

# HRI THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX 2011



## FOCUS ON KENYA

INVEST IN PREVENTION:  
A RECIPE FOR THE FUTURE



# CRISIS AT A GLANCE

# KENYA

## THE CRISIS AND THE RESPONSE

- At the time of the Humanitarian Response Index field mission in February 2011, Kenya was home to more than 300,000 refugees and 30,000 internally displaced persons; drought and flooding left 1.6 million people in need of food assistance.
- Since then, the situation has deteriorated sharply; the drought now affects 3.5 million people, acute malnutrition levels have risen sharply and the influx of refugees from neighbouring Somalia has overwhelmed capacity in existing refugee camps.
- The 2010 Kenya Emergency Humanitarian Response Plan requested US\$ 603 million, of which donors covered 65%; however, the agriculture and livestock, protection and education clusters were severely underfunded.
- United Nations (UN) agencies received 88 percent of all 2010 humanitarian funding in Kenya, despite a large presence of national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- The first multiyear appeal, the Kenya Emergency Humanitarian Response Plan 2011+ will cover needs in 2011 to 2013, but is under revision given the current drought situation affecting the region.



**CAMPS & SETTLEMENTS**

- Refugee camps
- Major towns

**DROUGHT STAGES**

- No data
- Normal
- Alert
- Alarm
- Emergency

Map data source(s): KFSSG, February 2011

Disclaimers: The designations employed on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the secretary of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers or boundaries.

Source: OCHA

TOTAL FUNDING TO KENYA IN 2010:

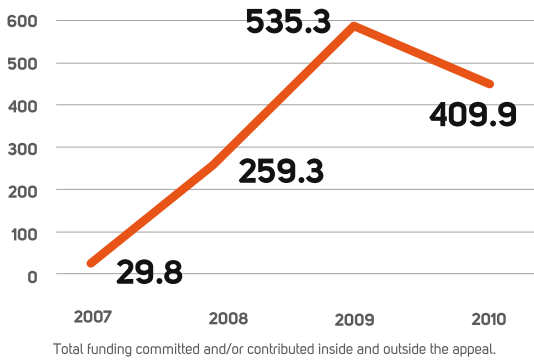
US\$ **409.9** MILLION

**96%** INSIDE THE CAP

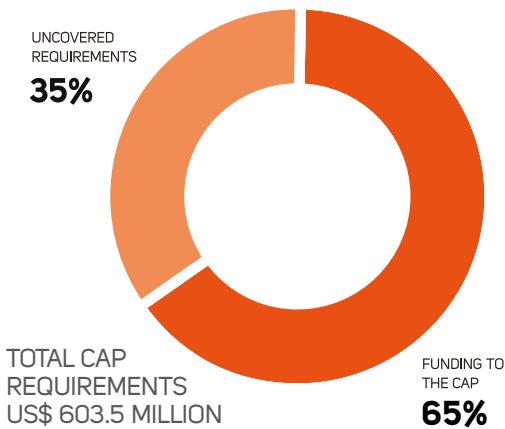


# KENYA

## TOTAL HUMANITARIAN FUNDING TO KENYA US\$ MILLION

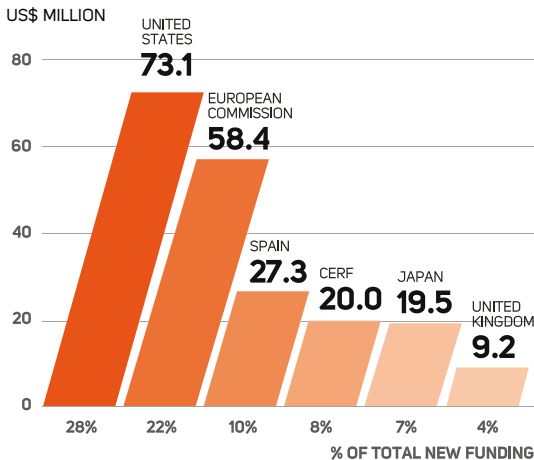


## 2010 KENYA CAP COVERAGE

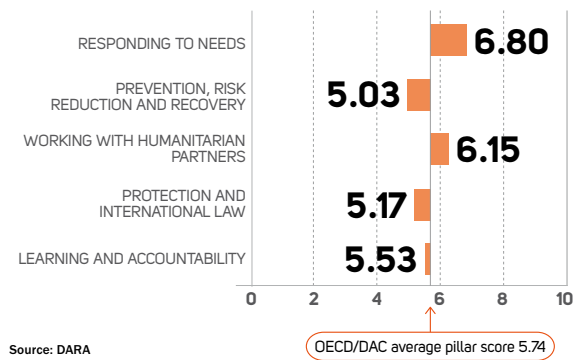


Source: UN OCHA FTS, accessed in April 2011.

