



HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN SOMALIA

Monthly Analysis

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This report was written in cooperation with the UN Agencies in Somalia

HIGHLIGHTS

The already dire humanitarian situation in Somalia has been further aggravated by the worst drought in a decade. Given the failed 2005 *Deyr*, around 1.7 million people – not including up to 400,000 IDPs - are now in urgent need of assistance for the next six months. The number has more than doubled since the last seasonal assessment in August 2005 when almost 1 million people were reported in needs of assistance and protection. Around 710,000 people are in a state of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis while 915,000 are experiencing a Humanitarian Emergency (figures inclusive of those at high risk of descending into either category in the coming months). The worse hit regions are Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba, and areas of Bay and Bakool, with northern Gedo and riverine areas in the Juba regions identified at moderate risk of a famine. The depletion of resources is resulting in increased movement of people.

The present complex emergency in Somalia requires an integrated multi-sectoral response to address the on-going water, food security, health, nutrition, protection and access crisis. Given that the next rains are not expected before April, the effects of the drought will only aggravate as the *Jilaal* dry season progresses. Improvement will depend largely on the appropriateness, timeliness, adequacy of emergency responses and on international support.

Humanitarian needs have soared in the most unpredictable and insecure areas of Somalia meaning access will continue to be a preoccupation. Continued piracy is also impacting on supply pipelines. In mid-January, an agreement was signed by the Prime Minister and the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia in which the TFG committed itself to cooperating with the UN to enhance unhindered access. This agreement has been followed by efforts to mobilize parliamentarians and community leaders to advocate at the local level on principles of unhindered access and passage of humanitarian assistance.

In compliance with a Global Humanitarian Reform, a new coordination mechanism has been established in Somalia - the Inter-Agency Standing Committee - to enhance coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian response. The first meeting of the Somalia IASC took place on 2 February 2006 the discussions of which focused around the sector response to the drought and requirements for advocacy. Seven clusters have been identified to prepare response plans in the water, food, livelihood, health and nutrition, education, protection and access sectors. These clusters are now active in devising the drought response.

Members of the Somalia IASC have decided that a review of the Appeal is now timely in order to better reflect the magnitude of the ongoing crisis. Until the revised Appeal is published, however, donors are strongly urged not to delay their contribution to the existing Appeal and to similarly support increased food requirements.

Smuggling off the northeastern coast is not abating and the death toll of people smuggled from Bossaso to Yemen continues to rise. Between 21 and 22 January 2006, two boats capsized off the Yemeni coast killing over 200 people. In the last two weeks of January, 32 boats shored in Yemen and during 12-23 January, some 1,300 Somalis and 70 Ethiopians were registered by UNHCR Yemen as newcomers. Aid partners are planning on facilitating a meeting among authorities from Ethiopia, Yemen, and Somali to address the issue, while in parallel conduct a wider information media campaign to raise awareness on the problem.

The spread of polio remains a major concern. Polio free for three years, the first cases of the virus emerged in Somalia in September 2005. By the end of 2005, the number had risen to 178 confirmed cases.

ACCESS and SECURITY

During December 2005 and January 2006, the onset of the drought dominated the humanitarian domain with focus directed at the worse hit regions of southern Somalia. Humanitarian needs have soared in the most unpredictable and insecure areas of Somalia yet access and security remain unshakable challenges to contend with.

One of the worse hit regions by the drought, Gedo continued to be unstable and volatile during the last two months. The UN had to temporarily suspend air and ground operations in Garbaharey and Luuq districts following threats that it might be targeted by some groups. Despite the subsequent withdrawal of these threats, the operational environment remains worrying and dangerous. Still, some international NGOs were able to access parts of Gedo in great distress. With assurance of safety and protection of its aid workers, CARE conducted two monthly food distributions in December and January in the districts of Belet-Hawa, Luuq, Dolow and Elwak.

