

# EAST AFRICA'S QUIET FAMINE

---

---

## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,  
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

—————  
MARCH 28, 2017  
—————

**Serial No. 115-16**  
—————

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/> or  
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>

—————  
U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

24-832PDF

WASHINGTON : 2017

---

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office  
Internet: [bookstore.gpo.gov](http://bookstore.gpo.gov) Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800  
Fax: (202) 512-2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402-0001

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EDWARD R. ROYCE, California, *Chairman*

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey  
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida  
DANA ROHRABACHER, California  
STEVE CHABOT, Ohio  
JOE WILSON, South Carolina  
MICHAEL T. McCAUL, Texas  
TED POE, Texas  
DARRELL E. ISSA, California  
TOM MARINO, Pennsylvania  
JEFF DUNCAN, South Carolina  
MO BROOKS, Alabama  
PAUL COOK, California  
SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania  
RON DeSANTIS, Florida  
MARK MEADOWS, North Carolina  
TED S. YOHO, Florida  
ADAM KINZINGER, Illinois  
LEE M. ZELDIN, New York  
DANIEL M. DONOVAN, Jr., New York  
F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.,  
Wisconsin  
ANN WAGNER, Missouri  
BRIAN J. MAST, Florida  
FRANCIS ROONEY, Florida  
BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK, Pennsylvania  
THOMAS A. GARRETT, Jr., Virginia

ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York  
BRAD SHERMAN, California  
GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York  
ALBIO SIRES, New Jersey  
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia  
THEODORE E. DEUTCH, Florida  
KAREN BASS, California  
WILLIAM R. KEATING, Massachusetts  
DAVID N. CICILLINE, Rhode Island  
AMI BERA, California  
LOIS FRANKEL, Florida  
TULSI GABBARD, Hawaii  
JOAQUIN CASTRO, Texas  
ROBIN L. KELLY, Illinois  
BRENDAN F. BOYLE, Pennsylvania  
DINA TITUS, Nevada  
NORMA J. TORRES, California  
BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER, Illinois  
THOMAS R. SUOZZI, New York  
ADRIANO ESPAILLAT, New York  
TED LIEU, California

AMY PORTER, *Chief of Staff*      THOMAS SHEEHY, *Staff Director*  
JASON STEINBAUM, *Democratic Staff Director*

---

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey, *Chairman*

MARK MEADOWS, North Carolina  
DANIEL M. DONOVAN, Jr., New York  
F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.,  
Wisconsin  
THOMAS A. GARRETT, Jr., Virginia

KAREN BASS, California  
AMI BERA, California  
JOAQUIN CASTRO, Texas  
THOMAS R. SUOZZI, New York

# CONTENTS

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| WITNESSES   |      |
| Mr. Matthew Nims, Acting Director, Office of Food for Peace, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development .....  | 3    |
| Mr. Ken Isaacs, vice president, Programs and Government Relations, Samaritan's Purse .....  | 29   |
| Mr. Michael Bowers, vice president, humanitarian leadership and response, Mercy Corps .....   | 38   |
| Mr. Thabani Maphosa, vice-president for food assistance, World Vision International .....   | 53   |
| Ms. Faustine Wabwire, senior foreign assistance policy advisor, Bread for the World Institute .....   | 64   |
| LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC., SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING  |      |
| Mr. Matthew Nims: Prepared statement .....  | 6    |
| Mr. Ken Isaacs: Prepared statement .....  | 32   |
| Mr. Michael Bowers: Prepared statement .....  | 41   |
| Mr. Thabani Maphosa: Prepared statement .....   | 56   |
| Ms. Faustine Wabwire: Prepared statement .....  | 67   |
| APPENDIX  |      |
| Hearing notice .....  | 86   |
| Hearing minutes .....   | 87   |
| The Honorable Christopher H. Smith, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Jersey, and chairman, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations:<br>2017 Bread for the World Hunger Report ..... | 88   |
| Statement of Sean Callahan of Catholic Relief Services .....  | 96   |
| The Honorable Thomas A. Garrett, Jr., a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia: Statement of the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan .....   | 104  |
| Mr. Thabani Maphosa:<br>World Vision East Africa Hunger Crisis Overview .....   | 108  |
| World Vision Somalia Emergency Appeal .....   | 109  |
| World Vision South Sudan Situation Report .....   | 110  |



## EAST AFRICA'S QUIET FAMINE

---

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2017

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH,  
GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m., in room 2200 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SMITH. The hearing will come to order.

I will be joined momentarily by Ranking Member Bass and some of the other members of the subcommittee. But there are some votes that will be coming up on the floor so we will start right at 2:30.

Thank you and welcome to each and every one of you. According to estimates by the United Nations, more than 28 million people in east Africa today desperately need immediate food aid.

Three countries in the region have emergency level food aid needs—Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. Meanwhile, areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda also face crisis level hunger with some households already in emergency conditions.

In Somalia, at least 6.2 million people need food assistance and that's more than half that country's population.

In South Sudan, nearly two-thirds of the population requires assistance and in fact about 4.9 million South Sudanese, or about 40 percent of the population, face severe life-threatening hunger with that number expected to rise to 5.5 million by July.

In Sudan more than 5.8 million Sudanese are believed to require assistance, 3.3 million of them in still-embattled Darfur states.

Unfortunately, the devastating impact of the current famine isn't confined to the hardest hit drought areas. Uganda itself, struggling with the effects of drought in some areas, has had to contend with nearly 800,000 refugees from South Sudan.

By the beginning of this month as many as 3,000 South Sudanese a week cross the border into Uganda. Lest we get caught up in the huge numbers involved in this crisis, we must always keep in mind what those numbers actually mean for the people in the long-term as well as the immediate and short term.

According to the U.N.'s World Food Programme, calculation's in January, global acute malnutrition rates for Somali children and pregnant and lactating women entering Ethiopia reached a whopping 78 percent.

That means that Somali children in the womb won't have enough nourishment to complete their growth in utero. Most, if not all, will be born stunted, which will be made worse by their continuing lack of nutrition once born.

Their mothers will be severely weakened and may not survive childbirth. All of them will have damaged immune systems and will be susceptible to diseases such as cholera or acute diarrhea and may die a preventable death.

In any event, the futures of far too many children and their potential contributions to their society will be forever limited and stunting cannot be reversed.

In 2011, the first U.N.-declared famine since the 1980s occurred in east Africa, directly affecting more than 10 million people.

This subcommittee held a hearing on the crisis on September 28th of that year and worked with humanitarian groups to ensure that aid was available and provided in the most in-need areas of east Africa. We will follow this hearing with a similar effort.

Six years ago, there was great attention given to the famine then. It was a catastrophe that caught the world's attention.

Somehow, the current famine has been caught up in the numerous global crises we face today and is not as much in the news as it ought have been and it is one of the largest disasters we have faced in recent years.

In 2011, we struggled with how to get humanitarian aid to those in Somalia who lived in areas controlled by al-Shabaab. That problem has not been eliminated 6 years later.

In 2017, not only is the ongoing conflict in Somalia hampering humanitarian efforts there but the continuing civil conflict in South Sudan has amplified the impact of the drought.

In 2015, a congressional staff delegation visited the historical Equatorial provinces of that country, which still produced food, even though poor transportation prevented it from being distributed beyond the borders of that region.

There was no conflict there at the time, only internally displaced people. Now all three of the former Equatorial provinces are seeing a spreading conflict and with farmers unable to plant or to harvest, the lack of food will only worsen over time.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has accused South Sudan's Government of ignoring the plight of its own citizens struggling through the famine.

He accused that government's leadership of refusal to even acknowledge the crisis or fulfil its responsibilities to end it.

At a time in which access to food is so critical in South Sudan, militias in that country supported by both the government and the rebels have been accused of intentionally destroying crops, looting cattle, and damaging vital water supplies.

In July of last year, it is believed that government soldiers were responsible for looting 1.5 million metric tons of food from the World Food Programme's warehouse in the capital city of Juba.

As a matter of fact, Greg Simpkins and I traveled to South Sudan last August. We went to Juba and we raised all of these issues, started with Salva Kiir, to the Defense Minister, to the head of the U.N. mission, and many others including Catholic bishops, trying to underscore our concern about food insecurity, the

violence that was escalating because we were in a place where just about a month before that about 200 soldiers had killed each other from two warring factions right at the Presidential palace.

It was absurd, and we did raise the concerns of our colleagues, our Speaker and the President. But not much has happened in response, sadly.

The conflicts in Somalia and South Sudan affect the entire region and place added burdens on their neighbors, who must also cope with recurring drought.

These two countries, along with Eritrea, remain the largest source of refugees globally. We cannot control the weather patterns that lead to recurring droughts in east Africa but we must find a way to end the conflicts of those two nations so that manmade disasters don't outstrip the impact of nature itself.

I'll never forget how the famine in Ethiopia during the Mengistu regime was made all the worse because he used food as a weapon. We can't see a replay of that atrocity today.

The term famine, like the term genocide, should not be used lightly. To be considered a famine there must be an extreme lack of food in at least 20 percent of the households in any area, acute malnourishment must affect 30 percent of children, and accrued death rate of more than two deaths per 10,000 must exist daily in the affected areas.

As our witnesses will describe for us today, the situation is already or soon will be in a state of famine in areas of east Africa.

Our mission today is to better understand the parameters of the crisis, its causative factors and the most effective action that must be taken now to save lives and end the threat of an even greater casualty count.

So I want to thank again our witnesses and begin the witness testimony with Mr. Matthew Nims, who has more than 17 years of international development and emergency programming experience.

He has been with USAID since the year 2000 and has worked in Indonesia, Guyana, Afghanistan, and here in Washington.

Starting in August 2011, he began serving as the deputy director of the Office of Food for Peace and since January 2017 has been the acting director of the office with a \$2 billion budget.

Food for Peace is the U.S. Government's lead for addressing food insecurity worldwide in both emergency and development situations.

Mr. Nims, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MATTHEW NIMS, ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF FOOD FOR PEACE, BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. NIMS. Chairman Smith, esteemed staff, thank you for the invitation to come speak with you today about the food security situation in east Africa, especially the threat of famine in Somalia.

Thank you for drawing attention to the plight of the world's vulnerable people and your long history of support for humanitarian efforts.

This year, massive humanitarian crises are occurring around the world, demanding an immediate, substantial, and creative response.

Our famine early warning system network, FEWS NET, warns that an unprecedented 70 million people will need emergency food assistance this year due to ongoing conflict, severe drought, and economic instability.

These crises are largely manmade with other compounding factors like the drought in Somalia, making the situation even more untenable.

East Africa is facing one of the worst droughts ever recorded and as many as 15 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya are facing food and water shortages as a result.

In many areas, vegetation conditions are the worst on record and if the rains fail this spring, the situation will continue to deteriorate.

We are seeing the worst in Somalia, where the effects of drought are being compounded by insecurity. In 2011, nearly 260,000 Somalis, half of them children under five, died in a famine triggered by what was at the time east Africa's worst drought in 60 years.

If current trends continue, famine, a term we do not use lightly, could happen again in Somalia. Already, more than 6 million Somalis, over half the population, are in need of humanitarian assistance and the rate of severe acute malnutrition is rising.

The crisis in Somalia also has regional effects, as people leave to look for food and support in neighboring countries. This migration, as well as refugees arriving from South Sudan, strains already depleted neighbors Ethiopia and Kenya.

But even with these challenges, these governments are proactively responding to the drought and USAID is aligning its investments with these country-led efforts.

