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Office of the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in Kenya

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Government launches a long-term National Economic Stimulus Program to address immediate drought needs, and revamp agro-infrastructure**
- **Long Rains Assessment results reveal dire needs in drought-hit areas**
- **Nutrition status of children indicate a worrying trend**
- **Ministry of Agriculture to lead food security assessment in Kenya's Grain Basket**
- **Humanitarian community observe World Humanitarian Day on 19 August**
- **IASC Kenya emphasises the need for an El Nino Contingency Plan**

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General Overview

With the drought conditions set to only worsen in the coming months, and with 9.9 million people said to be food insecure, the Government of Kenya launched a long-term National Economic Stimulus Programme. The Plan aims to address immediate drought needs and also start implementing infrastructure development in the agriculture sector that will revamp disused irrigation systems and introduce drought resistant crops. The Plan was launched by President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga during their visit, on 18 August, to Marsabit district in northern Kenya which is hard-hit by drought. To kick off the scaled-up drought response programme, the president flagged off livestock off-take by Kenya Meat Commission, borehole drilling, distribution of food and water to the affected families. The President advised beneficiaries of the livestock off-take programme to save the earnings and restock when the drought situation improves. Mr. Kibaki said government personnel would be stationed in the affected areas to purchase the livestock for ksh.8 000 per live animal.



Bare farm in Kajiado earlier prepared for long rains. Seeds did not sprout. Source: OCHA Kenya

The Long Rains Assessment results indicate a dire situation for arid and semi-land lands, highlighting severe food and water shortages, increased livestock deaths because of lack of pasture & water, and disease spread because of animal migration plus emerging conflicts over resources.

The Ministry of Agriculture will lead a food security assessment on 30th August- 5 September in the grain basket of Kenya where it is feared that there is crop-failure of between 40 % - 90 % in some districts, as a result of the failed Long Rains season of March-June this year. The crop failure in this region is expected to exacerbate the already grave food insecurity in Kenya.

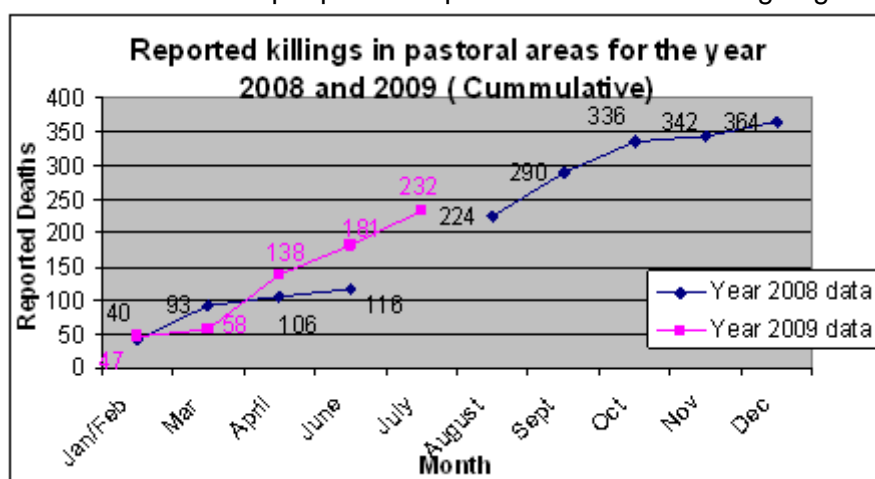
OCHA Regional Head of Office for East and Central Africa, Ms. Besida Tonwe died of a heart attack in Geneva, on 10 August 2009. Ms. Tonwe served in various portfolio in the UN for close to twenty years. Ms. Tonwe, buried in Geneva wheresome of her family resides, has left behind a young daughter.

UN OCHA Director in New York, Mr. Rashid Khalikov, on 15 August visited Kajiado district, south of Nairobi to see firsthand how the prolonged drought in Kenya is impacting livelihoods of affected populations. He visited a ¹CERF funded Nutrition Project implemented by Mercy USA in Mile 46 in Kajiado Central district. The director was accompanied by the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Ali D. Mohamed, and Ministry of State for Special Programmes and OCHA Head of Office. The mission saw the extreme coping mechanisms of the drought such as charcoal burning leading to environmental destruction, long trekking distances in search of water and pasture, malnourished children in a health centre and dried up water points. During his visit to Kenya Mr. Khalikov participated at the Regional Humanitarian Financing Workshop held 10-14 August, and held a meeting with all staff to plan a memorial for Ms. Besida Tonwe, Head of OCHA Regional Office for East and Central Africa, who suddenly died in Geneva on 10 August 2009.