Sea piracy continues to be a major concern in terms of security and humanitarian implications. The three Taiwanese fishing vessels hijacked in June 2005 were finally released on 29 January 2006 but not until a ransom was paid. On 21 January, the cargo ship "Delta Ranger" en-route to Dar-es-Salam fell under attack some 70NM northwest of Mogadishu to be saved by a US Navy destroyer. The incident indicated the *modus operandi* of the pirates which use "Mother ships" to extend their range of operations further away from the coast.

With its main supply pipeline affected, throughout December and January, WFP succeeded in bringing food into the country through a number of alternative routes. Some 1,000 Metric Tons (MT) of relief food were transported overland through Kenya to southern Somalia in two separate convoys. A further 1,000 MT destined to drought-affected areas in the south came through Merka using small vessels. The ports of Djibouti and Berbera are being used to supply the north and some 700 MT were recently transported from Elmaan to Wajid for distribution in Bay and Bakool. Preparations are underway to transport 5,000 MT through alternative routes to Middle Juba and parts of Gedo regions. The logistics of all these plans does not come without a security risk as demonstrated by the looting of a WFP convoy in Baidoa on 17 January 2006.

Central and southern regions remained tense and volatile with repeated incidents of fighting in early January 2006 in southern Mudug/Galgadud regions and eastern Bay/Bakool regions over pastoral land and water rights as well as revenge killings. Fighting between the Sa'ad and Suleman subclans in Mudug/Galgadud on 11 January 2006 was reported as the heaviest fighting in the area in the last six months. Since the announcement of the TFG to hold the first Parliamentary session in Baidoa on the 26 February 2006, preparations have been ongoing in Bay and Bakool to enhance security. Local reconciliation between the Digil and Mirifle has also resumed which among other things foresees the formation of regional and district administrations for Bay and Bakool. Both the Digil/Mirifle reconciliation process and the Parliamentary session could provide new opportunities for access.

Despite all these persevering complications, in mid-January the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Prime Minister in which the TFG committed itself to cooperating with the UN to enhance unhindered access and to assist in the dissemination of the MOU's principles at the local level. UN agencies are now working on a statement for local authorities and communities to adhere to basic humanitarian principles. The TFG has also created a Technical Committee which among other things will look into access issues.

In the northwest, one security incident was reported linked to the death sentences delivered to suspects found guilty of killing international aid workers in the area in 2003 and 2004, but it did not affect aid operations. Relative stability in the northern zones has continued to facilitate access in most regions, with the exception of contested areas of Sool and eastern Sanaag, where despite written agreements with both the northeastern and northwestern authorities, ongoing tensions in certain areas go on affecting the smooth delivery of assistance. On 24 November 2005, the Acting President of the Puntland State of Somalia released a decree requesting aid agencies to access and channel aid into the contested regions from Puntland alone. On 9 January 2006, local authorities in Las Anood confiscated vaccines coming from Hargeisa intended for the joint WHO/UNICEF measles campaign. The incident resulted in the suspension of the campaign in Sool region and was condemned by the Somaliland authorities who advised UN Agencies that all assistance in Somaliland - including Sool and Sanaag – should be channeled from their side only. So far nothing has been received in writing but advocacy for unimpeded access will clearly need to be maintained. Both authorities were reminded by the Humanitarian Coordinator of their commitments within the respective MOUs signed with the aid community.

PROTECTION

While access has normally been the main challenge to providing protection to vulnerable populations in southern Somalia, the drought is now resulting in increased movement of people from areas where livelihoods have become