USAID has rapidly scaled-up and redirected its efforts, providing vital food and malnutrition treatment as well as safe water, improved sanitation and hygiene, and even in the midst of an emergency we look for opportunities to build resilience and strengthen the communities' ability to respond to future shocks and stresses.

I recently visited a livestock market that is part of these resilience-building activities in the arid lands of northern Kenya.

The market, and others like it, support the livelihood activities of the pastoralists in the region, providing livestock trading and veterinarian services and in turn spawn opportunities for entrepreneurs in the local economy.

Jacob, for instance, fixes the motorcycles of people traveling to and from the new markets, and Mercy runs a restaurant to feed traders using locally grown food.

These efforts across the region are expanding economic opportunities, strengthening drought cycle management and improving health and human capital.

Over the long term, a British study estimates that every dollar invested in resilience results in nearly \$3 in reduced humanitarian spending, avoided loss, and improved wellbeing.

Challenges remain, however. In South Sudan, years of intense violence has transformed the world's youngest nation into one of the most food insecure in the world.



Nearly half of South Sudan's population faces life-threatening hunger this year, and famine was declared in several counties just last month.

In northeastern Nigeria, more than 5.1 million people are facing severe food insecurity and nearly 450,000 children will experience life-threatening, severe acute malnutrition this year. Famine likely did occur in 2016 but access has made it difficult to confirm.

Lastly, I would be remiss not to mention the situation in Yemen, which is experiencing the largest food security emergency in the world.

Conflict, political instability, economic crisis, and rising food and fuel prices have left more than 17 million people food insecure.

This situation has repercussions in east Africa as refugees flee to Somalia and Djibouti, who are struggling to handle the influx even as they face their own domestic crises.

These broader challenges are important to note because we are never focusing on just one country or region at a time. The United States cannot do it alone.

We need the United Nations, affected governments, donor partners, and NGOs like the ones that will be testifying after me to work together to tackle these challenges.

I want to thank these partners and our staff at USAID for their tireless efforts and dedication to helping those affected around the world.

Thank you, Chairman Smith, for your attention to these issues and for congressional support provided to USAID, especially our humanitarian programs over the years. Please know that your support transforms and saves lives every day.

Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nims follows:]

Statement of Matt Nims  
Acting Director of the Office of Food for Peace, Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and  
Humanitarian Assistance, U.S. Agency for International Development  
Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Subcommittee for Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations  
March 28, 2017

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to come and speak with you today about the food security situation in the Horn of Africa, and specifically the threat of famine in Somalia. We are grateful for your long history of support to humanitarian efforts and for drawing attention to the plight of the world's vulnerable people, such as those in the Horn of Africa.

My name is Matthew Nims, and I am the Acting Director of USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP). The United States has been the largest provider of emergency food assistance in the world. We use a mix of tools to respond to emergency food needs including U.S. commodities, locally and regionally procured food, vouchers, cash transfers and other complementary activities to reach the world's most food insecure with lifesaving aid. We also support development programs that address the root causes of hunger in areas of chronic crisis to build resilience and food security of local communities. Last year through the work of our many implementing partners, including those testifying on the next panel, our food assistance reached over 60 million people in 52 countries.

In 2017, we are confronted with major humanitarian crises around the world, which demand that the world provide an immediate, substantial, and creative response. The USAID-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network, or FEWS NET, has warned that this year an unprecedented 70 million people across 45 countries will be in need of emergency food assistance, largely driven by persistent conflict, severe drought and economic instability. Famine was declared in parts of South Sudan in February, and three other countries—Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen—face the threat of famine, putting a combined 20 million people at risk of dire food insecurity. That's more than twice the populations of New York City and Washington, D.C. combined.

Famines are rare, and we don't use the term lightly. In most cases, people face extreme food insecurity and are in need of emergency food assistance without the situation being categorized as a "famine." The global standard for classifying acute food insecurity, the International Food Security Phase Classification requires the most extreme conditions to be present before a famine can be declared. In communities in which famine is declared, at least 1/5 of households face an extreme lack of food and/or inability to meet their other basic needs, nearly 1/3 of children are already severely acutely malnourished, and men, women and children are already dying because of an extreme lack of food.

When we think of famine we naturally think of food, but the provision of safe drinking water, emergency health care and proper sanitation and hygiene are equally critical during these crises to battle opportunistic illnesses like cholera and diarrhea. Hunger weakens people's immune systems, leaving them susceptible to these often largely preventable and treatable afflictions; in situations of extreme food insecurity and famine, they can turn deadly. When Somalia faced famine in 2011, the impacts of cholera were devastating. That's why we work closely with our sister office, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, along with the Department of State's Population, Refugees and Migration bureau, to ensure that the United States' humanitarian response to these crises is a comprehensive multi-sectoral one.

Over the past few months, I've traveled to South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia to see the situation first hand and fully understand the scope and scale of the challenges people in these countries face. Today I want to share with you more about the ongoing crisis in these countries, what we're doing to respond, and the challenges we face.

#### HORN OF AFRICA

The Horn of Africa is facing increasingly severe drought conditions that are quickly exceeding many households' ability to cope. The scope of these conditions is so great that relief agencies estimate that as many as 15 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya are facing food and water shortages. Latest findings indicate the drought is now the worst ever recorded in some of the most vulnerable areas within the Horn.

In this region, we are most concerned about Somalia, where the effects of this latest drought are exacerbated by insecurity. In 2011, nearly 260,000 Somalis died in a famine triggered by what was at the time the Horn of Africa's worst drought in more than 60 years—half of them children under five. Recent analysis by FEWS NET indicates troubling parallels to conditions which led to the 2011 famine. In many areas, vegetation conditions are the worst on record, surpassing those observed during the 2011 crisis. The below-average rainfall of the 2016 October-to-December season has resulted in a harvest forecasted to be 50-70 percent below the five-year average, and if the rains fail again this spring, the food security situation will continue to deteriorate. In addition to these factors, the situation is further exacerbated by ongoing conflict.

Famine may again be possible in the coming months if drought conditions persist, purchasing power continues to decline, and insecurity prevents relief actors from reaching populations in need. An estimated 6.2 million Somalis—more than half the population—are currently in need of immediate humanitarian assistance as a result of the combined effects of the drought and ongoing conflict. Malnutrition rates are also rising significantly, with 71,000 children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition—a 42 percent increase from fiscal year (FY) 2016.

Severe malnutrition places children at high risk of disease and death, and last week, health partners reported there have been nearly 12,700 diarrhea or cholera cases and 268 drought-related deaths since January in Somalia.

The crisis in Somalia also has regional effects, as people leave to look for food and support in neighboring countries. This migration compounds the already tenuous situations in Ethiopia and Kenya. We support the food security needs of the refugees in these countries and are seeing highly concerning malnutrition rates among those arriving into Ethiopia from southern Somalia. According to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), as of January, global acute malnutrition rates for Somali children and pregnant and lactating women entering Ethiopia are at 78 percent. These countries are also facing inflows of refugees from South Sudan, making the impacts of these food security crises regional in nature.

Over the last several months, USAID has worked to rapidly scale up and redirect our efforts in Somalia, providing vital food and malnutrition treatment; and ensuring communities have safe drinking water, as well as improved sanitation and hygiene. USAID has provided more than \$151 million in emergency food assistance since FY 2016 for Somalia. USAID partners are distributing food rations to the most acutely food-insecure people, as well as food vouchers and cash transfers where markets are functioning. WFP's assistance in Somalia is typically linked to activities designed to help build the resilience of the Somali people, including vocational training or productive asset building activities, such as rehabilitating community water and sanitation infrastructure or roads. However, due to the rapidly deteriorating food security situation, many of these productive activities are on hold until households' food security improves.

This is the first time since Somalia's devastating 2011 famine that FEWS NET has explicitly warned of famine risk in the country. Lessons learned from that famine indicate that immediate action and a robust mobilization of international resources are needed to prevent a worst case scenario. At the same time, it is important to recognize the differences between the region's 2011 crisis and now. Today, host governments, and Ethiopia and Kenya in particular, are proactively responding to and managing the current drought. And even Somalia's young government formed a drought response committee focused on providing Somali support to Somalis. In fact, in February, the governments of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia all publicly committed to regional cooperation and cross-border collaboration to tackle both this drought and, through longer-term investments, the underlying fragility that tips vulnerable communities into crisis in recurring droughts.

We are aligning our investments in the region with country-led efforts such as the Government of Kenya's Ending Drought Emergencies initiative and Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). The Government of Kenya's initiative provides a common investment and programming framework for government and donor investment. The Government of Kenya has

committed \$1.6 billion against the initiative, complemented by \$1.5 billion from donors, including the U.S. government.

I recently visited with members of the Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth in Kenya (PREG), which works to build resilience in the vulnerable pastoralist communities of Northern Kenya which are largely arid and semi-arid lands. PREG brings together USAID's \$291 million in development programs in this region of Kenya with work by the country's national and county level governments to promote resilience and economic growth. In just two and a half years, there was a 12 percent reduction in the depth of poverty in this region due to these investments. USAID's contributions through PREG are helping more than 700,000 people to build assets to withstand chronic shocks and stresses; more than 100,000 people to have better access to water and 70,000 to have improved sanitation; and to manage more than 2 million hectares of grazing land through community-based natural resources groups, directly supporting the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of pastoralists in these arid and semi-arid zones.

As part of my trip, I visited one of the 12 livestock markets that PREG has constructed in Marasbit and Isiolo counties. Livestock trading and veterinary services were available, but what I found of equal interest were the entrepreneurs that have seized on the dynamism these markets bring to local communities to establish their own businesses and secure a livelihood for themselves and their families. I met Jacob, who started a small business to fix the motorcycles of those traveling to and from the new markets. I also met with Mercy, a local woman who opened a restaurant, which serves local food to the traders. Not only are the investments through the PREG benefitting the pastoralists and local communities they were designed to help, they are also forming the basis for thriving commercial hubs that offer services previously unavailable in Kenya's arid lands.

The Government of Ethiopia-led PSNP annually addresses the basic food needs of approximately 8 million chronically food insecure people through the seasonal transfer of food and cash resources, as well as the creation or improvement of assets that generate economic benefit to the community as a whole. With U.S. support, the PSNP has helped lift 1.5 million people out of poverty, reduced the annual lean season for vulnerable households from over 3 months to less than 2 months, and reduced the proportion of households forced to engage in distress sales of assets from 50 percent to 25 percent.

Even in Somalia, where the federal government formed just a few years ago, investments in development and resilience helped better position some communities to endure this drought. USAID continues to help build the capacity of the fledgling Somali government to support its own population. The Federal and State governments also formed Drought Coordination Committees, work to raise funds and coordinate the delivery of assistance to communities across Somalia.

These efforts across the region are expanding economic opportunities, strengthening natural resource and drought cycle management, and improving health and human capital. A 2012 study by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) in Kenya and Ethiopia estimated that, over a 10-year period with two large droughts, every \$1 invested in resilience would result in \$2.90 in economic benefits consisting of reduced humanitarian spending, avoided asset losses, and increased development benefits.

#### THE BIGGER PICTURE

Challenges remain, however, particularly since Somalia is not the only country currently at risk of famine. As mentioned in my opening, famine has already been declared in South Sudan, and Nigeria and Yemen are facing credible risks of famine as well. It's important to stress that these crises are largely man-made with other compounding factors, like drought in Somalia, making the situations even more untenable. There has been a remarkable shift in the drivers of humanitarian crisis over the past decade. Ten years ago, conflict caused just twenty percent of emergencies. Today, that number is 80 percent according to the UN. The number of people in need of humanitarian aid has more than doubled over the past decade, and more than 65 million people are displaced. This shift towards conflict-related crises brings with it different challenges like ensuring critical and safe access to communities in need.

