

UN warns of worsening hunger in East Africa amid third consecutive failed rainy season

14 July 2017 – The third consecutive failed rainy season in East Africa has seriously eroded families' resilience, and urgent and effective livelihood support is required, the United Nations agricultural agency has warned.

According to an alert released today by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), poor rains have worsened hunger and left crops scorched, pastures dry and thousands of livestock dead.

"This is the third season in a row that families have had to endure failed rains – they are simply running out of ways to cope," said FAO's Director of Emergencies Dominique Burgeon in a news release. "Support is needed now before the situation rapidly deteriorates further."

Families are simply running out of ways to cope

The most affected areas, which received less than half of their normal seasonal rainfall, are central and southern Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia, northern and eastern Kenya, northern Tanzania and northeastern and southwestern Uganda.

Increasing humanitarian need

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in these five countries, currently estimated at about 16 million, has increased by about 30 per cent since late 2016.

In Somalia, almost half of the total population is lacking reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

Read more on: [UN urges 'reboot' of drought responses to focus more on preparedness](#)

The food security situation for pastoralists is of particular concern, in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, where animal mortality rates are high and milk production from the surviving animals has declined sharply with negative consequences on food security and nutrition.

"When we know how critical milk is for the healthy development of children aged under five, and the irreversible damage its lack can create, it is evident that supporting pastoralists going through this drought is essential," said Mr. Burgeon.

Poor crop prospects

In several cropping areas across the region, poor rains have caused sharp reductions in planting, and wilting of crops currently being harvested. Despite some late rainfall in May, damage to crops is irreversible.

In addition, fall armyworm, which has caused extensive damage to maize crops in southern Africa, has spread to the east and has worsened the situation.

Cereal prices are surging, driven by reduced supplies and concerns over the performance of current-season crops. Prices in May were at record to near-record levels in most markets and up to double their year-earlier levels.

[Despite some humanitarian progress in Eritrea, UN relief official urges continued aid to tackle hunger](#)

13 July 2017 – The humanitarian situation in Eritrea – which is quite isolated and off the media radars – is “on a positive trajectory” but international donors need to give malnourishment and food insecurity continued attention, a senior United Nations relief official today said.

Back from a three-day fact finding trip to the east African country, John Ging, Director of the Operational Division at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), told journalists in New York that food and security remains a key concern there.

“Eighty per cent of the population depends on subsistence agriculture. The country is susceptible to harsh climatic conditions, especially what we saw with El Nino,” he said.

He noted that half of all children under the age of five in Eritrea suffer from stunting, and 39 per cent are underweight.

“We have to work very actively in that particular area to make sure we are addressing those who are suffering,” said Mr. Ging, noting an extensive programme to aid children in the country run by the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)).

Among other concerns, he mentioned the need to lower infant mortality, to provide people with greater access to clean drinking water and to improve sanitation.

Eritrea, which has a population of roughly 3.5 million, sits at number 179 out of 188 countries on the UN’s Human Development Index, which measures

indicators such as life expectancy and education.

The UN is assisting at nutritional feeding centres and health clinics, and has helped Eritrea achieve “a lot of progress” on the universal development goals.

“I don’t want to overstate the progress – it is significant because it is on a positive trajectory – but we have a long way to go,” Mr. Ging said.

He noted the “modest” appeal under way for \$328 million over the next five years to sustain and build on these programmes. The previous programme was 83 per cent funded.

“The momentum is there but there is a long way to go, so we have to give attention so it continues on that trajectory,” he reiterated.

[UN envoy calls on Security Council to further support fight against terrorism in West Africa, Sahel](#)

13 July 2017 – Amid rising terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa and the United Nations envoy for the region called on the Security Council to further support national and Regional efforts to combat this “serious threat”, including strengthening the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

The efforts of the region’s States towards broader development, increased investment, improved infrastructure and job creation are being undermined by factors of insecurity “both traditional and new,” warned Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the head of the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWAS).

Terrorism and violent extremism, which aggravate humanitarian crises and erode the integrity of the region’s States, have exacerbated traditional threats in West Africa and the Sahel region, which includes Mali, Mauritania, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Nigeria and Niger and Chad.

“These factors, combined with climate change, youth bulge and unemployment and unchecked urbanization constitute veritable push factors underpinning the surge in irregular migration and human trafficking,” he explained to the Council.

In the Sahel, the envoy continued, instability in Mali continues to spread into north-eastern Burkina Faso and western Niger, as evidenced by the recent deadly attacks in the border areas between these three countries. In the Liptako-Gourma region, which links Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, the past month has been marked by an intensification of terrorist activities and

violent extremism, including coordinated cross-border attacks on border crossings.

The leaders of those three countries met in Niamey on 24 January, and announced the formation of a multinational security force. The announcement came in the context of ongoing discussions on the operationalization of the G5 Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S), an initiative that also includes, in addition to Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, Chad and Mauritania. He called on the Security Council to further support the national and regional initiatives of the Sahel States against violent extremism and terrorism.

Turning to the situation in the Lake Chad Basin, Mr. Chambas said that despite the remarkable efforts of the Multinational Joint Force against Boko Haram, recent attacks demonstrated that the terrorist group remains a “serious threat” to the region. The mode and sophistication of these attacks, he added, suggest that the terrorist group has benefited from reinforcements.

The attacks, the UNOWAS chief stressed, have “devastating humanitarian consequences” in the Lake Chad Basin, where 5.2 million people, many of whom are displaced, are in a vulnerable situation.