## MAIN HUMANITARIAN DONORS IN 2010



## HRI DONOR PERFORMANCE BY PILLAR FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES



Source: DARA

Colors represent performance compared to donor's average Humanitarian Response Index score:  
 ● Good (Dark Orange) ● Mid-range (Light Orange) ● Could improve (Very Light Orange)

## DONOR PERFORMANCE AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Politicisation of aid and government corruption were widely reported as affecting access in assisting those most in need; there is little consensus among donors and humanitarian actors on the best way to address these issues.
- Many donors only funded emergency responses, leaving important gaps in support for prevention and preparedness efforts to address chronic vulnerability.
- According to many actors, donor support and funding for transitional activities and strengthening organisational capacity are also inadequate.
- Donors need to improve monitoring and follow-ups of the humanitarian situation and advocate to ensure current needs are met.
- Donors should also consider investing more toward strengthening the capacity of local organisations and ensuring knowledge from the field is appropriately integrated into programmes to reduce vulnerability.

# INVEST IN PREVENTION: A RECIPE FOR THE FUTURE

At first glance, Kenya seemed to be a regional success story, with relative stability and the largest GDP in East Africa. In fact, the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index reports that human development in Kenya has increased by 0.5 percent annually from 1980 to the present, a score

## ■ KENYA HAS BECOME TRAPPED IN A CYCLE OF VULNERABILITY AGGRAVATED BY GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION, POLITICISED AID AND A LACK OF POLITICAL WILL

consistently higher than the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, yet still placing Kenya in the low human development category. Nevertheless, thanks to its reputation for stability, Kenya has developed a booming tourism industry and become the regional hub for embassies and UN agencies. Therefore, many were caught by surprise when violence

erupted following the 2007 elections, revealing real humanitarian needs that Kenya's positive macroeconomic figures had obscured. Since 2007, Kenya has become trapped in a cycle of vulnerability aggravated by government corruption, politicised aid and a lack of political will from both local authorities and donor governments to respond properly to current needs or build resilience to respond to those of the future.

## THE CRISIS

It is difficult to avoid comparing Kenya with its neighbors, such as Somalia, where limited access greatly inhibits humanitarian action. In theory, Kenya should benefit from the multitude of international

agencies and donor governments present in Nairobi to be able to respond in a rapid and appropriate manner. However, Kenya does have a lot on its plate. More than 300,000 refugees from Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi live in Kenya. Of the 650,000 people forced to flee their homes as a result of the post-election violence, 30,000 have not yet returned to their homes (IDMC 2010 and OCHA 2011a). The Kenyan government seems to have prioritised 2012 elections and reformed the constitution over growing social issues, such as the problems facing the 50,000 people whose displacement preceded the 2007-2008 violence (IRIN 2011).

Kenya also suffers the consequences of climate change. *The Climate Vulnerability Monitor* (DARA 2010, p. 230) currently categorises Kenya as highly vulnerable and predicts it may become acutely vulnerable by 2030. Though climate change has received substantial attention in Kenya, efforts to address the underlying causes of cyclical humanitarian crises have, ironically, failed to materialise. Home to pastoralist communities who relocate in search of water and pasture for livestock, the arid and semi-arid North and Northeastern regions are among the poorest in Kenya. Historically, they have not received the attention they deserve from Nairobi, which some attribute to their lack of political influence. Drought in these regions and flooding in the Rift Valley left 1.6 million people in need of food assistance in 2010, including 242,000 children under five with moderate acute malnutrition and 39,000 with severe acute malnutrition, according to the humanitarian appeal (OCHA 2010).

## THE RESPONSE

The 2010 humanitarian appeal for Kenya was the fourth largest in Africa and among the largest globally, calling for US\$ 603 million to respond to the crises. The funding requirements for the multi-sector assistance for refugees, food aid and nutrition clusters were the highest, and donors covered more than 66 percent of these needs.

Kenya/ A dry river bed in  
Katuma refugee camp.  
UNHCR / R. Gangale /  
July 2010.

On the other hand, the agriculture and livestock, protection and education clusters were severely underfunded, each receiving less than 30 percent of the respective requirements. In particular, this limited funding for agriculture and livestock threatens the ability of North and Northeastern Kenya to recover from the current crisis and help prevent future crises. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (2011b), donors covered 60 percent of the total requirements with 37 percent coming from carry-over from previous years. The United States provided the majority of the remaining amount (30 percent) followed by the European Commission (20 percent), Spain (11 percent), the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Japan (both with eight percent). Other donors who supported the humanitarian appeal each contributed three percent or less. The World Food Programme (WFP) received the most funding, followed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). In fact, United Nations agencies received 88 percent of all funding to Kenya in 2010 (OCHA 2011b).