In South Sudan, years of intense violence has transformed the world's youngest nation into one of the most food insecure in the world. An estimated 5.5 million people—nearly half of South Sudan's population—will face life-threatening hunger this year. Civilians are targets of violence from armed actors on all sides of the conflict, local markets and harvests have been disrupted or destroyed, and families are being driven from their homes, forced to survive on whatever sustenance they can find like wild grasses and water lilies. More than 3.5 million South Sudanese are displaced, including 1.6 million South Sudanese refugees who have fled into neighboring countries. In the month of January alone, more than 90,000 South Sudanese fled their country, many to neighboring Uganda, where the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, which did not even exist seven months ago, has rapidly swelled to become one of the largest refugee camps in the world.

For three years, the international community has employed massive efforts to stave off famine in South Sudan. Yet as conflict intensified, the food security situation continued to deteriorate. Famine was declared in two counties on February 20, 2017, and significant humanitarian need can be found throughout the country. As we have said repeatedly, this is a man-made crisis and the direct consequence of prolonged conflict. We hold all the warring parties—including the government, the opposition, and affiliated armed groups—responsible for the hostilities that upend and, even worse, target civilian lives and livelihoods.

Despite the challenges of working in South Sudan, the United States has provided more than \$2.1 billion dollars in humanitarian assistance since the start of the conflict in December 2013, including more than \$221 million in emergency food assistance just this fiscal year. Our assistance, including the distribution of more than 600,000 metric tons of urgently needed food, has reached more than 1.3 million people every month.

More than 5.1 million people are facing severe food insecurity in northeastern Nigeria, particularly those displaced in Borno State. Though insecurity limits access and information gathering, there are signs that famine likely occurred in 2016, and may be ongoing in parts of the state that humanitarian actors are unable to reach. As humanitarian agencies access areas previously held by Boko Haram, they are encountering communities with dire levels of hunger and malnutrition, particularly among children. The UN estimates that in 2017, nearly 450,000 children will experience life threatening severe acute malnutrition. The United States has provided more than \$321 million since FY 2016 for people affected by the ongoing crisis in the Lake Chad Basin region, including more than \$175 million in emergency food assistance operations. Our assistance to this area is critical for promoting stability.

Lastly I would be remiss not to mention the situation in Yemen, where the effects of the severe humanitarian crisis there are felt across the Horn. Yemen is experiencing the largest food security emergency in the world. The escalation in conflict in 2015—coupled with political instability, the resulting economic crisis, rising fuel and food prices, and high unemployment—has led to staggering levels of food insecurity. This has led to large scale outflows of refugees and returnees, when security permits, to Somalia and Djibouti, who are struggling to handle the increased caseload of populations in need.

More than seventeen million people in Yemen are food insecure, including seven million people who are unable to survive without food assistance. More than 460,000 children under 5 are acutely malnourished, a 200 percent increase since 2014. FEWS NET is reporting that famine is possible in Yemen if food imports drop or conflict further restricts markets and humanitarian access.

The U.S. government has contributed more than \$431 million in humanitarian assistance in Yemen since the beginning of FY 2016, about \$265 million of which is emergency food assistance through UN and NGO partners. U.S. food, including specialized nutritional products, has been a critical part of our response, as many local markets have severely contracted from reduced imports. Where possible we have used other interventions such as food vouchers, which have supported local vendors and stimulated local markets, crucial in crisis-affected communities.

## CONCLUSION

It's important to note these broader challenges the humanitarian community faces. We are never focusing on just one country or region at a time, and the scale and nature of humanitarian crises in the world right now strain the capacities of the humanitarian system. The United States cannot do it alone—we need all our United Nations, NGO, affected government, and donor partners working together to tackle these challenges.

We call on other donors to increase their contributions, and appreciate that some are beginning to rise to the challenge: on March 17, the European Union announced an additional 100 million euros to respond to the crisis in South Sudan, and 65 million euros to respond to the serious droughts in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. In response to unprecedented support from the British public for their East Africa appeal, over the weekend of March 18-19, the UK Government matched pound for pound the 5 million pounds donated by the public. The Government of Canada just announced \$90 million for all four countries facing famine.

Every day I am grateful to be part of this global humanitarian community. But I am especially grateful for the committed staff that serves in the Office of Food for Peace and at USAID. They represent hope to those in need and bring the generosity of the American people directly to ordinary people in desperate situations. And it is because of the dedication of all our NGO partners like those on the next panel—Mercy Corps, World Vision and Samaritan's Purse—and those of our UN partners—the World Food Program and UNICEF—that aid reaches those who need it, despite how difficult getting it to them may be.

In addition, we have worked with our international partners to identify strategic opportunities to make global humanitarian assistance more effective and efficient, including prioritizing needs and reducing duplication and costs. This will make every dollar the U.S. provides work even harder and help more people.

We remain committed to providing humanitarian assistance around the world as both a moral imperative and as a direct benefit to the well-being of the United States. As provided in the President's Budget Blueprint, the FY 2018 Budget will allow for significant funding of humanitarian assistance. We do expect that we would focus resources on the highest priority areas and continue our efforts to make humanitarian assistance more efficient and effective, while also asking the rest of the world to do more.

Thank you for your attention to these issues and for the support Congress has provided to USAID and specifically our humanitarian programs over the years. We do this work not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is in the interest of the American people and promotes global stability. Please know that your support transforms and saves lives every day.



Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Nims, for your testimony and above all for your work, which has been tremendous over the years and, obviously, during a crisis like this it is needed now more than ever.

Let me just ask you a few questions. About a month ago, you had testified that Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia all pledged regional cooperation and cross-border cooperation to tackle the drought and the underlying fragility of the region.

Has there been any fruit to that effort? Are they truly cooperating? And are we ahead of the curve this time, are we just keeping or head afloat, or are we behind?

Mr. NIMS. Thank you for that question.

As far as cooperation efforts of those countries that you mentioned, through the IGAD network they have brought together leaders of those governments to work better together to address this crisis.

I think the efforts, most notably in Kenya and Ethiopia, are showing the greatest strides. For example, the same drought that is affecting Somalia is also affecting those two countries.

But those two countries are better able to withstand what's happening. Kenya, for example, is putting \$1.6 billion of its own resources toward helping people in Kenya that are affected by this drought.

Ethiopia has a longstanding social safety net program in conjunction with USAID and other donors to be able to better withstand what's going on.

So the cooperation definitely has started and IGAD is in a good position to do this.

Mr. SMITH. Let me ask you with regards to aid workers, when Greg Simpkins and I were in Juba, again, late August of last year, we kept raising the issue including with the military—with five of the top generals and the Defense Minister—about the need—this was after the Terrain incident where several aid workers were raped, many aid workers were beaten and diplomats—one journalist, a South Sudanese man, was killed—and as it turned out one of the aid workers, and I didn't know this until about 3 days before we left, was actually from my district.

She was not raped but she was sexually assaulted and the two military officers that broke in and broke up what was about to become a rape prevented even further tragedy to her.

But she has been severely traumatized. She was actually going to testify at a hearing we had on South Sudan and then just didn't want—she was going to do it by way of phone with no name attribution, anonymously. But it was just too much to tell the story of what an aid worker goes through.

So my question is, the U.N. Panel of Experts for South Sudan said that South Sudan is the deadliest in the world for aid workers.

It seems to me that whether it be USAID and our mission leaders and people on the ground or anyone else from the NGO community, we have got to just keep pounding away with these governments and all parties, including rebels, to leave the aid workers alone.

There needs to be a sacrosanct—this is almost like when the Red Cross would show up even the most hostile of forces would at least allow the white flag for humanitarian purposes to go forward.

What can we do to—maybe an initial assessment of how bad it really is in each of these countries and what can we do to make sure that that aid does then flow and that would include the indigenous aid workers because sometimes they are picked off and hurt because they are seen, well, they are South Sudanese and nobody will make a big deal about it.

Of course, we look at their lives as equally important to everyone else's life. So if you could speak to that.

Mr. NIMS. Chairman Smith, thank you very much for that question, and it is actually incredibly relevant. We have just received reports as of yesterday that six workers from an indigenous NGO were killed in South Sudan—three Kenyans and I think it is now three South Sudanese. They worked for a local NGO.

USAID does not have a direct relationship with that entity but they are definitely partners in trying to bring lifesaving aid to South Sudan for the greater humanitarian community.

I believe that now, since the conflict began in 2013, that we have had over 80 fatalities of aid workers in South Sudan. It is an incredibly dangerous place to work.

And I think you're correct in saying that we have to ensure, all donor governments and all operating partners, that the safety of our people are of utmost concern and that we continue to take measures to ensure when they go out to do this work that they are protected and that all parties know that these are neutral actors in place.

This has been an issue that we are not just seeing in South Sudan. We are seeing other parts of the world as well. As part of the World Humanitarian Summit last summer in Turkey, we talked about this issue and it is very concerning for donors, especially for our office where not only do we have our partners, we also have USAID staff in these conditions.

And this is one of the great changes I think that we have seen in the last 5 years about the nature of conflict and what we are responding to is that conflicts are not driven necessarily by the natural disasters that they used to be.

They are being driven by conflict. Conflict necessarily puts greater risk on our partners. I also think that the people that will be following will be able to talk in greater detail about some of the actions they are taking.

Mr. SMITH. Let me just ask you, how much money are we allocating toward this crisis? Is there a low estimate, medium estimate, high estimate?

What do you think is going to be needed? Will there be a request of Congress for additional funding or do you have enough that you could either reprogram or you already have?

And, secondly, on the issue of prepositioning, again, just having been in Juba it was appalling that armed forces would go to WFP warehouse and pretty much strip it clean of all of the foodstuffs that were there which were intended for extremely hungry people.

Prepositioning, GAO found that it does save time. It's there in a way that could be accessed quickly. But it does cost money, and then there is the risk of theft. How do we balance all of that?

And the idea of WFP tracking food delivery—are we on top of that with them to make sure that it gets to where it is supposed to be in a timely fashion to alleviate suffering?

Mr. NIMS. Thank you, Chairman, for those questions.

Let's talk about some of the numbers. Right now, since FY 2016 Food for Peace alone has provided, including South Sudan, close to \$1 billion of resources have been allocated in food resources to all of those affected countries and that is primarily from the Office of Food for Peace.

Our sister office, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in USAID, also has done over \$500 million in conjunction with our funding.

So I think that there is a robust response from the United States in these crises and we can break down by country some of these operations, even by partner at a later date if you would like that.

Mr. SMITH. If you could provide that for the record as quickly as possible that would be very—

Mr. NIMS. Not a problem. We will definitely be on that as soon as this hearing ends.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM MR. MATTHEW NIMS TO QUESTION ASKED  
DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

In FY 2016-2017, the U.S. Agency for International Development has provided more than \$983 million to the Horn of Africa to date, including \$762 million in emergency food assistance from Food for Peace. In addition, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration has provided \$286 million in humanitarian funding for a total of nearly \$1.27 billion from the U.S. Government.

In addition, USAID has provided more than \$708 million to South Sudan in FY 2016-2017, including \$565 million in emergency food assistance from Food for Peace. The U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration has also provided nearly \$123 million in humanitarian funding for a total of nearly \$831million from the U.S. Government.