At the same time, the threats posed by extremists and terrorist groups should not obscure other traditional threats to security in the region, such as the rise of inter-communal tensions in several countries, including clashes between herders and farmers. Also of concern is the intensification of smuggling, cross-border crime and human trafficking in areas where State structures are scarce.

“This insecurity,” he said, “also extends to the Gulf of Guinea, where piracy is increasing.”

In view of these threats, he considered that the [UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel](#) presents an effective multidimensional response to streamline efforts and reduce duplication between the various initiatives in the Sahel.

In that context, Mr. Chambas said he is ready to continue working with the States of the region to strengthen justice, the rule of law, security reform and national reconciliation.

[As Haiti struggles to stamp out cholera, UN urges further international support to combat](#)

disease

13 July 2017 – Noting the challenges that continue to hamper sustained progress in combating cholera in Haiti, the United Nations General Assembly underscored the need to strengthen national health, sanitation and water systems on the island to promote the well-being of the population as well as contributing to Haiti’s sustainable development efforts.

In a resolution adopted today, the General Assembly recognized the efforts made by the Organization in alleviating the cholera epidemic in Haiti, in particular through the [new UN approach to cholera in Haiti](#) and the decrease in the number of suspected cases as a result of intensified response efforts under the approach.

In addition, the Assembly underscored that maintaining the intensified [cholera response and control](#) remained “critical” and invited UN Member States, donors, financial institutions and the private sector to provide voluntary funding and support for the new UN approach.

The 193-member General Assembly also called for greater international and regional cooperation and technical assistance, including through bilateral, North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

Further in the resolution, the Assembly welcomed the intention of the Secretary-General to invite UN Member States to voluntarily direct their share of the unencumbered balance and other income for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, known by its French acronym, MINUSTAH, to support the new approach.

MINUSTAH is drawing down its operations in Haiti and transitioning into a new, smaller follow-on presence to assist the Government in strengthening rule-of-law institutions, security sector and human rights monitoring.

The Assembly also called on the UN chief to “rigorously pursue and complete” the liquidation of the assets of MINUSTAH and when disposing of the assets, to consider their potential use by the UN country team and the Government in supporting the cholera response, as well as sustainable development of Haiti.

[UN’s economic advice ‘proven accurate’ and applicable for sustainable development, review finds](#)

13 July 2017 – Economic analysis by the United Nations over the past 70 years

has proven to be accurate and can help countries navigate through a difficult current world economic situation and implement the new global development goals, an in-depth review of the analysis has found.

First published in January 1948, in the direct aftermath of World War II, the [World Economic and Social Survey](#) is the oldest annual economic and social report of its kind and has promoted a broader understanding of development.

“This year’s Survey reviews 70 years of this flagship publication and draws lessons for the pursuit of sustainable development as we look ahead,” noted UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres in the report’s preface.

Individual countries have pursued widely different development paths during a period that has witnessed the fastest growth in global output and trade than any other period in the history of humanity. The nations have achieved varying results from the bleak to the miracle.

The review, released by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, finds that the free trade, development-friendly, country-specific advice of the Survey over the past 70 years has proven to be accurate and prescient and should continue to aid nations as they peruse implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

Survey’s prescient analysis ‘a valuable tool’ for the [SDGs](#)

“Despite significant changes in global development over the years, many parallels can be drawn between the current challenges facing the international community and those that confronted the world in the past,” Mr. Guterres said, underscoring that the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development “is a moral and economic imperative – and an extraordinary opportunity.”

The review argues that in the early 1950s, the Survey was ahead of the curve in development thinking. It was an early proponent of development not just as the expansion of output, but also as a process of large-scale structural and institutional change for the promotion of high standards of living, full employment and social progress.



General view of opening meeting of 6th session of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations on 2 February 1948 at Lake Success, New York. The 18-member organ of the United Nations was established by the Charter “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom... to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social development of all peoples. UN Photo

The Survey advocated the importance of international coordination, by saying that the action of the government of one country may constitute an element disrupting the equilibrium of other countries in the absence of effective coordination.

In other instances, the Survey in the 1960s contributed to the analytical basis for the establishment of the UN Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)) and UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), providing a forum for developing countries to advance their insertion into global trade and support for industrialization. The Survey also proved to be forward-looking in the 1980s. Before the debt crisis in developing countries erupted, it had raised concerns about large fiscal and trade deficits of developing countries and their implications for the long-term growth and social progress. Leading international financial institutions at the time concentrated on getting economies into balance with little consideration of the social consequences.

The Survey offered a critique of the “one-size-fits-all” approach adopted by adjustment programmes during the debt crisis, which significantly constrained national policy space and contributed to a “lost decade of development” in Latin America and Africa.

This critique supported countries in the design of country specific development strategies in the 1990s. The Survey prudently cautioned against factors leading to the financial crisis in the late 2000s.

This year’s Survey also argues that development progress requires robust global economic growth, solid expansion of trade, and steady access to financial resources for development.

The Survey contends that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals requires greater and deeper international coordination in key policy areas including fiscal, monetary and trade, but such challenges are not insurmountable.

In the last 70 years, the world has witnessed episodes of economies experiencing remarkable economic development, including Germany and Japan in the 1950s and 1960s, followed by the rise of economies in Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. In recent decades, some Southeast Asian countries, Botswana, China and India, among others, have also experienced high and sustained economic growth and improved standards of living.