## DONOR PERFORMANCE

Despite the clear need for investment in prevention, preparedness and local capacity, donors are reluctant to fund activities they consider beyond the boundaries of emergency response. The Humanitarian Response Index (HRI) team interviewed humanitarian organisations on donors' application of the *Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship* (GHD) in their support to the crises in Kenya. In the field survey, team members asked senior humanitarian staff to score their donors –governments, private foundations, pooled funds, UN agencies or NGOs acting as donors– on a series of issues related to the quality of



their aid. Survey questions on donor support for prevention, preparedness, transitional funding, and organisational capacity and contingency planning received some of the lowest scores. "They say their mandate is only emergency. This is our biggest challenge with our donors," explained one interviewee, expressing a concern echoed by many. In fact, some organisations, fearing donors simply were not reliable for funding anything beyond emergencies, reported that the longer term funding commitment required by refugees precluded working with them. This is highly concerning in Kenya, as it is precisely the "humanitarian +" areas that are most in need of support to break the cycle of vulnerability.

### — Transitional activities

Donor support for transitional activities needs major improvement, according to humanitarian organisations. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) donors and

UN agencies were equally weak in this area. “Our donors could do more. Recovery is not funded,” asserted an interviewee. “We tried to propose something for early recovery but our donors were not interested,” reported another. To interrupt the cycle of emergencies affecting Kenya, however, donors must ensure proper transition from humanitarian assistance. The Kenya Emergency Humanitarian Response Plan 2011+<sup>1</sup> is an important step in the right direction. The first appeal to cover multi-year funding, it addresses both emergency and longer-term needs. However, ensuring these needs are met requires a follow-up, as weak monitoring has already produced problems in the current response.

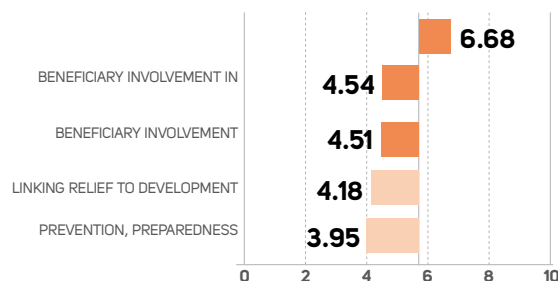
#### ■ Prevention and preparedness

Prevention and preparedness interventions are consistently underfunded, perhaps because they rarely capture the media spotlight. Yet numerous studies have found that investing in prevention and preparedness would actually cost donors significantly less money than emergency response.<sup>2</sup> “All donors prefer visibility, so they find humanitarian programmes more showy for domestic constituency. It is a grave fault that there is so little investment in disaster preparedness in a region of recurrent drought,” maintained an interviewee.

Humanitarian organisations rated UN agencies slightly lower than OECD/DAC donors for supporting conflict and disaster prevention, preparedness and risk reduction. “We have to beg them,” remarked one respondent with frustration. UN agencies’ obligation to follow the requirements of their own donors does, however, affect the support they provide to NGOs. While most OECD/DAC donors received low scores for these issues, the European Commission placed relatively higher. Respondents reported that it requests that partners incorporate prevention, preparedness and risk reduction measures in funding proposals and subsequent reporting.

## DONOR PERFORMANCE ON PREVENTION, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

### FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES



Source: DARA

Colors represent performance compared to donor's average

Humanitarian Response Index score:

● Good ● Mid-range ● Could improve

#### ■ Organisational capacity and contingency planning

Though organisational capacity and contingency planning are fundamental to preventing and

## ■ PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS INTERVENTIONS ARE CONSISTENTLY UNDERFUNDED, PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY RARELY CAPTURE THE MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

responding to crises in a better way, humanitarian organisations find securing donor support for this highly challenging. Under pressure for greater efficiency from domestic taxpayers, some donors are increasingly concerned about the amount of

funding that directly reaches each beneficiary. While interviewees understood the need for increased efficiency, they reiterated their frustration over donor hesitation to support other essentials such as training and emergency stocks.

1 The Kenya Emergency Humanitarian Response Plan 2011+ appeals for funding to cover needs from 2011 to 2013.

2 According to the World Bank (2009), “One dollar invested in prevention saves seven dollars spent to remediate hazard effects.”