USAID funding for the **Horn of Africa** in **FY 2017** includes:

Food for Peace (FFP)

| USAID/FFP <sup>3</sup>  |  |  |                      |
|---|--|--|----------------------|
| <b>DJIBOUTI</b>   |  |  |                      |
| WFP   | 2,960 MT of In-Kind Food Emergency Assistance                    | Countrywide                              | \$3,500,000          |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/FFP FUNDING FOR THE DJIBOUTI RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>             |  |  | <b>\$3,500,000</b>   |
| <b>ETHIOPIA</b>   |  |  |                      |
| CRS/JEOP  | 124,747 MT of In-Kind Relief Food Assistance                     | Amhara, Dire Dawa, Oromiya, SNNP, Tigray | \$64,005,700         |
| Mercy Corps   | 669 MT of In-Kind Nutrition Commodities                          | Somali                                   | \$756,400            |
| WFP   | 39,500 MT of In-Kind Relief Food Assistance                      | Somali                                   | \$27,998,800         |
|   | 39,150 MT of In-Kind Food Assistance for Refugees                | Countrywide                              | \$29,434,200         |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/FFP FUNDING FOR THE ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2017<sup>4</sup></b> |  |  | <b>\$122,195,100</b> |
| <b>KENYA</b>  |  |  |                      |
| WFP   | 23,800 MT of In-Kind Food Assistance for Refugees                | Garissa, Turkana                         | \$22,500,000         |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/FFP FUNDING FOR THE KENYA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>                |  |  | <b>\$22,500,000</b>  |
| <b>SOMALIA</b>  |  |  |                      |
| WFP   | 37,140 MT of In-Kind Emergency Food Assistance                   | Countrywide                              | \$60,000,000         |
|   | Food Vouchers and Cash Transfers for Relief Food and Livelihoods | Countrywide                              | \$20,000,000         |
| Implementing Partners   | Food Vouchers and Cash Transfers for Relief Food and Livelihoods | Countrywide                              | \$43,150,000         |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/FFP FUNDING FOR THE SOMALIA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>              |  |  | <b>\$123,150,000</b> |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/FFP FUNDING FOR THE HORN OF AFRICA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>       |  |  | <b>\$271,345,100</b> |

U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)

| IMPLEMENTING PARTNER   | ACTIVITY   | LOCATION                    | AMOUNT              |
|--|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>USAID/OFDA<sup>2</sup></b>  |  |                             |                     |
| <b>ETHIOPIA</b>  |  |                             |                     |
| Action Contre la Faim (ACF)  | Nutrition, WASH  | Oromiya                     | \$1,779,464         |
| Concern  | Nutrition, WASH  | Amhara, Tigray              | \$1,642,303         |
| GOAL   | Nutrition  | SNNP                        | \$1,000,000         |
| International Medical Corps (IMC)  | Health, Nutrition, WASH  | Oromiya, SNNP               | \$2,000,000         |
| International Rescue Committee (IRC)                                       | WASH   | Somali                      | \$870,219           |
| OCHA   | Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund   | Countrywide                 | \$6,000,000         |
|  | Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management   | Countrywide                 | \$1,000,000         |
| Oxfam/Great Britain (Oxfam/GB)   | Agriculture and Food Security, Economic Recovery and Market Systems, WASH  | Somali                      | \$3,900,000         |
| Project Concern International (PCI)  | Agriculture and Food Security, WASH  | Oromiya                     | \$783,160           |
| SC/US  | Agriculture and Food Security, Economic Recovery and Market Systems, Nutrition, WASH   | Afar, Somali                | \$3,300,000         |
| UNICEF   | Health, Nutrition, WASH  | Afar, Oromiya, SNNP, Somali | \$4,052,408         |
| UNHAS  | Logistics Support and Relief Commodities   | Somali                      | \$500,000           |
| USAID/Ethiopia   | Risk Management Policy and Practice  | Countrywide                 | \$1,500,000         |
|  | Agriculture and Food Security  | Oromiya                     | \$499,500           |
|  | Agriculture and Food Security  | Somali                      | \$499,974           |
|  | Agriculture and Food Security  | Countrywide                 | \$250,000           |
|  |  | Program Support             | \$376,920           |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>       |  |                             | <b>\$29,953,948</b> |
| <b>SOMALIA</b>   |  |                             |                     |
| Implementing Partners  | Agriculture and Food Security, Economic Recovery and Market Systems, Health, Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management, Logistics Support and Relief Commodities, Risk Management Policy and Practice, WASH | Countrywide                 | \$46,385,934        |
|  |  | Program Support             | \$32,523            |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE SOMALIA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>        |  |                             | <b>\$46,418,457</b> |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING FOR THE HORN OF AFRICA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b> |  |                             | <b>\$76,372,405</b> |

PRM

| State/PRM   |  |                 |                     |
|---|--|-----------------|---------------------|
| <b>DJIBOUTI</b>   |  |                 |                     |
| International Organization for Migration (IOM)                            | Contribution to Yemen Revised Regional Appeal for Djibouti | Obock           | \$1,200,000         |
| UNHCR   | Protection and Assistance for Refugees                     | Countrywide     | \$3,300,000         |
| <b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR THE DJIBOUTI RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>       |  |                 | <b>\$4,500,000</b>  |
| <b>ETHIOPIA</b>   |  |                 |                     |
| IOM   | Contribution to Yemen Revised Regional Appeal for Ethiopia | Countrywide     | \$1,100,000         |
| UNHCR   | Protection and Assistance for Refugees                     | Countrywide     | \$31,150,000        |
| UNHAS   | Logistics Support and Relief Commodities                   | Countrywide     | \$560,000           |
| <b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR THE ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>       |  |                 | <b>\$32,810,000</b> |
| <b>KENYA</b>  |  |                 |                     |
| UNHCR   | Protection and Assistance for Refugees                     | Countrywide     | \$20,800,000        |
| UNHAS   | Logistics Support and Relief Commodities                   | Countrywide     | \$530,000           |
|   |  | Program Support | \$83,924            |
| <b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR THE KENYA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>          |  |                 | <b>\$21,413,924</b> |
| <b>SOMALIA</b>  |  |                 |                     |
| UNHCR   | Protection and Assistance for IDPs and Refugees            | Countrywide     | \$8,300,000         |
| <b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR THE SOMALIA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b>        |  |                 | <b>\$8,300,000</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR THE HORN OF AFRICA RESPONSE IN FY 2017</b> |  |                 | <b>\$67,023,924</b> |

USAID funding for the **South Sudan** in **FY 2017** includes:

**Food for Peace (FFP)**

| USAID/FFP <sup>2</sup>         |  |                   |                      |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|----------------------|
| Catholic Relief Services (CRS) | U.S. In-Kind Food Aid  | Jonglei           | \$12,357,100         |
| UNICEF                         | U.S. In-Kind Food Aid  | Countrywide       | \$12,258,477         |
|                                | Logistics Support  | Upper Nile        | \$800,000            |
| WFP                            | 62,380 MT of U.S. In-Kind Food Aid                           | Countrywide       | \$133,972,400        |
|                                | 50,916 MT of Locally and Regionally Procured Food Assistance | Countrywide       | \$96,930,000         |
|                                | Cash Transfers for Food                                      | Central Equatoria | \$3,000,000          |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/FFP FUNDING</b> |  |                   | <b>\$259,317,977</b> |

**U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)**

| IMPLEMENTING PARTNER            | ACTIVITY   | LOCATION                      | AMOUNT              |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| USAID/OFDA                      |  |                               |                     |
| FAO                             | Agriculture and Food Security, Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management            | Countrywide                   | \$9,000,000         |
| Food for the Hungry             | Agriculture and Food Security  | Jonglei, Upper Nile           | \$1,400,000         |
| IOM                             | Shelter and Settlements  | Unity, Western Bahr el Ghazal | \$1,321,000         |
| Mercy Corps                     | WASH   | Unity                         | \$2,995,425         |
| OCHA                            | Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management   | Countrywide                   | \$1,250,000         |
| Relief International            | Agriculture and Food Security, Nutrition, WASH   | Upper Nile                    | \$500,000           |
| UNHAS                           | Logistics Support and Relief Commodities   | Countrywide                   | \$2,850,000         |
| UNICEF                          | Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management, Nutrition, Protection, WASH              | Countrywide                   | \$5,993,600         |
| WFP                             | Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management, Logistics Support and Relief Commodities | Countrywide                   | \$7,500,000         |
|                                 | Program Support  |                               | \$561,592           |
| <b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING</b> |  |                               | <b>\$33,371,617</b> |

**PRM**

| STATE/PRM  |  |             |                     |
|--|--|-------------|---------------------|
| Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) | Livelihoods, Protection                  | Upper Nile  | \$1,000,000         |
| UNHAS  | Logistics Support and Relief Commodities | Countrywide | \$910,000           |
| UNHCR  | Multi-Sector Assistance                  | Countrywide | \$16,600,000        |
| <b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING</b>                           |  |             | <b>\$18,510,000</b> |

Mr. NIMS. As far as prepositioning, especially in South Sudan but it really goes for other places that we are working as well, but South Sudan is a little bit particular. Because of the rains in South Sudan, our partners and the donors work very, very closely to ensure before the rains hit that food is prepositioned in warehouses throughout the country that needs to be there so that it can be accessed.

Conflict will disrupt that—our ability to preposition into those warehouses. The case in Juba you mentioned, WFP in particular took heroic efforts to remove much of the food before the conflict actually began.

Not all of the food was taken out but that warehouse in and of itself they knew that the conflict actors were coming and the team moved actually the majority of the food out of that warehouse before the conflict.

So our teams on the ground are very adept at being able to know what's going on on the ground and to protect those resources. There is always a danger in prepositioning but because of the access we get when these conditions allow us not able to deliver having that food in place is of primary importance. So we are going to continue to use that tool to ensure we are best able to respond.

Your final question about WFP tracking or being able to account for the resources—this is something of critical importance to USAID in general and definitely our office.

We at USAID partner with WFP and the NGOs to ensure that those that have been targeted are the ones that are receiving the aid and there are several ways that we do this.

First of all is ensuring that those identified are the ones that need the aid. In other words, the most vulnerable are getting it.

Our partners are very, very good at ensuring when they go to communities, those relationships that they have they are able to identify those who are most in need.

The second part, when we actually go for distribution, is that we have teams of monitors in place and we have certain biometric measures that we can employ to ensure that those that have been identified are actually the people that are getting the aid.

This can go from a retinal scan, to an ID card, to even a fingerprint that we would employ to ensure that those people are the ones that are supposed to be getting the aid.

And then finally, we would do, especially in places like Somalia and in other places, is a follow-up distribution testing to ensure that the people have actually received the aid.

This can be done through cell phone surveys similar to our Nielsen ratings that we have here in the United States where we will do a random call of beneficiaries to ensure that they actually did receive the aid as well as setting up hotlines so that the beneficiaries can actually call in to ensure that they've got that.

Finally, what we do is that we, the USAID, has employed third-party monitoring. These are actually groups of NGOs or other actors that we employ to go back to those areas to ensure that the food that was allocated to those regions actually was delivered to those people that we are supposed to.

This all combines to make sure that we have a pretty good eye on what we plan to do actually happens and reaches those needy beneficiaries.

Mr. SMITH. And before you leave, my good friend and colleague, Ranking Member Bass, one issue that we pressed Salva Kiir on relentlessly and have done so since our trip there in August, to his Defense Minister, his Vice President, who I have seen since, is zero tolerance for sexual violence—violence of all kinds but including sexual violence.

