

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FUND



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SOMALIA

WHY THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FUND (HRF)?

The Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) for Somalia was created in 2004 and has developed into a strategic response tool that pools resources from various donors to support rapid humanitarian response in the early stages of an emergency, and fill gaps in the later stages of a crisis. Originally established to support drought response activities in northern Somalia, its use was later expanded to cover emergency needs throughout the country. The HRF is a flexible and adaptable tool that is adjusted to meet new and emerging needs of affected populations.

To date, and including the special Tsunami-HRF that was established after the tsunami hit Somalia in late 2004, 98 projects have been supported through the Fund in response to various needs arising from humanitarian emergencies throughout the country.

Southern Somalia experienced heavy *Deyr* rains in November/December 2006 that resulted in widespread flooding which in turn resulted in significant displacement, particularly of riverine communities along the Juba and Shabelle rivers. The HRF prioritised flood response interventions by supporting 30 projects between January and April 2007. The projects funded during this period were more than the total of 22 projects supported in all of 2006.

During its Post *Deyr* Survey, FAO's Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU) found that 255,000 people had been displaced by the floods. Projects supported under the HRF provided drinking water, health and nutrition services as well as shelter and non-food items to the affected populations. As flood waters receded, the HRF shifted support to early recovery and flood mitigation activities such as strengthening of river embankments and de-silting of irrigation canals so as to contribute to flood control.

As the HRF has evolved, efforts have been made to improve access to the Fund by national NGOs. Between January and April 2007, thirteen Somali NGOs received direct funding alongside nine international NGOs and three UN agencies. This is a marked improvement compared to 2006 when only four Somali NGOs were funded alongside eighteen other international NGOs.

Funding Update

Since the beginning of the year the HRF has supported 30 projects with the carryover funds from 2006 of US\$3,277,110 and contributions from Sweden and the CERF in 2007. The HRF receives support from the UK, Netherlands, Norway, Ireland, Sweden and the CERF. A total of US\$8 million is appealed under the 2007 Somalia CAP.

HOW DOES THE HRF FUNCTION?

The HRF's aim is to improve the timeliness and appropriateness of humanitarian responses through the provision of a flexible resource that can be drawn on quickly. The flexibility of the Fund allows, for example for a project to be changed if the need is met before completion of the projected period. For instance, a project by IOM to repatriate irregular Ethiopian immigrants from Somalia was nearing completion, when a fresh crisis affecting the same population in the same geographic area broke out. IOM was authorised to use the remaining money to support the Ethiopian immigrants' emergency needs.

The HRF works through an Advisory Board, comprising UN agencies, international and national NGOs and is chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia. Project proposals are submitted to OCHA and shared with relevant cluster leads, FAO/FSAU and FEWSNet for initial review; the Board members are subsequently asked for recommendations. From the submission of a project to the release of funds, the process should take a short period, including a few days for funds transfer from Geneva. The maximum funding ceiling is US\$250,000 per a project and an implementing partner is permitted to have a maximum of three concurrent projects.

The HRF also facilitates enhanced coordination. Before a project is selected, other partners working in the targeted area of intervention and sector experts are consulted on the projects' benefits. In addition, the partner must demonstrate that the affected communities were consulted on how the intended project would be implemented.

IMPACT OF HRF FUNDED PROJECTS IN 2007

Contributed towards saving lives and alleviating suffering of floods affected people...

Flooding at the end of 2006 occurred at a time when communities in southern Somali regions were starting to recover from the impact of multiple years of drought. As part of the humanitarian response, Horn Relief distributed Non-Food Items to 6,200 flood affected households in Lower Juba. UNICEF was supported through the HRF to carry out three similar projects benefiting 76,600 people displaced by floods and conflict in other parts of Lower Juba and Mogadishu. In addition, an NCA project provided 30,780 flood-affected people in Gedo with non-food items such as blankets, water jerry cans and cooking utensils. HIWA carried out a project to fill in response gaps by distributing jerry cans and kitchen sets to 1,200 flood affected people in parts of Hiran.



A child at a Supplementary feeding centre(SFP)

Contributed towards building resilience of flood affected people:

Should seasonal rains be heavy, flooding can occur twice a year along the Shabelle and Juba rivers. The effects of flooding can be reduced through strengthening of river banks and desilting of irrigation canals that draw water from the rivers to support farming activities. Since March 2007, the HRF is supporting five projects aimed at reinforcing the river banks and rehabilitating primary canals at various points along the Juba and Shabelle rivers. The projects will be implemented by MURDO, WOCA, UNDP, COSV and SDRO. It is hoped that the projects will help mitigate the extent and impact of flooding in the target area.

Rehabilitation of water sources to enhance water quality and quantity...

While flooding caused significant displacement, wells and latrines were also inundated which resulted in an increase in reported cases of watery diarrhoea in early 2007. The HRF is presently supporting six projects addressing the rehabilitation of water sources in Hiran and Bay regions as well as in and around Mogadishu. The provision of clean water in areas near Mogadishu was particularly important to meet the needs of people displaced as a result of conflict in the recent months.

Contributed towards rebuilding livelihoods....

In the area of livestock livelihoods support, the HRF has so far supported two projects in addition to three projects in agriculture. Some 6,180 small animals were distributed by VetAid to agro-pastoral families in 15 villages in Gedo Region that lost their livestock in the recent drought and were later affected by heavy flooding. In addition to this, VSF- Germany has recently started investigating camel deaths in Puntland through the support of the HRF. Under Agriculture, the HRF supported distribution of farming tools and seeds in Bakool region through ARAO. The high level of asset loss indicates that recovery could take several years. Muslim Aid is assisting 5,118 people in Hiran to restart agricultural activities. HARDO is doing a similar project for 10,500 people near Jowhar. FAO is teaming up with the Centre for Education and Democracy (CED) to support a fisheries project on River Shabelle to assist the flood affected communities to diversify their diets and livelihoods.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

The HRF will continue to be used to meet urgent humanitarian assistance addressing the most immediate needs of the conflict displaced populations, including shelter, blankets, and water and sanitation purification. The urgently needed humanitarian response to the crisis is hampered by several access and logistical challenges such as impassable roads, and insecurity, which will only worsen the already precarious humanitarian situation of people recovering from the drought, floods and conflict related displacement.

Very high levels of asset loss and financial indebtedness across the board are indicative that full recovery could take several years. As the HRF is accessible to both UN agencies and NGOs, it remains a strategic tool in supporting a cross-sectoral approach to meet immediate humanitarian and early livelihood support needs of affected populations.

The HRF will thus continue to be used to enhance rapid response and meet identified gaps in all parts of Somalia. Prioritization will be undertaken based on the level of vulnerability and concerted efforts will be made to enhance access to funds by Somali national NGOs and CBOs.

Members of Advisory Board: UNICEF, WHO, HORN RELIEF, NGO CONSORTIUM, WFP, FAO, UNHCR, AFREC and UNDP
Advisors to the Board: Cluster leads, FSAU/FAO and UNOCHA

For more information on the HRF please contact Lilian Nduta: Nduta@un.org or Eva Kiti: Kiti@un.org