

ICG Discussion Paper 4A - Current humanitarian situation and access

According to the most recent country-wide needs assessment, 2.4 million people, one in three Somalis, are in need of humanitarian assistance, a 20 percent increase in the number of vulnerable compared to the second half of 2010. The increase is due to a combination of drought, skyrocketing food prices and constant population displacement as a result of the ongoing conflict. Malnutrition rates continue to rise, with 75 per cent of the estimated 241,000 malnourished children in the country residing in the conflict-stricken southern regions. This is due to a combination of factors including lack of clean water - leading to diarrhea - and reduced access to milk as livestock migrate in search of water and pasture. With 1 in 4 children acutely malnourished, and 1 in 23 severely malnourished in southern Somalia, the situation remains one of the worst in the world.

More than 55,000 people have been displaced due to the drought since December 2010. As rain performance was not adequate in most of southern Somalia, including the main maize producing regions, Somalia is expected to slide deeper into crisis leading to an increase in the number of Somalis in need of assistance from the current 2.4 million.

The southern and central Somalia regions remain the epicentre of the humanitarian crisis. The estimation is that since the beginning of the year, more than 100,000 people were displaced within Somalia, mainly due to conflict and drought. The majority were displaced in and around Mogadishu. The new military offensive launched by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and AMISOM against Al Shabaab in late February is still ongoing and civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. Since the beginning of the year, more than 3,200 people have been admitted in the two main hospitals in Mogadishu for weapon-related injuries.

Humanitarian access remains most constrained in southern areas, while in the central region of Galgaduud, access has widely increased in the first half of 2011. With UN international staff finally being able to access the area, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be strengthened and increased response will hopefully reach the current estimated 180,000 people in need in that area. In the south, Al Shabaab continues to control most of the territory. Recently, anti-Al Shabaab groups took control of four districts in Gedo region, namely Belet Xaawo, Luuq, Ceel Waaq and Garbahaarey, and one district in Lower Juba, i.e. Doobley. The humanitarian community is planning inter-cluster needs assessments in some of these areas to develop response plans targeting the population in need. These areas have received limited assistance over the last two years.

The low funding trend since 2008 continued in 2011. The 2011 CAP is only 43 per cent funded. As of the end of May 2011, US\$226 million was received out of the \$530 million requested. The \$226 million includes \$80 million in carry-over funds from 2010, meaning that only \$146 million in new funding has been received, not even half the amount requested almost halfway through year. Although at face value the overall Somalia funding situation over the past three years looks relatively balanced - \$489 million received in 2008, \$559 million in 2009 and \$429 million in 2010, there was a decline of \$178 million in new funding between 2008 and 2010, representing 41 per cent.

In February 2011, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated \$15 million to support humanitarian action in Somalia, including livelihoods support to displaced people and farmers in the south, targeted food assistance, emergency nutrition and health services, maternal and child healthcare, the provision of drinking water and latrines to displaced and drought-

affected people, as well as the distribution of basic household items to displaced people. Pooled funding (Common Humanitarian Fund and CERF) accounted for some 60 per cent of new funding as of the end April 2011. Pooled funds have become an important funding mechanism for Somalia, allowing aid agencies to respond to new emergencies, and to plan ahead for their yearly humanitarian programmes.

I. Key Issues: humanitarian space, conditionalities and accountability

Respect for humanitarian principles in operational terms continues to be eroded both within Somalia and externally. Externally, some donor countries have placed restrictions and conditions on the use of humanitarian assistance that run counter to accepted humanitarian principles and practice, resulting in substantial decline in the overall level of humanitarian assistance available to people facing acute needs.

In country, aid agencies continue to be subjected to demands for registration fees and other sorts of financial demands. Camps have been occupied and assets looted. All parties need to recognize the need for humanitarian access and that aid groups operate on the basis of humanitarian needs alone and independently of political agendas.

The majority of humanitarian programmes in south central are implemented by local NGO partners and, where access is still possible, it is through adherence to the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality. The public perception of such discipline is what allows humanitarian agencies to remain operational and therefore strengthening of political linkages will negatively impact on the delivery of assistance.

Somalia is a high risk environment in many different ways: in terms of the security under which agencies operate, the financial restrictions under which programmes are implemented, the challenging operational environment and the issues of accountability that have been raised. The humanitarian community is investing more and more in monitoring the assistance delivered and in providing help through the recently created Risk Management System (which was also introduced for CHF funded projects). A comprehensive database for Somalia listing all contractors with the UN will be established soon.

II. Key Messages

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance and livelihoods support is expected to increase over the next few months, due to failed crop production in the main maize producing regions of southern Somalia, increases in water and cereal prices, continued conflict and related displacements in south and central regions. The number of people in need had already increased from 2 million in mid 2010 to 2.4 million, representing a 20 percent increase, following the Post-Deyr assessment in December 2010.

Additional funding is required from donors to address increasing humanitarian needs. Only US\$226 million out of \$530 million requested in the 2011 Humanitarian Appeal Process has been received so far, of which \$80 million is carry over from 2010. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance and livelihoods support is increasing. Therefore, even if the 2011 Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) were 100 per cent funded, humanitarian agencies would not be able to address the increasing needs of the population. The 2011 CAP was based on 2 million people in need.

Innovative action is required to facilitate humanitarian access to people in need. For this to occur, international support is required. Somalia is one of the hardest places in the world for aid workers to work. Access to populations such as IDPs, who are often amongst the most vulnerable, continues to remain a challenge in the south.

We urge all parties to the conflict to ensure that civilians are protected from being victims of this conflict. The number of civilian casualties in Somalia remains a serious concern. Since the beginning of 2011, the two main hospitals in Mogadishu recorded over 3,200 war-wounded, representing only a fraction of wounded civilians. All parties to the conflict must not target or use civilians as instruments of war. We urge donors to support AMISOM and the TFG by providing improved equipment, and by ensuring that security forces receive adequate training in IHL, and are monitored in their compliance with IHL.