disrupted. The depletion of resources (water and pasture) in many areas has led many pastoralists and agro-pastoralists to move either with their livestock to areas where water and food is available or to abandon their locations altogether. Resource-based conflict has been reported in many locations where pastoralists have encroached on farming land. In Kamtirey village near Kamsuma (Lower Juba) for example, one Bantu farmer was recently beaten to death by cattle owners for objecting to let the cattle graze on his off season crops. Families are also splitting, with men and boys moving livestock to the river areas and women with young children heading towards urban centres. In Galkayo town, according to local authorities around 70 people – primarily women and children – are said to arrive every day in the existing IDP/returnee settlements. In Bay and Bakool, movement has been reported as the water table has dropped. In “*Marid*” settlement in Wajid, six months ago there were only 120 families. By the beginning of January 2006, camp leaders reported 970 families were registered. In the last month, another 130 people have arrived and more keep coming every day. At the time of drafting, the figures were being verified. In Lower Juba, field reports have relayed increased population movement owing to rumours that assistance is being delivered in north eastern Kenya. Some families have reportedly started to sell their assets to pay for the trip. So far, no such movement has been tracked in Kenya.

Tracking of movement is incredibly difficult, particularly in areas where aid partners are not present due to insecurity. In an attempt to better follow the situation, the Protection and IDP Working Group is establishing a rapid monitoring network to track drought related population movements, monitor access to aid and other protection related issues that may result from conflict and/or the drought. Given the regional nature of the drought and the scope of the ‘Somali livelihood system’, the Protection Working Group is also working on a regional level to track cross-border movement. This information will be crucial in identifying specific protection and assistance needs arising from displacement.

Ethiopian Migrants and Smuggling in Puntland

With continued smuggling occurring from Puntland to Yemen and the Gulf States, the number of Ethiopians arriving in Bossaso continues to augment. In December, an IOM mission, followed by representatives from the Nairobi based IDP/Protection Working Group, traveled to Bossaso to discuss the issue with the Puntland authorities and look into the feasibility of providing a “one-off” assistance to facilitate the return of those Ethiopians who wished to go home. Discussions indicated that such assistance was not feasible, however, without there being commitment and measures to combat smuggling first on the part of the Somali authorities.

On 13 January, 378 Ethiopian migrants were detained in Sanaag region (Puntland) by the military police as they were attempting to walk to Bossaso. Aid agencies in the area found the group in a dire situation with no food or water. The group was eventually released and transported to Bossaso where they were included in a WFP/DRC emergency food assistance programme for the migrants which had commenced in November 2005. The arrival of the group highlighted again the need for all authorities concerned to take responsibility for curbing the smuggling in order for any return operation being looked into by the aid community to be successful.

According to UNHCR in Yemen, the death toll of people smuggled from Bossaso to Yemen is rising. Two boats capsized off the Yemeni coast on 21 and 22 January: the first carried 128 people, of which only five survived, while the second carried 128, with only 46 survivors. The travelers are not only Ethiopian. In the last two weeks of January, 32 boats were registered by the Yemen authorities. During the same period, some 1,300 Somalis and 70 Ethiopians were registered as newcomers by UNHCR. The influx came after a break over the Christmas period due to bad weather conditions and is said to have increased because of the drought affecting the Horn, which smugglers are taking full advantage of.

These figures unlikely give a correct understanding of the situation as more people than those registered are actually arriving in Yemen; they are just not registering. Somalis, for example, are granted automatic refugee status, while Ethiopians are not.

Near Bossaso, boats leave with reported regularity. In some locations, two to three boats leave every night between ten at night and two in the morning. Both Somalis and Ethiopians are found waiting for boats, sometimes for days which places them, particularly women, at risk of attack by militia. Higher numbers of Somalis from Mogadishu waiting to make the crossing have been noted. At the feeding sites in Bossaso, new Ethiopian faces are seen replacing old ones every day.

Aid partners are now look into facilitating a meeting among authorities from Ethiopia, Yemen, and Somali to look into ways of addressing and combating smuggling, while in parallel conducting a wider information media campaign to raise awareness on the problem. UNHCR is donating vehicles to the authorities to patrol the

coastline, while IOM is considering a small field presence to facilitate voluntary return of Ethiopians. The WFP/DRC humanitarian feeding programme will continue until the end of February at which time it is anticipated that IOM will have established its presence. UNHCR just sent in a film-crew to Bossaso to develop footage for an international information campaign, including for Ethiopia on the hardships faced by those who attempt to make the crossing.