The report on the Terrain installation suggested that they do that, which is what we were asking for. But it still hasn't happened.



And until the military up and down the command, every aspect of it, realizes that its security forces cannot rape and harass people, particularly aid workers who are seemingly one of the most targeted groups; we really have to raise the bar, I think.

They have promised they would do it. Kiir told us he would do it, told Greg and I face to face, and it is about time to get it done. That was in August.

I know you are absolutely on board pushing that. But know that we work in tandem, all of us. It is bipartisan.

That has got to end and they need to implement a strategy that is zero tolerance because just like we had with many of the peacekeepers when they were deployed to Goma and other places, and I had several hearings on that. Went there.

As you know, I wrote the trafficking laws for the United States, the Trafficking Victims Protection Acts. George W. Bush did a zero tolerance policy for our military and it holds today, and if somebody violates it, even to the point of prostitution, the Uniform Code of Military Justice is as clear as a bell.

It is actionable and they can go to prison and they should go to prison, those who violate it.

So, Kiir, we told him that. We said, we know that years back you had a fondness for President Bush—well, he did it with our military—please do it with yours.

And he said he would and he hasn't. So it is a point of great consternation and anger now that they have refused to actually do it.

So I just would hope you would convey that too because, again, the people we want to protect are the indigenous South Sudanese, obviously, and the beneficiaries of the aid and all those wonderful women and men who put their lives on the line as aid workers to help.

So thank you so much for your testimony.

Mr. NIMS. Thank you very much, Chairman. Thank you for your efforts on that point.

Ms. BASS. Thank you very much for coming and giving your testimony today and I just had a few questions for you.

We have a markup in the full committee tomorrow and we have a resolution on the famine, and I just wanted to know what you thought about it.

Right now the resolution is focusing on South Sudan, but whether or not you thought Somalia and Nigeria needed to be included as well.

That's one question. I also want to ask you about the role of the AU. Is the AU helping and what role they are playing specifically?

And our chairman here was talking about President Kiir in terms of the peacekeepers. But I would also want to know whether or not they have stopped.

I don't know if you mentioned this, Mr. Chair, but whether they stopped. They had increased the fees for humanitarian workers.

It was some crazy dollar amount—\$10,000 or something if you wanted to come in and provide humanitarian support. They got condemned internationally for that. I don't know if they have backed away.

Mr. NIMS. Thank you, Ranking Member Bass, for those questions.

On the first question about including Somalia and Nigeria in the resolution, the situation in both of those countries is very severe as well.

In Nigeria, what we are seeing is over 5 million people at risk of severe food insecurity and even about the same level in Somalia.

The difference in Somalia is that in about the next 2 or 3 weeks, if the rains fail, which it is still unknown exactly if that's going to happen, we could be seeing even more need because those are very crucial rains at this time.

So it is expected that the needs are going to grow pretty quickly in Somalia as well. And in Nigeria, the real issue has been the lack of access in some of those areas—in fact, zero access in some of them still, and when our partners have had access they are finding—

Ms. BASS. Because of Boko Haram or because of other—

Mr. NIMS. Boko Haram. Because of activities of Boko Haram, most definitely, and when our partners have had some access they are finding just horrific conditions on the ground with severe acute malnutrition rates that are really unheard of in quite some time—over 50 percent in certain cases.

So that is a very, very severe crisis and I can say that I think that the partners have really stepped up their game in Nigeria. I think that there are several issues to contend with but I think that we are better placed than we were as a better humanitarian community than, let's say, even 6 or 8 months ago.

That's not to say there is a lot of work left to do and there is a lot of areas of access that we just are not getting into.

Coming back to Somalia, what we are seeing, depending on the rains or not, we are still in midst of a very serious situation.

We have lots of people—like I said, 5 million people that are really at risk right now. Again, what's a little bit different about this is that Somalia definitively it is because of a drought that's happening right now.

It's not to say that there is not intense conflict that is really what got us here but the drought is what is most concerning and what we need to do now—what USAID is doing is not waiting for this to happen.

We are acting now. We are moving food into the country now and working with our partners to ensure that we are there.

What's a little bit different than the situation now is the fact that we have acted a little bit earlier than before in 2011, as the chairman was saying, and we also have better access, meaning our partners have much better access than they did in 2011 and really the viability of al-Shabaab has been reduced. Back in 2011, al-Shabaab was in control of the capital Mogadishu. That is definitely not the case now.

What our partners are telling us is that in the urban areas of Somalia we have pretty good access. We have pretty good sustained access. The rural areas are still of concern.

So around 600,000 to 900,000 people in those rural areas really are still getting limited to no access and that is very concerning, especially as the drought conditions worsen.

Your question about the AU, I think—

Ms. BASS. Well, actually before you go there, the—so in Nigeria the Nigerian Government has also said that Boko Haram was under control. So—

Mr. NIMS. I would not be in a good position to talk about the military and the government's efforts directly on Boko Haram.

I can say that our partners definitely feel that there are places that are unsafe for them to access. And similar to Chairman Smith's question about putting our partners in danger, without adequate control of a situation our partners are just simply not going to go to those places and that definitely still exists.

Ms. BASS. Of course not. The AU?

Mr. NIMS. The AMISOM troops have had significant impact in Somalia. I think that the combined forces of Kenya and the Ethiopians have really opened up those corridors and really allowed the NGOs to be able to reestablish a very good network and very good operations in there.

It is hoped that that continues and with elections in Kenya and with continuing growth in Ethiopia, let's hope that continues. That is a very, I think, good sign of how the AU in general has had positive impact on this and I think that will continue.

Ms. BASS. So—and what about the AU and also President Kiir in terms of aid workers being able to come?

Mr. NIMS. Correct. So we did hear about a week or so ago about a \$10,000 per humanitarian worker fee to be able to do this. I can say for certain to you right now that that has not occurred—that our partners are still operating, that they have not been asked to pay those fees.

Ms. BASS. Was that not true or he backed away from it or—

Mr. NIMS. I think many things—

Ms. BASS. Kind of important if it wasn't true.

Mr. NIMS. I think that the announcement was made. We believe that it was made. But I think the efforts of the donors and the U.S. Ambassador there has made it very clear that this fee is untenable and will not be paid and I think that has had substantial impact on it, going forward.

Ms. BASS. So let me ask you a question. In the President's proposed budget with a 30-plus percent cut to USAID, if that cut actually went through, how would you respond to this situation that you're facing now?

Mr. NIMS. So we at USAID, we have seen the President's blueprint and it hasn't specifically mentioned cuts to Food for Peace, and we continue to work on the budget.

But I have no information exactly on the cuts for 2018 or the potential impacts that's going to have on our budget.

Ms. BASS. Okay. I thought that there was a significant cut to USAID that was proposed.

Mr. NIMS. I think that there have been proposed cuts. As the exact impact of what that's going to be and how that's going to be, especially on the humanitarian side, we really have no information at this time.

I feel that it is my job to make sure that with the resources we are given by Congress that we make the tough choices that are going to be there in the future and that we continue to stress the most vulnerable and the most needy in the world.

Ms. BASS. Is there anything else you think Congress should be doing right now?

Mr. NIMS. I think having hearings exactly like this that bring attention to what's going on not just in Somalia but I do think Somalia needs attention—but other places in the world is incredibly crucial.

I think the chairman's efforts on highlighting the safety of humanitarian workers as well as the protection issue that is definitely apparent in so many of these conflict situations is incredibly useful.

When we are able to get you all to come out to see some of these programs that is phenomenal as well. Your visits to the field have tremendous impact for your understanding but also for us to elevate the situations.

Ms. BASS. So is the chairman going to go?

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Ms. BASS. Maybe I'll go with you.

Mr. SMITH. That would be great.

Ms. BASS. I yield.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Garrett.

Mr. GARRETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Very briefly, the ranking member asked about the situation in Somalia and Ethiopia. I would just give you carte blanche to extend whether or not there is a relevant crisis in any other nations and leave that open ended.

But specifically, obviously, when you look on a map you see the Republic of the Sudan, obviously, North and South Sudan and other surrounding areas and these sorts of humanitarian crises, particularly as it relates to famine, generally don't respect borders.

Are there other areas where we might consider the application of assistance?

Mr. NIMS. Thank you, Mr. Garrett.

What I had not talked a lot about, which was a little bit in my opening statement, is the situation in Yemen and I think the numbers alone in Yemen where we are looking at close to 17 million people that are severely food insecure and with the pending conflict and the existing conflict and how that's going to go is definitely cause for concern.

And because of the proximity of Yemen to east Africa, that is a place that will be impacted by maybe refugees coming in or large movements of population. Yemen is a place where access is very difficult.

Ninety percent of Yemen's food is imported and, quite frankly, the humanitarian assistance alone is just not going to be able to impact that situation if there is a full collapse of the market or even the ability to import food. I think that we should be keeping a close eye on Yemen.

One aspect is South Sudan, and just yesterday, the head of the World Food Programme's emergency division came in to talk to us about some issues. She's here in town and is going to talk about these four areas that we are talking about.

And what was surprising to me is that she brought up as bad as South Sudan is and how it has just trended down, quite frankly, over the last 3 years that she is most concerned about that moving

quickly into an even worse status and a lot of that is because of the continued conflict and what she is seeing.

And I tend to agree that South Sudan is on a simmer and could very easily go into a boil very, very quickly and I think that we have to continue our vigilance on what's going on in South Sudan and the conflict makes it incredibly difficult for us to be able to do what needs to be done as humanitarians.

Mr. GARRETT. So, Mr. Nims, you're here and we are speaking about a humanitarian crisis that the vast bulk of the world is not aware of.

To that end, is there something with which the common observer of world events might put this on scale with? Can you compare it to—this crisis to another humanitarian crisis to provide scale?

Mr. NIMS. So what we have been saying in humanitarian circles is that we have not seen this level of need or population movement or refugees since World War II.

So, in fact, this is unprecedented in, really, quite frankly, human history, the level of need. I think it is important to say that even in the case of Somalia where we are seeing a drought that every single one of these four major conflicts in northern Nigeria, in South Sudan, in Yemen and in Somalia, are all primarily due to conflict.

These are man-made situations and I think it is important for us to understand that as dedicated as the people in USAID, as dedicated are the people who will be talking afterwards, humanitarian assistance cannot solve these crises.

We really need to have political solutions. We need strong leadership from the U.N. and other places to be able to bring cogent solutions to what's going on.

We didn't talk about Syria or what's going on in Iraq. These are similar longstanding crises that really exist because of manmade conflict and we cannot, in the sense as we say "HA"—humanitarian assistance—ourselves out of this.

Mr. GARRETT. So are there any regional players who, if they were to change attitudinally, might be of key assistance as it relates to getting the aid where it needs to go.

Obviously, in Yemen, for example, there is real challenges just getting on the ground much less getting aid where it needs to go.

Are there any countries where if they were to sort of change the current status of their activities in their own region would be able to be particularly helpful, and who and how so?

Mr. NIMS. Thank you for that question, Congressman.

I think you're getting into a realm of me as an operator. You know, I definitely can look at the situation—

Mr. GARRETT. Sure. I respect that.

Mr. NIMS [continuing]. That's going on. I think that we have talked to our State Department colleagues and they are in a much better position to answer some of those questions and I appreciate that.

Mr. GARRETT. Sure. Yeah, no, I get that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Garrett.

Mr. Castro.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, Chairman.

Thanks for your testimony today and I apologize if I ask something that's been asked already. I had my Western Hemisphere Subcommittee hearing at the same time so I've been in and out.