The humanitarian community in Kenya on 19 commemorated the inaugural World Humanitarian Day, under the theme, *The Human Face of Drought*. OCHA coordinated a photo exhibition with pictures received from UN agencies, the Kenya Red Cross and NGOs depicting the impact of drought on food security, water, health, agriculture and livestock. Further, pictures showed how the worsening drought conditions have led to displacements and deaths because of resource-based conflicts. OCHA Kenya Head of Office highlighted humanitarian issues in Kenya brought about by multiple factors- climate change, chronic poverty, water and energy scarcity, the food and financial crises, economic migration, population growth, urbanization, pandemics and political instability. The day was a joint commemoration with four OCHA Offices and humanitarian partners based in Kenya and Somalia who highlighted the risks humanitarian workers face to deliver aid, referring to three international aid workers abducted in July in North-eastern Kenya, and 48 workers that have died in Somalia since January 2008. This year's inaugural commemoration comes following the decision of the sixty-third United Nations General Assembly last December to designate 19 August, date of the bombing at the UN's Baghdad headquarters in 2003, as World Humanitarian Day. Globally, World Humanitarian Day 2009 will have three areas of focus:

- To draw attention to humanitarian needs worldwide;
- To acknowledge the ongoing work of humanitarian staff around the globe;
- To honour those who have lost their lives in humanitarian service.

The cumulative number of people killed this year in pastoral areas has risen to 242. The number of those reported dead this year is higher than the 222 reported at the same time last year. Seventeen (17) people are reported killed during this month of August 2009. Despite the signing of a peace agreement between the Turkana and Pokot on 29 July 2009, violent conflict between the two communities continues to escalate. At least 25 people are reported killed since the signing of the agreement.



¹ Central Emergency Response Fund

II. Humanitarian Situation

Food Security

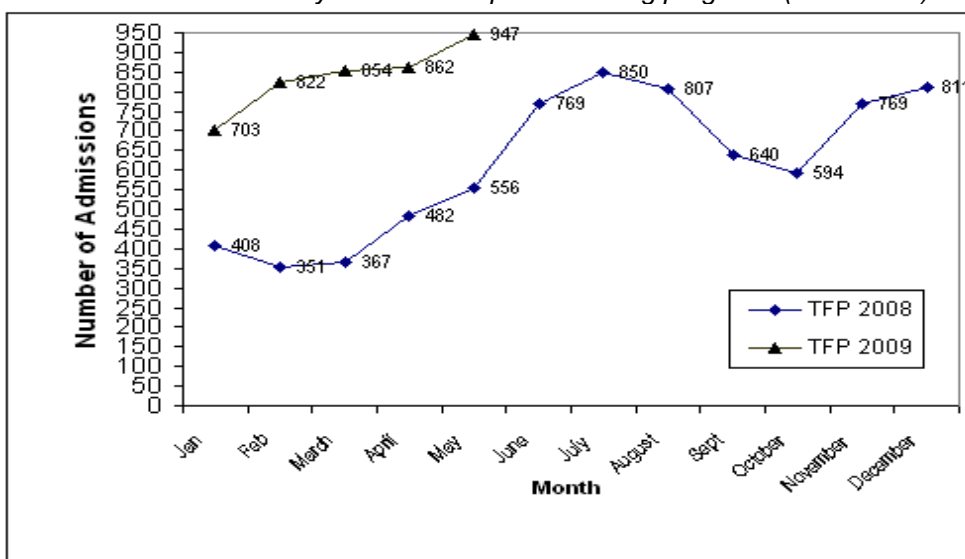
The Kenya Food Security Steering Group on 11 August announced that 4.5 million people are in urgent need food aid. The humanitarian community is expecting these figures to rise sharply by the end of the year as needs are seen rising in districts, for example out of an estimated population of 334,476 people in Garrisa district (North Eastern Kenya) 106,104 people were in July reported to be beneficiaries of the government/WFP run Emergency Operations Programme (EMOP). A month earlier, Arid Land Resource Management Project indicated in Garrisa alone, 92,288 people received food distribution under EMOP in June 2009. Other than food aid, there are huge demands to over-stretched water resources, health, and livestock welfare, a main source of livelihoods in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. The 4.5 million people on EMOP, is expected to rise by the end of the year.