In a statement issued by the Vice President of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland on 8 January, a focal point to deal with IDP issues within the Somaliland administration has finally been appointed. All issues pertaining to assistance and protection of refugees, returnees and IDPs will now fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Repatriation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation. This development marks a real step forward for the aid community as the prior absence of a designated government focal point was among the issues that hindered effective coordination and delivery of assistance and protection to IDPs.

On 22 December, a fire swept through a southern Galkayo IDP settlement, in which at least two people died. Numbers of injured were conflicting but 15 cases of rape were reported. Like in most Somali settlements, IDP settlements are highly congested. According to the municipal authorities, 15,000 IDPs reside in Galkayo where there is a lack of available land. The settlement has existed for more than 10 years, without receiving any external assistance. This has left its population in unfavorable hygienic conditions, highly vulnerable to sexual abuse and other forms of crime. Fires too are a constant hazard. The municipality, with assistance from the aid community, is looking into possible solutions such as resettlement of IDPs to different sites.

Somaliland received a number of repatriates from Djibouti in two convoy movements during the past month. With a total number of 212 households and 1,243 individuals, UNHCR and the local authorities escorted the refugees to various settlements throughout Awdal region. This groups forms part of the last repatriation expected to the northwest of Somalia from the region, since Djibouti and Eritrea are the only countries still to host a relatively small number of Somali refugees from this area.

RULE of LAW

The first police academy to be built in Somalia for several years was officially opened by Prime Minister Gedi on 20 December 2005, Somali Police Day, at Armo, 100 kilometres south of Bossaso in the northeast of Somalia. In its first operational phase, the initial intake of 130 male and 20 female cadets from different regions joined the Armo Police Academy on 10 December 2005.

To ensure quality and uniformity across the police force, the challenging three-month training course will be a continuation of the one developed by the UNDP Programme on Rule of Law and Security (ROLS) at the Mandera Police Academy in Somaliland which was first rehabilitated in 1999. This covers community policing, basic police training, non-violent disarmament, physical fitness, self-defence, marching and theory. Computer lessons will also be provided. Upon graduation, the cadets will then be able to take up posts in different law enforcement sections such as the traffic police, the mobile unit, criminal investigation department, manning complaints desk at the police stations, and internal affairs.

Phase 1 of the construction at the Academy was the establishment of two classrooms, dormitories for male cadets, an administration block and the electricity and water supply. Phase 2 will cover a dispensary (to serve the Armo community as well), dormitories for female cadets, two classrooms, two more dormitories for male cadets, a multi-purpose hall (for recreation and dining) and sports facilities. The Armo community contributed the (undisputed) land at no cost, built the external perimeter wall of the Academy, the trainer's accommodation and the water pipe system from the town to the Academy. Support staff at the Academy are from the town, and the dispensary, which will include a maternity wing, will also service the residents.

The ultimate aim of the Law Enforcement component of the ROLS Programme is to establish a professional civilian police force able to effectively contribute to the restoration of peace while gaining the trust of the community, and the development and provision of high calibre training. Part of ensuring the longevity of the Academy is the engagement of former police officers to conduct the training. UNDP has been involved in police training for the last three years and has trained 2,000 police officers in Somaliland and Puntland.

HIV/AIDS

Through the support of UNAIDS and WHO, Somalia has just updated its strategic information on the status of the HIV epidemic the country Somalia. In 2005, 40,000 adults were living with HIV/AIDS; 4,200 new HIV infections appeared; 3,300 adult deaths were recorded; 3,900 children were living with HIV/AIDS; and 970 children deaths

were recorded. This information will be most useful for the initiation of programmes on Orphan and Vulnerable Children, and Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission services.