But let me ask you, how will the reduced U.S. contributions to U.S. peacekeeping affect the humanitarian situations in South Sudan and Sudan?

Mr. NIMS. Thank you for that question, Congressman.

I am really not able to say exactly how reduced funding to any one group, especially on that level of the U.N., would have a direct impact.

I do know that the peacekeeping force in South Sudan, for example, has a critical role to play. But the level of funding from the U.S. or other agencies I am not really able to say what that exact impact would be.

Mr. CASTRO. But I suspect that reduced funding probably wouldn't be helpful, right?

Mr. NIMS. I would agree that probably it would not be helpful.

Mr. CASTRO. Yes. Let me ask you, as far as you know what is China's commitment to humanitarian aid in Africa and in this region in particular?

Mr. NIMS. Thank you for that question.

I am not fully versed on exactly the levels that we have seen from the Government of China in humanitarian assistance.

I do know that USAID and the State Department have been engaging with officials from China to increase their role in humanitarian assistance and I believe that China recently has announced some bits of funding for Somalia, for example.

But I don't know those exact numbers and we can definitely get back to you on what those figures have been.

Mr. CASTRO. Well, and part of the reason I ask, for example, is because China has been more active in Africa, the continent generally, in terms of economic development investment and I wonder if they have also stepped more aggressively into the humanitarian aid role.

Mr. NIMS. I do think that they have increased some of their funding in certain ways and we are hopeful that it will continue and I know that we have efforts to engage them in the humanitarian sphere specifically on how to engage with the U.N. and other actors. But we can get you more of that information at a later time.

[The information referred to follows:]

WRITTEN RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM MR. MATTHEW NIMS TO QUESTION ASKED DURING THE HEARING BY THE HONORABLE JOAQUIN CASTRO

At the 2016 U.S-China development cooperation dialogue, the United States and China agreed to enhancing collaboration on global food security, deepening coordination on humanitarian assistance and disaster response, and working collaboratively with multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and United Nations to implement sustainable development goals. The United States has also urged China to increase its contribution to humanitarian assistance, both to countries directly and to multilateral agencies. Recent Chinese humanitarian assistance funding includes:

- At the second Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in December 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged \$156 million in 2016 emergency food aid to countries faced with food security crisis caused by El Niño, including approximately \$88 million in support for Ethiopia, Somalia, and nine other African countries.

- In September 2016, China announced plans to provide \$100 million to the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund in assistance to refugees facing humanitarian need.
- In 2016, WFP received \$5.94 billion in contributions, including \$18.6 million from China—an \$8.1 million increase from the 2015 Chinese contribution of \$10.5 million.
- In 2016, UNHCR received \$3.34 billion in donor contributions, including \$2.8 million from China. This is an increase of \$1.86 million from the 2015 Chinese contribution of \$941,841 to the UNHCR.
- China is one of the top 10 donors to the FAO, with a 2017 contribution of \$14 million. Other Chinese contributions to UN agencies for 2017 are not yet publically available.
- On the development side of food security, China has a long-standing strategic alliance with the FAO to support tripartite cooperation in developing countries, and has contributed \$80 million to the FAO-China South-South Cooperation trust fund since its inception in 2008.

Mr. CASTRO. Sure. And, you know, and of course we want the aid to get there regardless of where it comes from, right? You want people to be helped when they need help.

But I have said before that the President's posture toward many nations around the world and his scaling back of funding for things like humanitarian aid are making the United States take a back seat to other countries when it comes to being a leader in the world.

And part of that is not only economic engagement but also this kind of aid, and when you couple this scaling back with the hostility that he's shown toward countries like Mexico, for example, allies around the world, or Germany, Australia, I think it puts the United States in a very precarious position and also allows a nation, an economic competitor of ours, a nation like China to step forward and really become an even stronger leader around the world, and that Xi Jinping, the President of China, probably sees Africa as a further opportunity in addition to what they've done economically there to step up and be helpful in ways that it looks like this administration is committed to backing away from. What do you think about that?

Mr. NIMS. I think that USAID has been, and especially the Office of Food for Peace and our sister office, OFDA, have enjoyed tremendous support from Members of Congress and what we have been able to do over the last 3 years has really saved countless lives.

We look forward to continued support to be able to do what we do because, as I said earlier, I think we are looking at an unprecedented time of need and I hope that we will be able to continue to do that.

Mr. CASTRO. Well, I appreciate that, and we want you all to be successful. I worked with USAID on the global development lab legislation that we got through the House and couldn't quite get through the Senate. Hopefully, it'll get through this term.

But I would hate to see the work of this Congress and, you know, the chairman, I know, has worked on these issues a lot—I would hate to see your work and the work of this Congress undone by a lack of commitment, going forward.

Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Castro.

Mr. Nims, thank you very much for your testimony. We do have a series of four votes, and I apologize—we will have a brief suspension of this subcommittee.

But I would point out that the President does propose and we dispose in the House and Senate. I've been here 37 years; I'm in my 37th year as a Member of the House and we fought hard and back—pushed back when Obama wanted to cut tuberculosis and cut it significantly.

He wanted to cut neglected tropical diseases—we had a major bill that I have introduced on neglected tropical diseases—down from \$100 million to about \$82 million. Thankfully, in a bipartisan way we pushed back.

I don't know if it is OMB or it is the President but we always seem to have people in the White House that talk a good game and then we end up not getting what we think we should get.

I do think the Congress will very carefully, both the authorizers and the appropriators, will look at these budgets and make sure that we get humanitarian aid to where it is needed most and to do it in a way that does our American public proud that we care for the least of our brethren and I mean that by situationally, of course, because they are disadvantaged by famine.

Thank you so much, Mr. Nims, and we stand in recess.

Mr. NIMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Recess.]

Mr. SMITH. Subcommittee will resume its sitting and, again, I apologize for the delay because of the votes. I don't think we will have another vote for a long time. So thank you for your patience.

We will begin now with our second panel, beginning first with Mr. Ken Isaacs, who serves as vice president of programs and government relations for Samaritan's Purse. He has served as the director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance within USAID.

He coordinated the United States Government response to the Indonesian tsunami, the Pakistani earthquake, the humanitarian relief efforts in both Darfur and southern Sudan as well as the Niger and Ethiopia emergency responses.

He led Samaritan's Purse's organizational efforts in Liberia in response to Ebola and testified before this subcommittee on that very issue in 2014.

We will then hear from Mr. Michael Bowers, who is the vice president for humanitarian leadership and response for Mercy Corps.

In this capacity he is responsible for leading and supporting Mercy Corps' global emergency operations, enhancing their quality and accountability, and ensuring that they bring the greatest benefit to people in need.

Mr. Bowers has directed the agency's activities in sub-Saharan Africa, the Balkans, and Asia, managing programs in food security, shelter, agriculture, and economic development.

Mr. Bowers recently led Mercy Corps' humanitarian assistance programs in Turkey and in northern Syria in 2017.

We will then here from Thabani Maphosa, who is partnership leader for food assistance at World Vision International and acting senior director for the food security and livelihoods team at World Vision, United States.



In these roles, he leads a global team of technical specialists across the World Vision partnership to deliver quality food assistance programming. His careers included 12 years at World Vision working in numerous countries in southern Africa. He currently serves as the representative to World Vision International on the World Food Programme's executive board.

Finally, we will hear from Ms. Faustine Wabwire, who is Bread for the World Institute's senior foreign policy analyst at the institute.

Ms. Wabwire provides policy leadership on issues including climate change, global poverty and hunger, social protection, the need for strong institutions and local capacity, and the role of effective U.S., partner country, and multilateral assistance in providing solutions.

Prior to joining Bread for the World Institute, Ms. Wabwire held a number of positions in academia, research, and international development at the national, regional, and global levels.

I would like to now yield the floor and welcome back Mr. Isaacs.

**STATEMENT OF MR. KEN ISAACS, VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMS AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, SAMARITAN'S PURSE**

Mr. ISAACS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank you and the representatives, all the fellow guests to the committee for the opportunity to speak here today on behalf of those suffering as a result of what is being referred to as a quiet famine in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

And the numbers have been gone over in much greater detail this morning than I need to enumerate now but I will say a couple of things, that the crisis is a result of many factors.

Certainly there is the weather. There is market influences. But what I really want to focus on is South Sudan.

We are working in an area, Mayiandit, that has officially been declared as a famine zone, and between South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, Samaritan's Purse is feeding probably 2 million people a month. So we have a large presence there.

We have large activity. We have solid relationships with Food for Peace program, with OFDA, and particularly with the World Food Programme, and I want to acknowledge their great contribution to everything that is going on there.

The most significant driver of the current crisis in the worst hit area of South Sudan is political insecurity and brutal conflict and it continues to engulf the region.

In South Sudan alone, I have got a number here—1.85 million people have been internally displaced, leaving their homes and their crops behind as they flee for their lives.

A week ago Sunday, we had 15 of our national staff were abducted. They were taken at 2 a.m. They came into our compound and they kept them for 3 days. Thankfully, no one was hurt. There was no ransom made, but it had to do with the local dynamic over humanitarian assistance and this shows some of what was being talked about earlier from Congressman Bass about the dangers to humanitarian workers, and it is a growing problem.

The seven that were killed just 2 days ago—the problem is that the central government doesn't control the people with the guns anymore. They have control over the main elements of the SPLA but there are so many factions and factions of factions and factions of factions that you can make a deal with somebody, you can get a permission and you don't know that that's going to extend into the next village.

As a result of the insecurity there what Samaritan's Purse has done is, to be honest, it has caused us to create our own security department that reaches all the way back to headquarters.

So we have a separate analysis and can monitor our people whether that is electronically—we track them. The negotiations that go on are all-consuming, but the safety of our staff is important.

I think that the United States needs to maintain its leadership in humanitarian response around the world, and with all of the talk that's going on of budget cuts, I don't know where that's going down and I don't want to get into the politics of it.

But there is criticism going around about development aid or a lot of times you hear sort of a broad term we are going to cut development money.

I think that there needs to be a clear delineation in the thinking in people's minds between humanitarian assistance and development money.

Even at the end of wars America has always fed people. We fed our enemies, and I don't think that food should be a bargaining chip and I don't think that food should be a tool of diplomacy.

I think that giving humanitarian aid represents the best of the heart and the spirit of the American people and I think that whatever it takes to do that in supporting Food for Peace and supporting the World Food Programme I believe that we need to make that effort.

I think that there are also some things that could be considered that would be very beneficial in food aid reform.

The system right now—pretty much there is some flexibility for local purchase with cash but I think that if that could be reviewed for even more flexibility and that means to buy commodities out of local markets, arrange local logistics that would not only stimulate local economies but frequently you would be able to get more food at a better buy.

In Uganda, 1.5 million people are in phase three of a food crisis situation. Eight hundred thousand of them have come from South Sudan.

Right now, we are feeding about 60,000 a month. In 2 weeks, that number is going to go up to about 300,000 a month.

The pressure that is being created in the region from the insecurity is going to breed more insecurity is what's going to happen. So you have a situation where the lack of food is not only causing suffering, people are moving for food. People are selling their goods for food. They are sort of using up their coping mechanisms.

A famine is—here is a great analogy of a famine. It is like a big tree when the wind blows. The wind blows and the tree leans and it comes back up. And the wind blows harder and it leans a little bit more and it comes back up.

But there is a point if the wind blows over the tree can't get back up and in those areas that the FEWS NET has declared as a famine zone it is there now.

So what this means from an optical perspective, just speaking candidly and from a human perspective, is that a lot of people are going to die.