Ministry of Agriculture says due to the near total failure of rains in lower Eastern Province, expected production has been revised downwards by 46% from 1.3 million bags to 0.7 million bags in the long rains. Rift Valley Province may harvest 11.2 million bags in the long rains season down from the earlier projections of 13.5 million bags due to the continuing dry season. This is a reduction in production by 44% compared to 20 million bags achieved in the province in a normal season. In some parts of the province, farmers have been forced to replant twice or thrice. This has resulted in the crop being at different stages of growth which impacts on ultimate harvests expected at a particular time. Harvesting of maize has started in the South Rift (Sotik, Iotokitok, Bomet and Narok). Maize is at drying and harvesting stage in greater Meru and Embu areas of Eastern Province but there has been almost total crop failure in lower Eastern where rains have been very little and unreliable.

Nutrition

Levels of acute malnutrition in young children are increasing and are of serious concern in the Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASAL) of Kenya. UNICEF estimates that about 250,000 and 40,000 children below five years old are affected by moderate and severe acute malnutrition respectively and require immediate treatment. Despite all efforts to ensure adequate coverage of critical nutrition services in the most affected areas, the coverage remains far from the minimum standard of 50% to have a public health impact and would require immediate scale-up in order to have a public health impact on child survival and development (for instance, as of June 2009, the average coverage was about 30% for arid districts). Recent nutritional survey findings indicate that levels of global acute malnutrition are critical in Arid districts where rates are above 15 and 20% (WHO, 2006). In addition, levels of global acute malnutrition are serious in districts traditionally not significantly affected by acute malnutrition such as Kajiado and Kinango where rates are above 10% (WHO, 2006). Also, rapid assessments and nutrition surveillance, based on Mid Upper Arm Circumference, indicate a nutritional deterioration in children below 5 years old in most districts. Finally, admissions in therapeutic feeding programs are increasing and indicate a worrying trend as shown in the graph below.

Admissions of children < 5yrs old in therapeutic feeding programs (2008-2009)



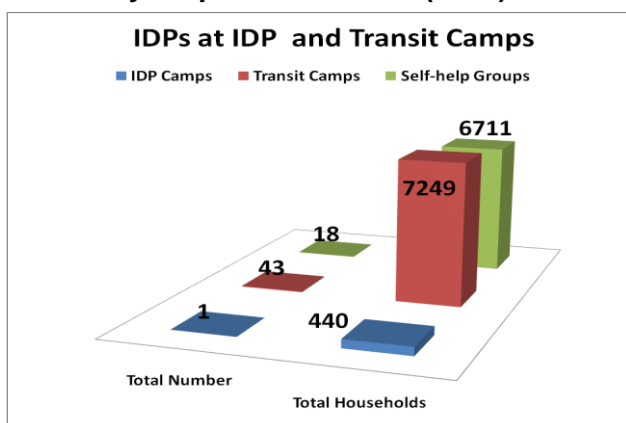
Health

OCHA conducted a field mission to Ukambani, east of Nairobi, where drought is manifesting in poor nutritional status of children, death of livestock and environmental degradation. Pellagra disease is suspected in children under 12, and is linked to Vitamin B deficiency. The skin complications have variously been associated with the vitamin deficiency related Pellagra though no clinical confirmations have been made. Visit to Makindu district hospital where one child was admitted with similar conditions did not bear much information since Medical Superintendent said they were still carrying out diagnosis. He confirmed that they suspected some drug reaction or vitamin deficiency complications. There is need for clinical diagnosis to ascertain the disease and concerted survey to establish the exact number of affected people. This may include mobile health outreach programme in the remote areas with a view of reaching other unreported cases. If confirmed, there is need for medical care which may include Nicotinamide or niacin taken orally usually effective in reversing the clinical manifestations of pellagra and or provision of a high-protein diet and B-complex vitamins essential for complete restoration of health.

WASH

OCHA mission to Makueni, Makueni and Kitui revealed that emergency water trucking is needed as the drought conditions are worsening. This will be required mainly by institutions such as schools and hospitals and communities. The districts in Ukambani have an average of three water tankers which are sometimes shared among two districts. Even in the event of successful water trucking system, the communities have few storage containers. There is need for an accompanied supply of water containers to the households. The long-term solutions lie with rehabilitation of boreholes, water harvesting, and desilting of dams. Support to on-going interventions by German Agro Action (GAA) in Mwingi and Makindu, Catholic Diocese of Kitui is needed to scale up their water interventions in other areas.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)



There are 2,200 IDPs remaining in the Eldoret showground camp. The IDPs mainly comprise of hawkers and landless squatters. 7,249 households are hosted in 43 transit camps in the Rift Valley provinces. There are 18 self-help groups hosting 6,711 households.