After their establishment on September and October 2005 respectively, the Somaliland AIDS Commission (SOLNAC) and Puntland AIDS Commission (PAC) Secretariats are now close to being fully operational with the needed human resources and office space through the support of the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM). On 1 December 2005, the new structures were supported by the UN to coordinate the 2005 World AIDS Day (WAD) in Somaliland and Puntland. In South Central, UNICEF and UNAIDS worked closely with the TFG to help coordinate a number of activities to mark WAD. The opportunity of the WAD was used to gain traction on the AIDS response, promote local ownership as well as build local capacity.

The report for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS has been finalized and will be released at the UN General Assembly in May 2006. Thanks to this event, Somalia will once again appear on the global map. According to the report, the HIV/AIDS response in Somalia improved between 2003 and 2005 in strategic planning, policy formulation, prevention and treatment services, and monitoring and evaluation. The report recommends refocusing of prevention and treatment services on the ground.

The last two months have witnessed great progress in the implementation of HIV intervention services on the ground. So far, 86 People Living with HIV have enrolled in the ART project in Hargeisa, Somaliland which started in June 2005 supported by UN agencies and other development partners. Also, the project has been used to distribute 300 condoms freely every month to all patients. In Bossaso, a meeting to scale up prevention, treatment, care and support services, and promote nationwide access to all those who need it, is being planned for 23-24 February by UNAIDS and WHO in collaboration local authorities and stakeholders. It is expected that existing obstacles and impediments affecting access to services and scaling-up will be identified and strategic actions areas agreed upon.

HEALTH and NUTRITION

Even before the drought started, malnutrition rates in the worse affected areas were already unacceptably high with some pockets in Gedo registering up to 20% acute malnutrition. Malnutrition rates have now reached 25% in some areas of Gedo and could get worse in the coming months. Decreasing access to acceptable and sufficient levels of water and food are contributing to the deterioration, which, accompanied to an increase in communicable diseases and limited access to health care services, will impact on the general health situation. For the populations of Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba and parts of Bay and Bakool, the coming months could bring horrifying hardship.

Between 23 and 30 January 2006, an interagency nutrition survey was conducted by FSAU, ACF and UNICEF in Wajid district (excluding IDPs in Wajid town) which reported global acute malnutrition rate at 14.7%, and severe acute malnutrition at 2.2%. Six cases of oedema were also recorded. Food security appeared to be better in the southern part of the district than in the north. The malnutrition rates appear to be within the range considered typical in Wajid district.

During early February, an interagency survey was conducted in two IDP settlements in Wajid town (the third settlement rejected the survey). The assessment mission visited every occupied structure and surveyed all children aged 6-59 months or with length/height of 65.0-109.9 cm. A total of 142 children from 111 households were assessed and a global acute malnutrition of 27.1% and severe acute malnutrition of 9% was recorded. About 3.5% of the children surveyed had oedema. All the severely malnourished and sick children were referred to the nearest health facility in Wajid town. Dietary diversity was noted as being very poor with almost all (99%) households consuming three or fewer food groups¹. Cereals and sugar were the main food items consumed. The IDPs mainly came from within Wajid district (50%), Belet Hawa (18%), Rabdure (13%) and Elberde (10%) and the main reasons for movement were lack of food (52%), water shortage (18%), civil insecurity (9%) and search for employment (9%). The malnutrition rates recorded at the Wajid IDP sites are significantly higher than those of the surrounding area and than the typical levels for the district.

Rabdure district has experienced a recurrent drought with the cumulative effect of poor harvest, reduced pastures, population movement and disruption of livelihoods leading to a deterioration of both nutrition and food security. An inter-agency nutrition survey was conducted by FSAU, IMC and UNICEF from 19 to 23 January 2006, the results of which showed a global acute malnutrition rate of 15.9% and a severe acute malnutrition of 1.4%. No cases of oedema were identified. The malnutrition rates appear to be within the range considered typical in Rabdure district.

¹ Food groups are based on the FAO food group classification.

During December 2005 and January 2006, districts in Puntland and Somaliland received catch-up measles vaccination campaigns, although the campaign in Sool was interrupted in December due to access and security problems when vaccines arriving from Hargeisa were confiscated by the local authorities in Las Anood. Despite efforts to curtail the appearance of the disease in South/Central, measles outbreaks were reported in many areas. In Baidoa, Bay region, an 11% mortality rate was recorded following a house to house assessment conducted by UNICEF and partners in late December in which over 500 cases and 25 deaths were found. Given the humanitarian emergency unraveling in southern Somalia, aid partners are now focusing their activities on the most affected areas, launching a phased measles vaccination campaign for the south in March 2006.

The last two months also saw concerning increases in diarrhea in some areas in response to which cholera preparedness plans are being updated. Use of poor water quality influences increased water-borne diseases, the most concerning of which is cholera. There were no cases of cholera confirmed during December and January, but given that this is the start of the cholera season, drought affected areas are at an increased risk. Cholera in Somalia increases when the water levels are low, as this concentrates the amount of *Vibrio cholerae* in the shallow wells. Malnutrition is also a predisposing factor. WHO and UNICEF are pre-positioning cholera stocks in numerous locations in central and south areas, while joint health and water and sanitation responses – such as chlorination and rehabilitation of water sources - are also being implemented.

As the drought progresses in the coming months and access to water and food becomes increasingly scarce, the health situation in Somalia will need to be closely monitored. Existing disease surveillance mechanisms are being intensified and amplified to enable timely detection and response. An epidemiological analysis was undertaken of the year 2005 which among other things showed that coverage provided by the sentinel surveillance sites is not regular, nor sufficient. Health partners have been requested to join the mechanism in order to make it more robust. Health partners will also embark on mortality surveys.

The continued spread of polio throughout Somalia is of major concern. The first cases of the P1 wild poliovirus emerged in Mogadishu in September 2005 ending the country's three year status as polio-free. By the end of 2005 a total of 178 polio cases were confirmed: 159 in Mogadishu, 15 in Lower Shabelle, 2 in Somaliland (Sool), and 2 in southern Somalia. During January 2006, a total of 26 acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) cases were reported, all of which in South/Central zone except for one in Puntland. All are awaiting laboratory confirmation. During December and January, sub-national Immunization Days were conducted throughout South/Central the coverage of which is presently being analysed. Thought to have originated in Yemen, the spread of the wild poliovirus is attributed to an alarmingly high rate of refusals for polio vaccination coupled with difficulty in access due to insecurity and the remoteness of some areas. WHO, UNICEF and partners will continue with their immunization activities, the next of which are expected in the second half of February 2006.

LIVELIHOOD and FOOD SECURITY

In early January 2006, FAO/FSAU with FEWS/NET completed the post 2005 *Deyr* seasonal analysis according to which around 1.7 million people – not including up to 400,000 IDPs - are in need of urgent assistance until June 2006. Around 710,000 people are in a state of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis, while 915,000 are experiencing a Humanitarian Emergency (figures inclusive of those at high risk of descending into either category in the coming months). The worse hit regions are in southern Somalia, in Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba, and areas of Bay and Bakool. Northern Gedo and the riverine areas in the Juba regions have been identified at moderate risk of a famine. All livelihood systems (pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and riverine agriculturalists) are affected by the crisis.

According to the Survey, in northern Somalia, the *Deyr* rains were generally normal which enabled continued improvement of rangeland and livestock conditions. Some localized pockets in the North emerging from over three years of drought, however, received very little rain, placing recovery of communities at risk. In central regions, recovery is also affected by ongoing unresolved conflict. In northern and central areas, around 290,000 people thus remain in a state of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis and in need of continued assistance.

In southern Somalia, around 1.4 million people are in need of urgent critical assistance. Immediate causes of the crisis are a severe drought combined with localised conflicts. Crop production for this year is reported to be 50% of the post war average – the lowest cereal production in over ten years. In some areas, extreme water shortages have pitted wildlife against human beings. In Gabato village in Bakool, a water catchment that has served entire villages for over 50 years is now dry for the second time in its history. In some areas of Bakool, families are reportedly spending between 70-80% of their income to buy water. Cattle deaths in the worst affected areas are already reaching 20-30%, and could reach 80% by April. Pastoralists are culling weak animals and young calves, and inducing still births to save their resources. Livestock prices have dropped drastically while food prices have

increased substantially. The price of sorghum, a generally cheaper cereal, is now more expensive than maize in some locations. As mentioned above, malnutrition has reached morally unacceptable rates (25%), while measles outbreaks have been reported in many areas. Confused migration patterns of both livestock and civilians are reported, the majority moving toward riverine areas or urban centers throughout the country. In Bay and Bakool, preliminary assessments reported massive closure of schools: only 14 schools are currently open out of 115.

Further stressing the situation is the regional nature of the drought which limits coping mechanisms and available resources. The effects of the drought will only aggravate as the *Jilaa* dry season progresses, during which more resource-based conflicts can be expected over ever depleting resources. As more insecurity emerges, access and humanitarian space will increasingly be affected. The next rains are not expected before April and according to FAO/FSAU, should the rains fail or be delayed, the humanitarian situation in Somalia could degenerate to levels comparable to the 1993 famine. Preliminary climatic forecasts draw a bleak picture.

Since drought early warning signals in November 2005, UN agencies and NGOs stepped up monitoring and enhanced preparedness plans. In early January 2006, the TFG established a Ministerial Disaster Committee to liaise closely with the aid community on the drought response. In the course of January various meetings took place among the various stakeholders which helped reach a common understanding on the magnitude of the crisis. As both the TFG and aid partners have stressed, the present emergency in Somalia is a water crisis and will require an integrated multi-sectoral response as it affects water and sanitation, food security, health, nutrition, protection and access. Furthermore, the response will need to be two-pronged providing both emergency assistance as well as medium-term livelihood support for the rehabilitation of assets.

To ensure a timely and effective response, a Drought Working Group has been established (see next section on Coordination) to ensure an integrated approach and to cover the most immediate needs in the various sectors. While some interventions in the water and sanitation, food, livestock and agriculture sectors have already started, implementation of sector plans remains somewhat limited by insecurity, weak operational capacity as well as bottlenecks in funding and the supply line.

For the next six months, WFP has increased its country wide food aid programme from 18,000 to 95,000 MT, 77,000 MT of which is aimed for the south. WFP, however, still has a shortfall of 34,000 MT and while there is food in the pipeline, WFP's response until April is unlikely to meet expectations. The Agency is finalizing logistics arrangements and distribution plans in more than 250 distribution points covering 19 districts in the six drought stricken southern regions. CARE still awaits donor confirmation to expand its normal Rural Food Security Programme to meet the increased drought needs, while ICRC's food distribution was imminent at the time of drafting. Organizations like ICRC, FAO, COOPI, VSF and ACF are implementing projects in support of livestock and agriculture.

Within Somalia, partners have doubled-up their coordination activities which are taking place with increased frequency and in more locations. Further to Johwar, Wajid has developed to become the central coordination hub for southern regions and some agencies have reinforced their presence there to strengthen programming and monitoring. In this respect, efforts are being made to map out response plans to identify who is doing what where in the different sectors and gaps that need addressing.

On 6 February 2006, former Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik was appointed by the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, as the new Special Envoy for the Horn and Eastern Africa. The Special Envoy will ensure effective humanitarian action and will act as a catalyst for response and cooperation among the UN, affected countries, donors and aid partners at the national, regional and international level.

COORDINATION and CONSOLIDATED APPEALS PROCESS (CAP)

Following consultation with partners and in compliance with the Global Humanitarian Reform, the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in Somalia took place on 2 February 2006 the discussions of which focused on the sector response to the drought and requirements for advocacy. In Somalia, seven IASC clusters have been identified together with respective cluster co-leads (from NGOs and UN Agencies) to plan and coordinate sectoral responses to humanitarian issues. These are: i) food aid; ii) agriculture and livelihood; iii) water and sanitation; iv) health and Nutrition; v) access; vi) protection; and vii) education. The IASC membership includes OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO, UNHCR, ICRC, CARE, Gedo Health Consortium, DRC, NOVIB and Concern. The NGOs were selected by the Somalia NGO Consortium to represent the NGO community. FAO/FSAU and FEWS/NET will act as technical advisors, while a seat has remained vacant to be filled by a Somali representative.

