



SOMALILAND DROUGHT SITUATION REPORT



February 2011

Introduction

Somalia has been under civil war since the collapse of the central government in 1991. Since then there was not functional central government and the country was divided into parties controlled by ethnic based war lords. In 2006 Islamic Courts Union defeated the war lords and then they were defeated by Ethiopian troops supporting interim government formed in Kenya.

In northern Somalia the situation was different; there was functional but not recognized government since announcement of Somaliland republic and separation from Somalia. Recovery from the long war and establishment of government from scratch were the major challenges for the new republic.

In addition to the man made catastrophes natural disasters were among other big problems. Recurrent droughts and floods in absence of government became common in Somalia. Currently the country is experiencing a severe drought affecting all parts of the country. Furthermore, southern regions of the country are in continuous fighting between UN-Backed government and African Union troops in one side and Alshabab militia, who controls most of the country, in the other causing one of the biggest displacement in the country.

African Development Trust (ADT) has been operating in Somalia since its establishment in 2004 implementing different programs and projects in whole Somalia including Somali land and Puntland. It is one of the few organizations still working in Somalia and it has operational agreement with both Somaliland government and transitional federal government of Somalia.

The overall goal of the field visit was to know the real situation on the ground in Somaliland and the effect of the current drought on the life of the people in Togdher region and IDP camps in it. The visit continued for two weeks and covered Togdher, Hargeisa and Awdal regions of Somaliland; especially focusing on drought effects and the life in the IDP camps in Togdher.

II. Objectives

- 1. Assess the humanitarian situation in Somaliland and effects of the current drought***
- 2. Identify the real needs of the people affected by the drought and IDPs in Togdher***
- 3. To gather information for proposal development and fundraising.***

General Drought Situation in Somalia:

Currently Somalia is experiencing the worst drought affecting both people and livestock in all parts of Somalia. The drought is hitting in all the horn of African countries of Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. Somalia being the worst hit, north, central and southern regions' situation is desperate. UNICEF puts the number of people that need emergency livelihood and life saving assistance at 43 per cent of the population. The drought is caused as seasonal rains have fallen short for eight seasons. Ten people including an elderly woman died of hunger in Galmudug in the central Somalia.

Food security situation is worsening in all drought-affected areas. The prices of the food have risen up 300 percent. Similarly the price of water is sky rotating and out of reach for most of the poor. Livestock herds have been decimated, forcing destitute pastoralists to migrate to towns and villages in search of aid. Malnutrition in children under five and adults has escalated. According to Oxfam International 25 percent of the population to be acutely malnourished in Gedo region. In the nearby Juba regions, that number rises to 30 percent. Poor sanitation, water borne diseases and diarrhea to some extent are reported in central, southern and northern regions.



There is general interruption of life in the affected areas. Many villages are migrated of lack of water, schools closed, health facilities abandoned and nomads' normal movements for pasture and water totally destroyed. People and livestock overcrowded in the still remaining water points and cities which services were in very poor conditions. There is big burden on functioning borehole as the shallow wells, ponds and birkas exhausted.

Drought situation in Somaliland:

Somali National Movement (SNM) captured northern regions after the collapse of central Somali government in 1991. In a conference held in Burao in May 1991 SNM announced establishment of Republic of Somaliland and independence from Somalia in the former British Somaliland or northwest regions. Although the new republic is not yet recognized by the international community, there is unlike stability and democratically elected. The total population of the country is estimated 3.5 million and administratively divided into 12 regions.

The area is drought prone semi arid with temperature ranging between 15 - 32°C throughout the year. The annual average of rain fall is 500mm to 1000mm. However, there are four distinct seasons. A main rainy spring season from April to June, followed

by a dry summer season from July to September. Then there is a short autumn rainy period from October to November, and finally a long dry winter from December to March. The latter is the most difficult for the animal herding rural population and to the farmers to a lesser scale. If the April-June rains fail the result is a drought that could kill most animals which have already been weakened by the December-March dry season, which also severely hits the country's economy.

The situation in Somaliland is not better than other parties of the country. The grip of the drought is very hard. In addition to the drought the region hosts many IDPs because of its security compared to other parts of the country. In February the government appealed for emergency. According to government the drought affected about 40 percent of Somaliland's 3.5 million, which is equivalent to 1.4 million people.



According to elders and local authorities, water, food, shelter and health are the urgent needs of the people. ADT, WFP, UNICEF, Oxfam international, DRC and NRC are among engaged in emergency in the country. The nearest rains are expected in April so the situation will worsen and more people will be affected.

Water Situation:

Water scarcity is the first problem in entire affected areas. Almost all water points such as shallow wells, ponds and birkas (an underground cistern) dried up because of long time lack of rains. There is high over utilization of the still functioning boreholes. Some even have mechanical problems. A 200 litre of water costs \$ 10 in Togdher region which is one of the most hit regions. As situation is very desperate people are drinking very dirty and stinking remained water at the bottom of the dried up wells and this will cause health problems to the children and elders. Already diarrhea outbreak is reported in some areas in the IDP camps and drought affected areas. Water-trucking, construction and rehabilitation of boreholes, rehabilitation and desilting of dams are the first intervention priority.



Pasture Situation:

Pasture quality and availability highly decreased in all affected areas. Water and pasture distance significantly increased since major water points at pasture areas have dried up. Many able families are feeding their remaining animals as a final try to save them. Those who can't feed their livestock are dying or already dead. It is common to see cows and goats digging the ground with their feet to reach roots of the disappeared grasses. Elders are worrying about the high degradation in well known pasture and grassing areas, as the grass has disappeared and trees are destroyed for charcoal by the drought affected people.

