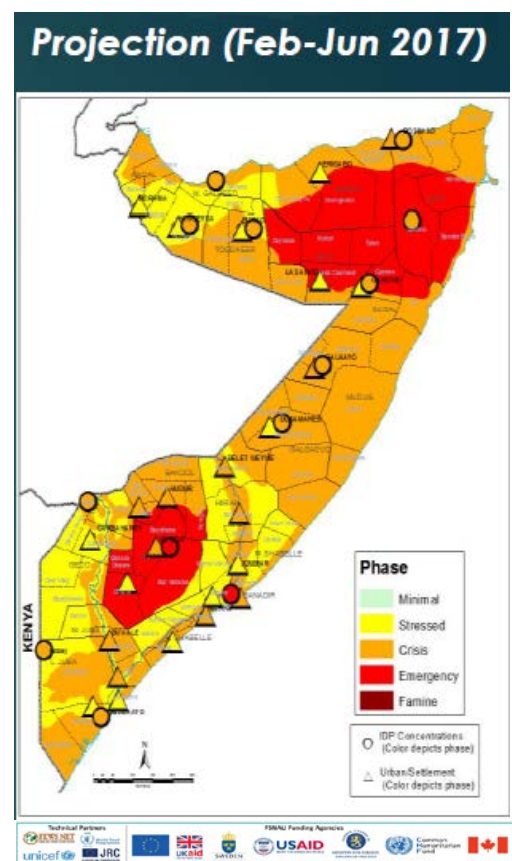
Somalia on the Verge of Famine

Key Recommendations

The international community cannot stand by and allow yet another catastrophic famine to unfold in Somalia. More than 363,000 children are in need of urgent nutrition support, with 71,000 severely malnourished on the verge of starvation. In 2011 the world said ‘never again’ and yet despite numerous warnings the international community has been too slow to act.

World Vision calls for the following, immediate actions:

1. **Elevate the international alert level to respond to a possible famine in Somalia. The UN must openly communicate the gravity of the situation to its Members States, urging them to provide timely financial support to the relief efforts.**
2. **Remove impediments to humanitarian access. The Federal Government of Somalia and the regional governments must ensure safe, unimpeded and regular access to rural and remote areas for humanitarian organisations to deliver aid to the affected children and communities. This includes ensuring bureaucratic impediments such as regional registrations are dealt with effectively. All parties to the conflict in Somalia must facilitate humanitarian relief operations, in accordance with applicable provisions of international humanitarian law and the UN guiding principles of humanitarian emergency assistance.**
3. **Prioritise child protection and address malnutrition. Donors must ensure child protection and malnutrition interventions are fully funded as part of the response efforts and that protection of children is mainstreamed in all humanitarian response activities as per the Interagency Minimum Standards for Child Protection.**



Somalia Acute Food Insecurity/IPC Phase map, Post Deyr 2016/17 Seasonal Assessment, FSNAU & FEWSNET, 2 February 2017

Situation Overview

Somalia has been consistently ranked as one of the worst places to live for children and women in the world. Limited and fractured governance, crumbling basic services, active discrimination practices against girls, limitations on access to people and areas which are under armed non state actors control make it lethal combination for child survival.

Now the country has a new frontline as the severe drought is threatening to turn into a famine. Following a poor *Gu* season (April to June 2016 rainy season) and failed Deyr season (October to December 2016 rainy season), food security, pastures and water levels have deteriorated significantly across Somalia, with an increasing number of people faced Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity.

FEWSNET state that “If the 2017 *Gu* season fails as it is currently it is forecasted, the severity and magnitude of food insecurity will be even larger than currently anticipated. In a worst-case scenario where the 2017 *Gu* season performs very poorly, purchasing power declines to levels seen in 2010/11, and humanitarian assistance is unable to reach populations in need, Famine (IPC Phase 5) would be expected”¹.