The Drought Working Group established to handle the drought response is in line with the cluster approach. The Working Group is composed of the different cluster co-leads and the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator and will meet on a weekly/biweekly basis to review the response to the drought, identify gaps, ensure sectoral cross-coordination and discuss advocacy needs.² On a needs basis, the Working Group will consult with the TFG's Ministerial Disaster Committee.

While discussions among partners in January had opted to hold-off on a revision of the Somalia 2006 CAP, members of the Somalia IASC decided that a review of the Appeal was now timely in order to better reflect the magnitude of the ongoing crisis. Until the revised Appeal is published, however, donors are strongly urged not to delay their contribution to the existing Appeal and to similarly support increased food requirements. Critical humanitarian needs are vast and attention must not and cannot be drawn away from Somalia. If needs are not addressed now and in a concerted fashion, Somalia will only descend into further tragedy with possible implications even for the political process. The context in Somalia is not what it used to be in 1992 - the operating environment now is such that a difference can be made with international support.

At the first monthly meeting of the Somalia IASC with donors on 7 February, donors were fully supportive of this new coordination mechanism. Donors also demonstrated an interest in further supporting the Humanitarian Response Fund, an emergency funding tool administered by OCHA Somalia for which NGOs are now encouraged to submit proposals to kick-start interventions. To meet on a monthly basis, both the Somalia IASC and the IASC meeting with donors will enable increased dialogue on humanitarian issues alone and enhance advocacy efforts.

JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (JNA)

The Somali JNA has significantly expanded its efforts since October 2005, with over 55 experts from the UN, World Bank and Somali Diaspora being brought into the Cluster teams and some 65 counterparts being involved in the exercise. With the JNA officially launched during an Inception Retreat in November 2005, the process is now well into the field assessment phase with cluster experts fully engaged in analysis, traveling to Somalia assembling technical data and consulting representatives from sectors relevant to the clusters.³

The six in-country consultative JNA workshops involving experts, civil society representatives, public and private sector are in progress. The first one was held in Hargeisa between 16 and 18 January 2006 and saw around 100 participants including representatives of regional focus groups including women's groups, youth, civil society, traditional elders, religious groups, business community, professionals and regional administrations. An outcome of the Hargeisa workshop was the commitment and support to the JNA by Somaliland.

Between 12 and 15 December 2005, a JNA Planning Workshop took place in Jowhar which successfully initiated the organization of four in-country workshops for the South, Central, Benadir and South-West zones. The planning workshop gave a thorough orientation on the JNA concept and progress and served as a bridge-building exercise among the various Governors (or their representatives from the regions), the TFG leadership and civil society. In a communiqué, Governors pledged their unconditional support for the JNA and access to their respective regions.

Beyond these four zones, a consultative workshop is also planned for Puntland. All five remaining workshops are expected to take place in the course of February 2006. The purpose of the workshops is to identify preliminary priorities from a regional and sectoral perspective, and relevant sources of data and information. The workshops will happen in parallel to field assessments and culminate in the finalization of a draft Reconstruction and Development Programme document by mid 2006.

² A Drought Newsletter issued by the Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia in consultation with the Drought Working Group is now being issued on a regular basis.

³ JNA clusters: i) Governance, safety and the rule of law; ii) macro-economic policy framework and data development; iii) infrastructure; iv) social services and protection of vulnerable groups; iv) productive sectors and environment; v) livelihoods and solutions for the displaced. Cross-cutting issues: i) peace building, reconciliation and conflict prevention; ii) capacity building and institutional development (public and private) plus anti corruption initiatives; iii) gender parity and human rights.