UN agencies were reported to perform significantly worse than OECD/DAC donors in this regard. NGO survey respondents repeated that UN agencies treated them merely as service providers, instead of partners. “If there were a zero for this question, they should get it!” exclaimed an interviewee

## ■ **THOUGH CAPACITY AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO CRISES IN A BETTER WAY, HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS FIND SECURING DONOR SUPPORT FOR THIS HIGHLY CHALLENGING**

commenting on his organisation’s relationship with a UN agency. While some agencies are reducing overhead allowance, others are reported to have eliminated it completely and pay only upon project completion. Clearly, this system does not allow NGOs to build their capacity for response. Of the OECD/DAC donors, Sweden received the highest score, followed by Germany and the European Commission. The United Kingdom

and the United States both scored below the OECD/DAC average for this survey question, although some interviewees reported that the United States actively supported their contingency planning for the possible influx of Sudanese refugees due to the January 2011 referendum.

### ■ **Building local capacity**

Donor failure to invest in organisational capacity is problematic for international NGOs, yet greater still for local NGOs - the last in the chain of funding. The difficulty international NGOs encounter in obtaining donor support of this kind also has direct repercussions for the capacity of subcontracted local NGOs, which find themselves with limited budgets and minimal opportunities to influence project design and implementation. In fact, according to a representative of a local NGO,

“international approaches are often misguided, as they are not fully aware of the reality on the ground.” Although some donors make an effort to build the capacity of the government, they frequently neglect local NGOs. “None of our donors really want us to work with local partners. They see it as a risk. There is a certain fear of working with local NGOs,” reported a representative of an international NGO. Legitimate or not, this donor lack of confidence prevents many from directly funding local NGOs. One interviewee summed up the problem in the following way: “Donors want local NGOs to have more capacity before they fund them, but if donors don’t fund them, they can’t build their capacity.” The Emergency Response Fund, a locally-managed pooled fund intended to provide emergency funding to NGOs, could be used for exactly this purpose. However, several interviewees reported that the funding requirements are especially burdensome and that local NGOs need support to access this funding.

Many interviewees highlighted that building the capacity of local communities and local authorities still requires attention. Overall, humanitarian organisations considered UN agencies to perform significantly worse than OECD/DAC donors. However,

there are mixed opinions regarding the way donor governments and humanitarian organisations work with local authorities. In fact, due to corruption within the Kenyan government, some donor governments like the United Kingdom

## ■ **SHORTSIGHTED EMERGENCY RESPONSES WILL DO LITTLE TO END KENYA'S CHRONIC CRISIS**

have cut off all bilateral funding (DFID 2011). Some interviewees opposed local politicians’ selection of aid beneficiaries based on political ties. “Don’t leave it to politicians to decide who gets food,” stated a survey respondent. Several interviewees reported that the interference of local politics in aid decision-making sometimes prevents food aid from reaching those most in need. By contrast, others considered

local authorities better placed than humanitarian organisations to determine needs. “Food aid is politicised. Local politicians tend to choose their constituents, which is bad, but is it worse for us to decide the needs for them? We also have to respect their power and empower the community,” countered another. Donors cannot, however, afford to disregard Kenya’s corruption, exemplified by its low ranking in Transparency International’s 2010 Corruption Perception Index.<sup>3</sup>

## INVESTMENT IN PREVENTION AND LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

Shortsighted emergency responses will do little to end Kenya’s chronic crises. To compensate for tightened budgets in the current economic environment, tax dollars must be stretched to ensure maximum efficiency. To accomplish this, donors should ensure that their funding decisions are in line with actual needs and subsequently monitor their implementation. They would also do well to invest sufficiently in prevention, preparedness, local capacity and transitional activities so that local communities are more resilient to the risks they face today and those that climate change poses in the longer term.

*The situation in Kenya has deteriorated substantially since the time of DARA’s field research in February 2011, yet the arguments still hold true. Once the current food crisis is eventually surpassed, donors must invest in prevention and preparedness to avoid repeating the same mistakes of the past.*



INFORMATION BASED ON FIELD INTERVIEWS WITH KEY HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES IN KENYA FROM 20 TO 25 FEBRUARY, AND 158 QUESTIONNAIRES ON DONOR PERFORMANCE (INCLUDING 103 OECD/DAC DONORS). THE HRI TEAM WAS COMPOSED OF BEATRIZ ASENSIO AND MARYBETH REDHEFFER. THEY EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE TO ALL THOSE INTERVIEWED IN KENYA.



# HRI THE 2011 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE INDEX

FOCUS ON is a series of research papers on issues, donors and crises which result from our work for The Humanitarian Response Index (HRI). The HRI is an independent assessment of donor performance against Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles.