

UN releases \$2.7 million to help cyclone-hit 'Somaliland'; urges focus on longterm rebuilding

Following a visit to a cyclone-hit community in 'Somaliland', the United Nations has released close to \$3 million to help people affected by an unprecedented storm which delivered a full year's worth of rain in just a few days, compounding damage caused by recent severe flooding.

"We are on the ground, both the UN and NGOs, and we have already been providing assistance, particularly in the form of immediate food security assistance, and also non-food items, shelter items in particular, and health assistance – and this has kicked in, basically, from day one," said the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Peter de Clercq, on Monday, in the wake of a visit to Borama, located some 180 kilometres south-west of Hargeisa, the capital of 'Somaliland.'

We really need to not just work on the relief, but on the increased resilience of the families that live in this area – *Peter de Clercq (UNSOM)*

"Just to reinforce the rebuilding of livelihoods I, moreover, pledged \$2.7 million," Mr. de Clercq added, with the money coming from the international donor-backed Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF), designed to address the most urgent humanitarian needs in Somalia, which also covers 'Somaliland.'

The recent landfall of Cyclone Sagar on the northern Horn of Africa has affected some 160,000 people, killing dozens and causing severe damage to infrastructure and economic hardship, especially for traditional pastoralists.

Mr. de Clercq had been in Borama to see its impact first-hand, as well as meet with local partners, including government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, community elders and people directly affected by the storm.

"It was an opportunity to interact with people who were immediately affected by it," he said. "They've lived through this year of near-famine already, and they had to endure not only this very difficult period of drought, but then floods, immediately followed by the cyclone."

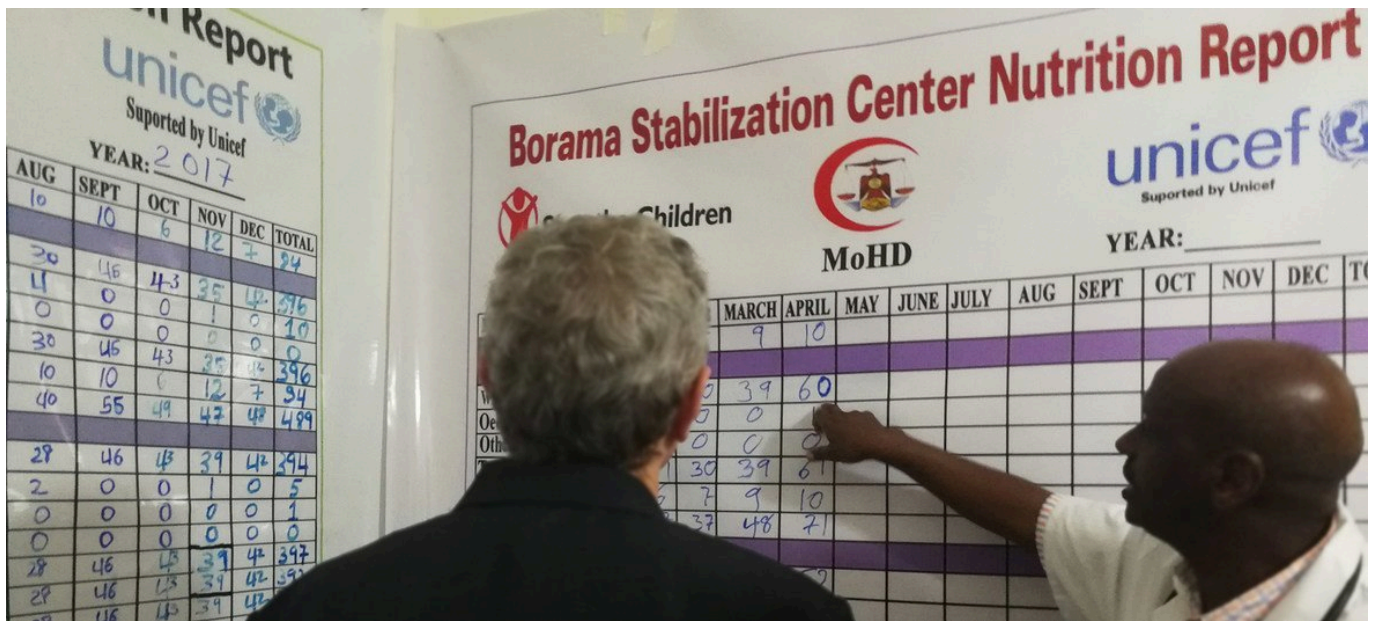
Need to focus on short- and long-term needs

The UN official said the response to the combination of events – storm, floods and drought – highlighted the need for a response which addresses both the short- and longer-term humanitarian needs with the short-term; the

longer-term being centred on building the resilience of communities like that of the Awhal region.

This will help to tackle the effects of climate change among the most vulnerable local populations, as resilience in these communities had already been extremely strained due to at least four failed rainy seasons.

“We still are dealing with the food insecurity, the lack of livelihoods as a result of the drought, and at the same time we’re dealing with people who’ve been displaced because their houses have been flooded, or because their livelihoods have been washed away,” said Mr. de Clercq, who also serves as the UN Secretary-General’s Deputy Special Representative for Somalia, and noted the need for increased funding of the SHF.



UNSOM/Carlos Gomez del Campo

On a visit to the Borama Regional Hospital, 180 kilometres southwest of Somaliland’s capital, Hargeisa, medical staff brief the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Peter de Clercq, on the hospital’s work, particularly in relation to the impact of Cyclone Sagar, but also on other humanitarian challenges, such as recent severe flooding and a years-long drought.

Currently, the Humanitarian Response Plan funding stands at \$390 million – less than 50 per cent of the amount that was pledged at this stage in 2017.

“We really need to not just work on the relief, but on the increased resilience of the families that live in this area, the families that have to go through this kind of terrible humanitarian challenges year after year after year,” Mr. de Clercq said. “So, we should not be waiting until the next crisis hits us – we haven’t seen the last drought yet, we very well may not have seen the last cyclone here.”