And I think that it is important that that be said, that people know that, that the Congress knows that and that we carefully consider the role that we want the United States to play in that.

So I think that I'll leave you today with four points to sort of simplify this. One is that the famine and the situation is severe.

Two, the crisis is a result of many things but in the worst areas it is resulting from conflict and lack of access and insecurity.

Three, I think it requires sustained American diplomatic leadership to have an effect there. Somebody asked earlier about the AU and what they are doing. You know, I can't pass judgment on the AU. I can just say look at what's going on in South Sudan and make your own conclusion.

And I think also that the situation requires sustained U.S. leadership and the provision of humanitarian goods.

I think saving lives is representative of American values. Thank you for letting me talk to you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Isaacs follows:]

KEN ISAACS  
VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS  
SAMARITAN'S PURSE

MARCH 28, 2017

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS,  
AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Chairman Smith, esteemed Representatives, and fellow guests of this committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak here today on behalf of those suffering as a result of what has been called a "quiet famine" in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. As we sit here today, more than 20 million people are facing the terrifying reality of starvation. UNICEF has warned that over 1 million children are at imminent risk of dying from severe acute malnutrition, and over 6 million do not have enough food to meet their basic needs. My organization, Samaritan's Purse, is currently working to save as many lives as possible by feeding some 2 million people in Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda.

This complex and horrific humanitarian crisis is the result of many factors. Poor performance of crops because of lack of rain, increased food prices, disease outbreaks, deteriorating water and pasture conditions, and livestock death have all contributed to the catastrophe that is now before us. The most significant driver of the current crisis in the worst hit areas of South Sudan, however, is the political insecurity and brutal conflict that continues to engulf the region. In South Sudan alone, 1.85 million people have been internally displaced, leaving their homes—and crops—behind as they flee for their lives.

Because of this, many people are calling this a manmade famine, and it is hard to argue with that assessment. South Sudan is a nation with fertile soil, abundant water from the Nile River, and 12 hours of sunlight each day. It is also a country that has been embroiled in civil conflict since 2013, creating a swirling mass of people seeking safety and a way to meet their basic human needs such as food, water, and medicine.

The only way to save lives and reduce the suffering of these vulnerable populations is for the United States to provide sustained leadership in bringing immediate, large-scale food relief to the area.

To accomplish this, Food for Peace (FFP), the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), and the World Food Program (WFP) must be robustly funded. Let me be clear that what I am suggesting is not development programming. The effectiveness of this type of long-term intervention is still hotly debated. Instead, I am calling for immediate humanitarian assistance to save the lives of potentially millions of people who are now facing severe food insecurity.

Samaritan's Purse is working closely with FFP to distribute monthly food rations provided by WFP to nearly 1 million people in South Sudan. We also are partnering with OFDA in South Sudan and many other countries to provide clean water, agricultural support, and lifesaving nutritional support to vulnerable women and children, where over 100,000 people are currently experiencing famine conditions and another 1.46 million are expected to reach emergency levels of food insecurity. In the last six months of 2016, we distributed over 20,000 metric tons of food to nearly half a million people in South Sudan. In February of this year, we provided food to approximately 123,000 people in Mayendit, one area of South Sudan where famine has already been declared.

In Uganda, 1.5 million people are in a Phase 3 food crisis situation. This means that acute malnutrition levels are above normal levels and households are only marginally able to meet their minimum food needs. The influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing conflict in South Sudan and other areas is exacerbating this already highly insecure environment. In partnership with WFP, we are currently distributing food to tens of thousands of these refugees with plans to support the food needs of approximately 300,000 individuals in our upcoming distribution cycle.

We are grateful for the strategic partnerships with FFP and OFDA that have enabled us to bring critically needed humanitarian relief to hundreds of thousands of people at risk of starving to death. Unfortunately, it isn't nearly enough.

In addition to adequate resourcing of food and funding for FFP, OFDA, and WFP, consideration must be given for food aid reform that allows local purchase providing the necessary flexibility to buy food where it is most affordable and can be delivered as quickly as possible. In situations like the current food insecurity crisis gripping eastern Africa, we are in a race against time to save as many lives as possible. If more funds were made available for local purchase, food aid could be frequently bought at lower prices, and closer to the regions in need, than what can be grown and shipped from the United States. This may not always be the situation but the flexibility for these kinds of decisions will result in saving lives while stimulating local agricultural production.

This isn't just a matter of compassion. Food insecurity only brings further instability and insecurity to areas already plagued by conflict. When people are starving, governments are undermined, and the situation supports the brutality of the brutal.

Three weeks ago, Samaritan's Purse staff working in Mayendit were abducted by armed actors who threatened to kill them—an action directly connected to the famine conditions in that area. Thankfully, they were released safely, but the security conditions in the region remain highly unstable. In this environment of desperation and ongoing conflict, it is imperative that the United States and the world continue to support humanitarian assistance in order that millions of people do not die. Humanitarian assistance cannot fix political problems. There must be significant and ongoing political engagement to deal with the underlying cause of the instability. This means that we must be willing to work with weak governments, brutal governments, and strong-armed political

actors that are at the forefront of the current conflicts. These things are achieved through diplomatic and military channels

Does the United States have a responsibility, and an interest, to feed starving people in east Africa? I believe yes we do. It helps maintain security in the region and helps prevent the spread of radical extremism. It allows the United States to have more connectivity and influence in difficult places.

Nothing shows the heart and the compassion of the American people like helping others who are in desperate need. The United States has always led the world in both strength and compassion—even feeding our enemies at the end of conflicts. The world cannot ignore a famine or shirk the responsibility to attempt to save the lives of those at risk. We cannot turn our backs on innocent people, especially children, who are emaciated and weak, right now as we sit in this hearing.

Are we prepared to watch them die because we failed to act?

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much for your testimony and even more importantly for your extraordinary leadership.

We have been joined by Eliot Engel, the ranking member of the full committee.

Mr. ENGEL. I will be brief. Thank you very much. Thank you, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass.

I am very grateful at the ranking member to the subcommittee for calling this hearing and bringing attention to the grave humanitarian crises that's worsening in east Africa and worsening—it is really scary because it has been pretty bad up until now.

The U.N. estimates that nearly 300 million people in east Africa don't have the food they need. Right now Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan face dire food needs while parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda face a crisis nearly as bad for several years.

Seasonal rains have failed in the Horn of Africa, a direct result of climate change and looking ahead, this crisis holds potential for massive displacement.

So we have an extreme weather condition caused by climate change. We have a worsening famine. We have a brewing displacement crisis.

These sound like the sort of issues our State Department and USAID are designed to grapple with. So I will reiterate the points I made this morning at our full committee hearing. The administration's request to cut our international affairs budget by a third would be devastating.

The lack of leadership in senior roles including USAID Administrator, director of USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, the Assistant Secretary for Africa, Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration, it makes it impossible for our agencies to do their jobs because these slots have not yet been filled.

American leadership is vital and so far this administration by its actions is undermining our country's role in the world. Among the two worst cases we see are in Somalia and South Sudan. I would like to briefly focus on those.

Between 2010 and 2012, Somalia suffered through the worst drought and famine in 20 years. Failed harvests, a spike in food prices, and insecurity that impeded the delivery of food and aid exacerbated this crisis. It exacerbated and was exasperating.

A quarter of a million Somali refugees lost their lives including 133,000 children under the age of 5. That just breaks your heart to see that.

And the main lesson learned from that tragedy is that humanitarian assistance came too late and we need to remember that lesson today. More than 6 million people are in need of assistance in Somalia and nearly 3 million face crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity.

If the April to June rains fail again, this situation could worsen quickly, potentially leading to another humanitarian tragedy and massive displacement in the Horn, which in turn could lead to instability in Kenya and Ethiopia.

I will soon offer a resolution supporting ongoing efforts by our Government along with the U.N. and the donor community to help

meet the challenge of drought and food insecurity in the Horn of Africa.

Turning to South Sudan, more than 40 percent of the population, nearly 5 million people, currently face severe life-threatening hunger. By July, that number will likely rise another ½ million.

Last month, the U.N. declared 100,000 people to be coping with famine conditions. The security situation on the ground remains dire. This past weekend, six aid workers were ambushed and brutally murdered in South Sudan. Since December 2013, nearly 80 aid workers have been killed.

The United States and our partners have taken on the tall order of distributing food and other necessities to those in need. Many of the worst off communities are inaccessible by road for most of the year and last month famine was declared in two counties in South Sudan.

So we need to continue providing humanitarian support and pressuring the government in South Sudan and the armed opposition to put the needs of their people first.

And I'm pleased to cosponsor Ranking Member Bass' resolution calling for strong support to address the famine there.

So I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm grateful to the subcommittee for addressing and dealing with these difficult issues. I'm grateful to our panellists, and I yield back.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Engel.

Dan Donovan.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for not being here earlier. I was at a budget briefing that my good friend, Eliot Engel, from New York was just talking about.

I understand that part of the crisis is caused by nature and there's nothing we can do about a drought. But some of the other difficulties is either a lack of aid or disruption of delivery of aid.

What are—and you may of—this may repeating because I wasn't here when you all testified, but are those the two main problems that we are facing—not enough aid and the disruption of delivery of aid?

Are there other issues that we should be knowing about so that if this can be addressed congressionally that we'll be able to at least understand the causations?

Mr. ISAACS. Thank you, Congressman.

Access is an issue. Access is an issue because it is insecure, because humanitarian workers are a target of opportunity or they can become a target of political opportunity. So that puts our staff in danger.

That's a problem. And there is some generalized breakdown over the last 15 years on this issue that humanitarian workers don't get neutral space, I will call it.

But I think that also some of the decisions in the steps that the Government of South Sudan are taking are hurting themselves. One of them is the \$10,000 per person fee for a work permit for foreigners.

Another one that is problematic is that they want to nationalize the staff. We understand that and we have always worked with that. They've said that they wanted 10 percent of the staff only to be expatriates.



So we have in South Sudan about 900 staff and we've got, like, 35 or 40 expatriates. But now they have actually come back and said this position has to be a South Sudanese—this position has to be—so you're talking about complicated financial matters.

You're talking about the oversight that this subcommittee and other committees would be interested on the use of U.S. food and that requires expertise and skill.

And if you look around you would see that in South Sudan maybe 75 percent of the people are illiterate. So they, just as a nation, have not built the capacity to fill the positions that they're calling for us to fill and they are putting pressure on us and they have tied all of that together to the issuance of work permits.

So they're not creating an inviting environment for NGOs to come in and help and I think that at the very best they need to put off whatever roles that they think need to be enforced for 36 months or something. They need, as a nation, to get through this famine.

They have got all kinds of other wars and other issues going on. But it is complicated to work there. It is dangerous to work there and some of the government policies that we see being demanded are counterproductive, in my personal opinion.

Mr. DONOVAN. Can you just expound on the disruption of delivery? Is that caused by government entities? Is that caused by some of the people that are involved in the conflicts?

Mr. ISAACS. So we had 15 people abducted a week and a half ago and they are a faction of a faction, and no one is in control of them.

So it was the local military garrison leader that made the decision that he was going to come through our compound at 2 a.m., threaded his way past an SPLM garrison. And I want to be careful here because I don't want to point fingers—I have got to go back and work with everybody. It's important.

But what I'm saying is that the command and control structures—that's multiple structures—are weak and they're fragile. And so you end up with a lot of guys with guns out in the bush and then they develop their own political thinking and then they decide to take action and that could be exercised probably—what happened when these people were ambushed and killed 2 days ago on the way to Pibor.

