

# HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE FUND



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SOMALIA

## WHY THE HRF?

The Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) for Somalia was established in 2004 to address humanitarian emergency gaps and meet the needs of the drought affected pastoral community in northern Somalia and parts of South/Central. At the time, the drought was reported as being the worst in severity and duration in living memory. After a short reprieve in early 2005 as a result of adequate *Gu* season (long rains) and effective humanitarian action, many parts of the country have regressed following the failure of the *Deyr* 2005 (short rains) particularly in the South/Central areas resulting in 2.1 million people in a state of Humanitarian Emergency and/or Acute Livelihood Crisis (*Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU/FAO) Post-Deyr January 2006*). The drought is the worst in a decade with combined annual cereal crop production at 50% of the pre-war average.

As the HRF gained popularity, and after consultation with partners, OCHA expanded the use of the Fund to emergencies beyond the drought to support interventions for populations affected by floods and conflict or displacement. In Somalia, the HRF has so far been recognised by all partners as a key mechanism through which assessed humanitarian needs and gaps can be addressed. In view of the prevailing humanitarian environment, the Fund will continue to play this key role and develop to become an even stronger strategic tool.

***“Since its inception, the HRF with contributions from UK, Norway, Ireland and Sweden has funded 22 projects amounting to approximately US\$3.3m and served 506,146 primary beneficiaries with a trickle down effect on many others.”***

## WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE HRF?

The HRF's aim is to improve the timeliness and appropriateness of humanitarian assessments and responses through the provision of a flexible resource that can be drawn on quickly. The Fund supports rapid response projects that are developed during the first phase of an emergency and before mainstream responses come into play. HRF activities seek to prevent a further erosion of livelihood assets by supporting the coping mechanisms of affected communities. As mainstream responses are planned and start to be implemented, the Fund is increasingly used to strategically fill gaps within an overall response plan.

The HRF works through an Advisory Board (members are listed overleaf) chaired by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia. Project proposals are submitted to OCHA for initial recommendation; the Board is subsequently asked for their endorsement. From the submission of a project to release of funds, the funding process should take a short period, including a few days for funds to be transferred from Geneva. Maximum funding ceiling is US\$250,000.

***“In an effort to enhance the response capacity, effectiveness and timeliness of the humanitarian system, a recent independent Humanitarian Response Review, prompted by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, recommended that flexible mechanisms such as the HRF be directly inserted into country Consolidated Appeals. Contributions would be voluntary and remain within a ceiling of 7% of the total Appeal. Such a tool would ultimately provide a contingency resource pool enhancing disaster preparedness and response.”***

## WHAT HAS THE HRF ACCOMPLISHED?

### ***Drought Response***

In Sool and Sanaag, the HRF supported two projects offering emergency cash for work in Gebi and Sool plateau in an effort to rejuvenate rangelands depleted by over three years of drought. Benefiting 1,566 destitute pastoralist households, the projects had a spillover effect on an estimated 120,000 pastoralists who utilized the recovered rangelands for grazing. In parts of Puntland, the HRF supported the relocation of 1,680 pastoralist families from drought affected areas and the provision of water to more than 100,000 people and their livestock. Besides targeting livelihood support, some projects directly supported the health and nutritional status of pastoralists who had lost all livestock and means of livelihood. For example in Somaliland/Togdheer one project provided immunization and supplementary feeding to 13,070 vulnerable members of the community many of whom were children and pregnant women. In January 2006, two projects supporting restocking of shoats for 500 destitute pastoralist households in Somaliland and water provision for 30,000 pastoralists with their livestock and 12,000 IDPs in Puntland have received support. The two projects aim to stem further deterioration of livelihoods and improve food security.

### **IDPs and Refugees**

In the conflict regions of South/Central Somalia and following recommendations of the Humanitarian Response Group, the HRF has been used to meet water, health, food and sanitation needs of IDPs. In Northern Gedo, 30,000 IDPs benefited from water trucking and rehabilitation of shallow wells to provide clean drinking water.

### **HIV/AIDS**

The HRF was used for a pilot project providing Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART) drugs to refugees in Somaliland. Although only 13 refugees were identified at the time, the project procured drugs for 100 beneficiaries in anticipation that more infected people would seek therapy once they became aware of the availability of drugs. Resources to fund a larger UN integrated project have been sourced and the programme started in August 2005.

### **Floods**

Following an OCHA led inter-agency assessment in specific areas of Lower Juba, adversely affected by flooding in June 2005; the HRF was used to provide alternative food sources by supporting fishing and agricultural activities. Fishing kits were distributed to 23,597 families and 67,000 families received seeds and water pumps. Additionally, Cash for Work projects were used to improve roads damaged by the floods. Such projects have built on local coping strategies and have both short and long term positive effects on food security.

## **FUTURE CHALLENGES**

The humanitarian situation in Somalia has drastically deteriorated in the last few months as a result of failed rains at the end of 2005. The FAO/FSAU Post Deyr Survey released in January 2006 finds that about 2.1 million people are in need of urgent assistance until June 2006 - approximately 1.5 million people are in a state of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis and/or Humanitarian Emergency, an additional 200,000 are on alert status and at high risk of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis, and up to 400,000 are continuing internally displaced.

Most of the areas experiencing a Humanitarian Emergency are in southern Somalia, particularly in Gedo and the Juba Valley. The current drought effects have been exacerbated by cumulative erosion of assets and livelihoods in the 2001-2004 drought spell and the affected communities have been affected by years of high malnutrition and morbidity rates, chronic food insecurity, clan clashes, and consecutive low harvests. As the HRF is accessible to both UN agencies and NGO it will be a useful tool in promoting an cross - sectoral approach to meet the food, water, health, nutrition, shelter and other needs of the affected populations.

## **HRF-TSUNAMI**

In view of the Indian Ocean tsunami that hit Somalia in December 2004, an HRF-Tsunami was created in early 2005 to improve the response to the tsunami emergency and prevent further erosion of livelihoods for populations on the 650km affected coastline. The tsunami occurred at a time when the area was beginning to recover from over three years of drought, periodic floods and chronic insecurity.

The HRF-Tsunami closed on 31 December 2005.

***“The HRF-Tsunami received contributions United Kingdom and Norway. The Fund supported eight projects in the following areas: psychosocial, water and environment conservation and access. A total of US\$1.5m was used with 140,000 direct beneficiaries.”***

***For more information on the HRF please contact Lilian Nduta: [Nduta@un.org](mailto:Nduta@un.org) or Eva Kiti: [kiti@un.org](mailto:kiti@un.org)***

***Members of Advisory Board: UNICEF, WHO, HORN RELIEF, NGO CONSORTIUM, WFP, FAO, UNHCR AND UNDP***

***Advisors to the Board: FSAU, ICRC AND UNOCHA***