A stakeholders meeting on the protection and durable solutions for IDPs was held in Nairobi. The Forum created an opportunity for relevant institutions and individuals (Government, UN Agencies, NGOs, donors and displaced people) to discuss the progress made in protection and assistance to IDPs over the last twenty years. Mechanisms for collective action and durable

solutions were also discussed. The first day was devoted to taking stock of the IDP environment, with an analysis of the root causes of the IDP problems in Kenya. The second day was dedicated to addressing the need for a shared IDP policy with an emphasis on prevention, protection, assistance and durable solutions. At the conclusion of the forum, the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs pledged to work towards the articulation of a legal framework and national policy around which response to IDP situations can be provided.

Refugees

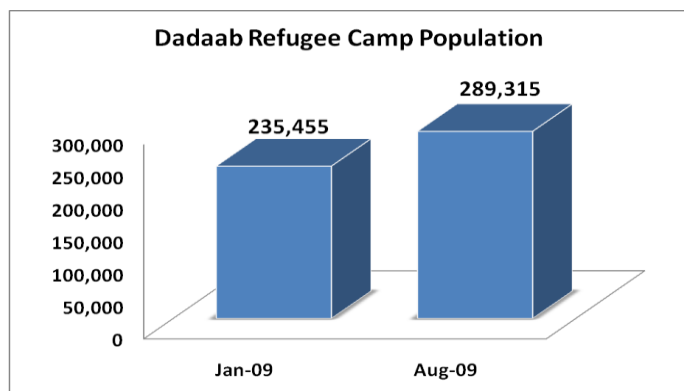
The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Antonio Guterres arrived in Kenya on 4 August for a three day mission.² The Commissioner visited Hagadera Refugee Camp in Dadaab on 4 August. During his visit, he noted a reduction of maternal mortality rates and improvement of nutrition from what he had seen in his previous visit in June last year. He was able to get first hand information regarding congestion in the camps and the challenges that Dadaab faces in assisting refugees. The High Commissioner also held talks with President Mwai Kibaki, Prime Minister Raila Odinga and other senior government officials. He presented the Government of Kenya with a five-pronged strategy which he hoped would ease congestion in



High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Antonio Guterres visiting a maternity ward at the IRC run hospital in Dadaab. UNHCR/E Hockstein.

² UNHCR Donors Update, August 2009

Dadaab and address security concerns and other issues raised by the hosting community. The strategy includes; support to the local community, improving facilities in the refugee camps, relocation of some refugees from Dadaab to Kakuma, creation of new refugee hosting sites in Dadaab and improving the security environment in Dadaab. The High Commissioner also held meetings with donors and representatives of various agencies working with the Kenya refugee programme.



UNHCR reports that Dadaab continues to receive an influx of new arrivals from Somalia. 47,000 refugees have been registered this year with more than 41,000 from Somalia. They are mainly from Juba and Mogadishu, where significant fighting and insecurity continue. The overall population in Dadaab currently stands at 289,315 persons as of 7 August 2009, an increase of 22% since the beginning of 2009 (from 235,455 persons).

Disaster Risk Reduction/Management

Discussions on El Nino Contingency Planning are progressing with the IASC Country Team meeting of Kenya of 12 August emphasising the need for a CP in the event of El Nino causing flooding. The Climate Outlook Forum will meet 24 and 25th August 2009 after which OCHA will collaborate with partners to move forward in the CP by early September.

Protection

On 23 July 2009, the Eldoret Protection Working Group selected District Children's Officer (DCO), Uasin Gishu District to be the Chairperson of the Group. The DCO is an active government participant of the Protection Working Group and also currently chairs the Children's Sub-Cluster in Eldoret.

Shelter

The Chairperson of the NAKA self-help group in Eldoret informed a UNHCR and IOM team that the group had not yet finished paying for the 3 acres of land that they had bought in Eldoret for their settlement. They have so far paid 100,000 Ksh only out of the 1 million shillings price agreed with the land owner. The group expected to raise the remaining 900,000 Ksh when they receive the 25,000 Ksh shelter grant from the Government. The group members had received the shelter. This has caused uncertainty amongst the members as the agreed time (March 2009) for final payment has far passed. Furthermore, delays in completing the sale deal have made them unable to complete the land transfer and obtain the title deed. This lack of title deed on the land has caused the group to be excluded from the IOM shelter programme. The NAKA self-help group is amongst other self-help groups formed by IDPs in the Rift Valley region who opted for resettlement in another part of the country as a durable solution after the displacement of December 2007. The majority of them were doing business in their former places of habitual residence, but could not return there as they did not own land. UNHCR will follow up with the Ministry of State for Special Programme in Nairobi.

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