“Consecutive failure of rains has resulted in poor pasture conditions, moisture stress and *Gu*-season harvests in the south that were 20 percent below the recent five-year average and 50 percent below the 1995-2015 average. In Bay Region, 2016 was the driest calendar year since 2001. In Bari Region, 2016 was the driest calendar year since 1985. The level of the Shabelle River is nearly 60 percent below average for this time of year, limiting access to water for livestock and crop production”². “Over the coming months, more and more water sources are set to dry up, leaving those that remain congested and over-stressed”³.

Somalia is reeling from this severe drought which is set to become a famine if no rains and humanitarian help comes in the next couple of months. The drought has been one of the main drivers of acute vulnerability in Somalia. Currently⁴,

- More than 6.2 (IPC Phases 2, 3 & 4) people are in need of humanitarian assistance with more than 2.9 million in ‘crisis’ and ‘emergency’ (IPC Phases 3 & 4).
- About 363,000 acutely malnourished children are in need of urgent nutrition support, with 71,000 severely malnourished.
- About 1.1 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) remain in protracted displacement.
- Livelihood protection and support is needed for over 3.3 million people in acute food security Stress (IPC Phase 2)
- About 3.3 million people lack access to health, water and sanitation.
- Around 3 million school-age children are still out of school. ⁵

¹ FEWS NET Somalia Food Security Alert, 16 January 2017

² FEWS NET Somalia Food Security Alert, 16 January 2017

³ FEWS NET Somalia Alert, 11 November 2016

⁴ Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator On The Humanitarian Situation And Response In Somalia at the Launch of the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan

⁵ FSNAU and FEWSNET Technical Release of Key findings from the 2016 Somalia Post Deyr Food Security and Nutrition Assessment

Pre-famine conditions show irreversible negative impact on children

Deeqa, 30 years old mother with four children from Somaliland, is among the 330 households displaced by the drought and moved to Buroa airport in search of access to clean water. Deeqa's oldest son is 8 years old and out of school now.

"We were expecting to get better living conditions for my children and livestock here, but I came to notice a worse situation than where we stayed before", she told World Vision. "I had more than 150 sheep and goats in Beer village before the onset of the drought, but unfortunately I have only 40 now, and they are all weak and likely to die soon."

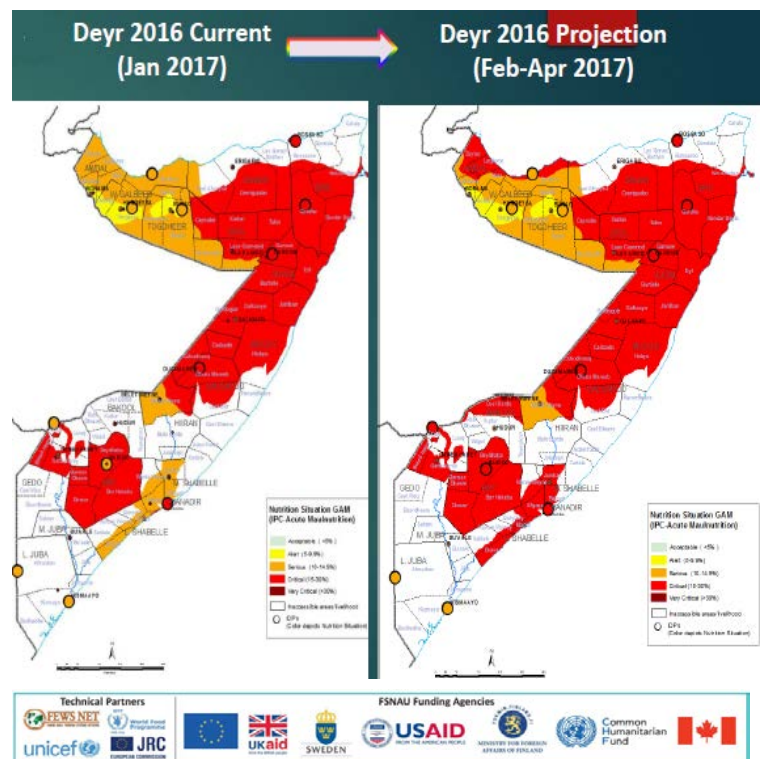
In 2011, more than 260,000 people, half of whom were children, died before the international community recognised the catastrophe and geared up to help. But in the current scenario where the need is dire and the resources are meagre, the 'Never Again' promise made by the international community in 2011 is at faltering stage. Famine is set to be all too real if the help does not arrive in a timely manner.