Livestock Body and Health Condition

The physical livestock condition in the country is very weak. It is very common to see left out cows after they could not move. Dead animals are scattered on the roads, villages and pastoralist encampments. In addition to the lack of water and pasture, there are diseases like tick, anthrax, black leg and pastreulossis which are killing animals. Immediate vaccination and treatment before the commencement of the rains is first intervention priority to save the maximum possible of livestock population. Weak animals most of the time die when rain starts because of the cold and heavy rains.



Human Health Situation:

High malnutrition, diarrhea, dysentery and other water borne diseases are common in every where particularly in IDP camps. MCH and health services are either poor or not functioning. Supply of medication, therapeutic feeding, rehydration fluids, water purification chemicals for affected human to avert an outbreak of epidemics are urgently needed.

Food Security Status:

The food security status in the country is very below normal. Food prices have risen 300 percent and no market for livestock. In normal times one goat used to be equivalent to 50 kg of wheat or maize but now five goats can't buy 50 kg of wheat or maize. Failure



of crops for two consecutive seasons and pirates in coasts of Somalia are attributed to the increase of food prices. In addition to the drought diseases in many parts of the country contributed in low demand of livestock in the markets in the country.

Copping Strategies:

As the magnitude of the drought is very big, options left for the people is limited. Moving to cities for begging and seeking casual labor, selling properties, selling fire woods and water in the cities are the coping strategies people are using. In the south, many people went to the capital (Mogadishu) preferring to live under the fight and bombardment over starving in their localities.

Security

There is no security problem in Somaliland and Puntland although fight and skirmishes on land began between these two autonomous administrations recently. In the south security is not good. There is daily fighting and bombardments in the capital between the government and Alshabab militia which controls the whole southern regions including most of the capital.

IDP Camps in Togdher:

Togdher is one of the 12 regions of Somaliland. The region borders with Puntland in the south, Ethiopia in the west and Berbera and Hargeisa on the east and north respectively. Burao is the seat of the region and one of the biggest livestock markets in east Africa. The total population of the region is estimated 217689.

Due to its strategic location, the region hosts many war and drought IDPs. More than 61752 people in four camps are living in the region. The life in the camps is very difficult, no shelter, no food, no health or education services. Some of the people eat in the camps once a day and there are others who don't eat even once. In the morning women and children go to Burao town for begging, seeking daily labor like washing clothes and chores, selling fire wood and water etc. Men also seek casual labor in the town.



Three of the camps do not have any service and WFP provides food irregularly. The nearest water source is Burao, an hour go and an hour back. No health services at all, diarrhea is reported from all camps. Malnutrition is high in children and elderly people.

Post natal death is also very high in the camps. Unlike other camps, Adan Sulaiman has MCH constructed by MSF and UNICEF provides medicines irregularly. Near the camp there is functional borehole constructed by the former Somalia government.

Table1: IDP camps in Togdher

S/N	Camp	# of people in the camp	Service available	Assisted by
1	Ali Hussein	4032 HHs	No	WFP irregularly
2	Yarowe	510 HHs	No	WFP irregularly
3	Adan Sulaiman	2511 HHs	-MCH -Borehole constructed by former Somalia government	UNICEF & WFP irregularly
4	Wajid (Pantu minority group)	3239 HHs	No	Some times by WFP

Recommendations:

The effect of the drought is very huge and deep. It is the natural result of long time rain failure in an arid and semi-arid area where rains are scarce and less intense. Gaps created by the drought is very big and cannot be covered the community unless external support is combined with the local efforts:

- **Water:** There is big gap in water availability. Currently the price of the water is escalating. In Burao truck owners sell 200 liters of water with USD10 when an empty barrel is USD15. No functional water points except deep wells which are limited in number and quality. Rehabilitation of malfunctioning boreholes is another problem. To reduce number of displacement of lack of water and to relief burdens on the functioning boreholes, **water trucking** is urgently needed particularly areas where water points exhausted. **Rehabilitation** of malfunctioning boreholes is also repeatedly requested. To solve water shortage in the long run, construction of more bore holes, wells, dams and birkas should be considered.
- **Livestock:** More than 55% of the population in Somaliland is nomads depending on livestock for their livelihood and they are the most hit by the current drought. Pastoralists are very vulnerable for water shortages as they need water for the livestock. Normally livestock disease out breaks are very common during droughts, because of hunger, long distances travelling in search of water and pasture, intermingling with other stocks from different areas and which may have infections. Therefore, to save life of the maximum possible number of

livestock **emergency treatment and vaccination campaigns** should be conducted before rains started in April.

- **Emergency food distribution:** There is big short fall in food in all affected areas. No harvest over the last four years and food prices is sky rotating. Purchasing value of Somaliland shilling is significantly decreasing and no market for livestock. By now, the first cases of death of hunger are reported where a mother and her two children died around Hargeisa. Emergency food distribution and therapeutic feeding is needed to save life and minimize malnutrition.
- **Human Health:** Health services are very poor in Somaliland. Drought affected people don't afford either medication charges in government hospitals or private clinics. Diarrhea, dysentery and high post-natal death are reported from affected areas particularly IDP camps in addition to the common disease in the area like, tuberculosis, malaria, pneumonia, etc. Hence, emergency health intervention in most affected areas and IDP camps should be considered.
- **Education:** Though it is not to the required level, there is formal education in big cities in Somaliland. Private education is also improving the country, but IDP camps in Togdher do not have either formal or informal education system. Children in these camps go to looking for what to eat instead of to school. Entire generation is forgotten that areas. The second millennium development goal (MDG) of the United Nation is by 2015 every child has to complete a full course of primary schooling, that is totally absent in those camps. Thus primary education for those children should be considered.