High malnutrition rates among children are set to rise further

Over 363,000 children are acutely malnourished, out of which about 71,000 who are severely malnourished and are in need of immediate and special nutrition support. Various surveys conducted by FSNAU in rural and internally displaced populations indicate that Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) prevalence is above the critical threshold of 15 per cent in half of 28 rural and displaced population groups surveyed. This lack of appropriate nutrition has severe and irreversible impact on children's growth impeding their all-round development. World Vision has witnessed situations where older children were asked to forego their meals which are fed to animals so they in turn can provide milk for younger children.

Access to health and WASH has been severely limited and is set to increase

Over 3.3 million people lack access to emergency health services and require improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene. Water consumption by people has dropped to just 3 litres per person from 7.5 litres per day, well below the internationally agreed SPHERE minimum standard and the average distance to water points in Somalia has risen to 50km, with some communities travelling as far as 125km. The severe drought declined water levels were matched by a steep rise in prices. Since June 2016, the cost of water has gone from \$5 a barrel (200 litres) to \$15 a barrel. In some remote pastoral settlements in the Sanaag region, the price has risen from \$5 to \$30.



Nutrition Situation Progression, Post Deyr 2016/17 Seasonal Assessment, FSNAU & FEWSNET, 2 February 2017

In Gedo region of Southern Somalia, 90 percent of villages are now reliant on unsafe water sources for drinking and domestic purposes. This has resulted in limited access to drinking water by children's and steep prices of water negatively dictate the quality of quality of food they receive.

Displacement, increased school dropouts and protection issues are on steady increase

OCHA Somalia has estimated that “worsening drought conditions have increased displacement and put additional pressure on family structures leading to family separation, intimate partner violence and an increase in harmful social norms such as child marriage and child labour. Displacement and inward migration also risks 90,000 children dropping out of school”, adding to 3 million children who are already out of school and 1.1 million IDPs. This is a major blow for Somalia whose youth account for up to seventy percent of the population. Many child protection issues have been raised as a result of displacement. Children who move from place to place become easy targets for physical and sexual abuse, early and child marriages and in some instances being picked up by non-state armed actors.

Recommendations

Hundreds of thousands of children and their families need immediate life-saving assistance and access to food, water, medicine and other basic services essential for their survival. Children require extra efforts from the federal and regional governments of Somalia to ensure that they are able to meet their daily needs, to continue education, drought related displacement is managed and that child protection issues are monitored and managed effectively through providing access and unreserved support in international humanitarian sector.

To ensure this happens World Vision recommends:

- 1. International community must step up its efforts to ensure that we do not repeat the 2011 and push for immediate drought relief transitioning to longer restoration of livelihoods. On-going operations to reach vulnerable communities need to be scaled up rapidly across the country. This must include investment in resilience and longer-term livelihoods programs to prevent families and communities from falling further into crisis.***
- 2. Donors must ensure child protection and malnutrition interventions are fully funded as part of the response efforts and that protection of children is mainstreamed in all humanitarian response activities as per the Interagency Minimum Standards for Child Protection.***
- 3. Recognising the urgent needs across the global humanitarian spectrum, donors must urgently re-align their priorities to avert another famine in Somalia. This includes new donor countries, whose participation and involvement is critical as part of the relief and long term efforts. To this effect, UNOCHA should ensure that coordination of the relief efforts is inclusive of all actors, is timely, efficient and effective to avoid putting lives of children and communities at further risk.***
- 4. The Federal Government of Somalia and the regional governments must ensure safe, unimpeded and sustained access to rural and remote areas for humanitarian organisations to***

deliver aid to the affected children and communities. This includes ensuring bureaucratic impediments such as regional registrations are dealt with effectively.

- 5. All parties to the conflict in Somalia must facilitate humanitarian relief operations, in accordance with applicable provisions of international humanitarian law and the UN guiding principles of humanitarian emergency assistance.***