You don't know how that's going to be manifested. But it creates a atmosphere of insecurity and too often humanitarian workers are the target of that.

Mr. DONOVAN. Does it create a black market of the items that are confiscated through a disruption, the folks that you are speaking about now?

Mr. ISAACS. So I don't know anything first-hand about a black market. That's not unusual in a war zone. But I will say this about South Sudan is that their inflation has been so enormous over the past couple of years and the availability of food is so low I think that food is going to go to feed hungry people.

Even if somebody steals it they may get some money but it is still going to all feed hungry people. Having your trucks looted is not what you want. But I don't have first-hand knowledge with large black market activity there.

Mr. DONOVAN. All right. Thank you. Does anyone else want to comment on that?

Mr. SMITH. Maybe if we could just get through all the witnesses—

Mr. DONOVAN. Yes.

Mr. SMITH [continuing]. And then we'll—

Mr. DONOVAN. Absolutely.

Mr. SMITH. But great questions. They are very good questions. Maybe you could incorporate that into your—into your testimony.

Mr. Bowers.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL BOWERS, VICE PRESIDENT,  
HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSE, MERCY CORPS**

Mr. BOWERS. By the way, I have worked with Mr. Isaacs before when we were trying to combat famine in North Korea. Mercy Corps and Samaritan's Purse had a large program there and it is always good to be with esteemed colleagues.

But good afternoon, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for holding this important hearing and I appreciate the opportunity to testify.

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization that specializes in humanitarian development and peace building programs. We operate in more than 40 countries around the world including throughout east Africa region and all four of the countries considered at risk of famine.

As you have heard, the current drought in the Horn of Africa is more intense and widespread than in 2011. Although severe drought plays a part, the regional situation is made worse by man-made causes that we have been talking about today, which include a deadly mix of conflict, marginalization, displacement, violent extremism, and climate change.

Moreover, insufficient investment in conflict prevention, resilience and sustainable development activities allow these problems to fester, extending these crises unnecessarily.

While the immediate priority must be saving lives, building resilience and addressing conflict and violence cannot wait.

Across the region we are working with our local partners to deliver food, water, sanitation supplies, healthcare, and education in these emergencies.

Where appropriate we try to provide cash assistance as well that allows families to buy the items they need most and, Congressman, to your point, where we are seeing opportunities and where markets can bear and food is available, giving people the dignity and the ability to buy their own food avoids the black market issue and it avoids, obviously, a costly pipeline of food where we can.

In South Sudan, we provide communities with emergency water and sanitation services, including responding to the recent cholera outbreak, and we are distributing crop and vegetable seeds, fishing nets and agricultural tools so that people can get an option to grow their own food and rebuild their lives.

In Somalia, primarily with private funds, we are rapidly bolstering ongoing livelihood programming while also responding to the increasing food insecurity.

This includes providing water and emergency wet feeding to over 21 schools in the central regions of the country that are most severely impacted.

Not only are we saving lives there but we are ensuring access to education of over 4,000 school children continue. In Ethiopia, in addition to treating malnutrition in the Somali region we are responding to the drought with a commercial destocking project that allows income to households that derive their income from livestock, protects the livestock assets of pastoralists, and preserves the deteriorating rangeland.

There, we are stimulating market linkages as well between traders and producers and supports the market prices of livestock.

In Kenya—today we have talked a little about Kenya with Matt Nims—there has been little donor funding released for the emergency response due to the drought to help bolster the efforts of the government, which is sizeable, and is doing much what they can.

However, funding which exists for the drought response has in large part been through private means. I was in Kenya in 2011 during that drought response as unfolded in Somalia and witnessed the consequences of that ignoring early action.

If we fail to respond now we risk a much larger and costly emergency response later with too many lives lost in the meantime.

Although funding is also needed across the region, we are barely scratching the service with what we have, and I think a question that the chairman posed earlier today, is there enough money in FY 2017 from the U.S. Government, and I will say no, there is not, and I would implore this Congress to not rescind \$360 million that's on the table for current FY 2017. If that is done so, over 8 million people almost immediately but certainly in the short term will be left without food.

Another question that raised the issue—and I think Congressman Garrett brought it up—is why is this famine and hunger crisis not getting the attention that it did in 2010 and 2011.

Well, in part we have seen before that the media by and large drives a lot of attention of your constituents. But if you think of it this way, 20 million people right now are at risk of starvation.

That is the combined population of the State of New Jersey and North Carolina. So if you are speaking to your constituents, and then the American taxpayer is wondering why should we spend money there, or talking to the administration, I would remind them of what Mr. Isaacs just said in terms of our moral obligations but also just the sheer numbers.

So in addition to funding we are also needing access in conflict zones, as has been mentioned before. Aid workers continue to be killed, injured, or harassed.

Horrifyingly, these seven individuals that were lost last weekend in South Sudan are not a strange trend. That is something that is continuing.

Without safe access to deliver food, water, and vital supplies, especially in areas which are on the brink of starvation, we will not be able to save lives, frankly.

Besides the urgent need to respond now, I would also stress we can do more to prevent these food crises in the future and now.

To improve food security in the region we need to implement a variety of programs that strengthen community resilience.

New evidence that we have from a USAID-funded program in Ethiopia called PRIME confirms that food security resilience programs can help communities survive crises and stop the cycle of recurrent humanitarian disasters.

Even as we respond urgently to the crisis in east Africa, we must continue to build these communities ability to cope with shocks and stress in the future.

That innovation, that resilience approach, by the way, was better embraced with the Global Food Security Act, which I have to thank Chairman Smith as well as the rest of this subcommittee for helping pass that important bill.

Finally, because conflict also directly and indirectly impacts hunger across east Africa, we need to support programs that address conflict where it is happening and mitigate potential spillover effects that further stress neighboring countries and exacerbate food insecurity.

This is why we focus on enhancing the capacity of people and institutions to prevent and manage conflict and this is something very important for the Congress to take into consideration as they look through their appropriations.

You in Congress have an integral role to play in helping prevent the spread of famine and create conditions that mitigate food crises from happening in the first place.

I have provided a more detailed list of recommendations including budgetary issues in my written statement. But for the sake of time I am just going to summarize again that we ask the Congress urgently provide lifesaving assistance in FY 2017 and FY 2018 through its appropriations process to address ongoing humanitarian needs by funding IDA and FFP fully, and that would be \$1 billion.

Invest in building the resilience of vulnerable communities to prepare for, withstand and recover from these shocks and stresses and prevent and manage conflict by fully funding Food for Peace, nonemergency programs including the Economic Support Fund, and Development Assistance.

And finally, encourage the administration, as Mr. Isaacs mentioned, to aggressively pursue diplomatic efforts by fully staffing the State Department and USAID to end these conflicts and remove obstacles for humanitarians seeking to reach populations in need.

Twenty years from now when we approach this time we will want to say what we did to conclude everything we could to save lives and turn this story of starvation into one of recovery.

I thank you and I look forward to answering some of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bowers follows:]

**Testimony by Michael Bowers**

Vice President, Humanitarian Leadership and Response, Mercy Corps  
 House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
 Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations  
 March 28, 2017  
 East Africa's Quiet Famine

**Introduction**

Good afternoon. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding this important, timely hearing. I appreciate the opportunity to join this panel and hope that my testimony helps bring more attention to the increasingly dire levels of food insecurity in the region and underscores the need for urgent action.

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization that specializes in humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding programs. We operate in more than 40 countries around the world, including throughout the East Africa region and in all four countries considered at risk of famine in 2017. At Mercy Corps, we believe that a better world is possible. Our team of almost 5,000 people around the world work to put bold solutions into action, help people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within.

**Famine Warnings***Global Context*

Although we are only focusing on East Africa today, it is important to first recognize how dire the global context is. Seventy million people in 2017 are projected to need emergency assistance based on known threats to food insecurity. **Particularly disturbing is that the threat of famine is the highest it has been in decades.**<sup>1</sup> A famine has already been declared in parts of South Sudan, and looming threats of famines in Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen have put an estimated 20 million people – more than the entire population of New Jersey and North Carolina combined – at risk of starvation in 2017. Approximately 1.4 million children are at imminent risk of death without immediate action by the international community.<sup>2</sup> With needs this high, we are deeply concerned that the President's FY 2018 budget request, if enacted, would slash humanitarian and development assistance and hamstring the U.S. -- and in fact the global response -- to this crisis, with tragic results. For example, if Congress enacted the President's request and Food for Peace and the Emergency Food Security Program were cut by 31%, approximately 13 million hungry men, women and children, would lose access to lifesaving food assistance. At a time when needs are growing exponentially, this request is not only irresponsible, but undercuts America's humanitarian leadership role in the world.

*Regional Context*

The current drought in the Horn of Africa is more intense and widespread than in 2011, and is the primary driver of food insecurity in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda. Although severe drought is playing its part, these are not just natural disasters. The regional situation is instead made worse by man-made causes<sup>3</sup> which includes a deadly mix of conflict, marginalization, displacement, violent extremism, and climate change. Moreover, insufficient investment in conflict prevention and management, resilience and

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fews.net/global/alert/january-25-2017>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_94893.html](https://www.unicef.org/media/media_94893.html); [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/22/world/africa/ivry-20-million-people-are-on-brink-of-famine-in-a-wave-of-poverty.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/22/world/africa/ivry-20-million-people-are-on-brink-of-famine-in-a-wave-of-poverty.html?_r=0)

<sup>3</sup> <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/03/18/opinion/sunday/that-food-saved-my-life-and-trump-wants-to-cut-it-off.html>

sustainable development activities allows these problems to fester, extending these crises unnecessarily. Within the region, the capacity and ability of the individuals countries to respond varies. While all could soon become overwhelmed depending on if/when rains fail, it is also important to note that Kenya and Ethiopia are in far better positions to respond because they are proactively responding to early warnings and current needs.

These massive multi-country humanitarian crises will have far-reaching impacts on security and stability in already volatile regions of Africa. Besides the tragic human costs, refugee flows are increasing. For example, approximately 1.5 million refugees have fled South Sudan since the conflict erupted, with the refugee population in Uganda more than tripling in the last 6 months alone, climbing to 698,000 by the beginning of February.<sup>4</sup> These crises are stretching the already-overwhelmed humanitarian system, almost to the breaking point.

In the Horn of Africa, 12.8 million people are severely food insecure. To address their needs, \$1.9 billion was requested in the UN OCHA report published in February 2017, "Horn of Africa: A Call for Action."<sup>5</sup> As the chart below demonstrates, based on the current rate of donor response to humanitarian appeals, the global community is falling dramatically behind in responding to massive humanitarian needs.

Chart 1: East Africa 2017 appeals and response plan funding progress currently tracked by the UN:<sup>6</sup>

| Country/Region | Required        | Funded          | Percent Funded |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Global         | \$20.8 billion  | \$3 billion     | 14.2%          |
| Burundi        | \$73.7 million  | \$15.2 million  | 20.6%          |
| Djibouti       | \$43 million    | \$1.2 million   | 2.7%           |
| Ethiopia       | \$948.6 million | \$62.5 million  | 6.6%           |
| Kenya          | \$165.8 million | \$3 million     | 2%             |
| South Sudan    | \$1.6 billion   | \$303.2 million | 18.5%          |
| Somalia        | \$863.5 million | \$249.5 million | 28.9%          |

While the immediate priority must be saving lives, **building resilience and addressing conflict and violence cannot wait**. As the international community, national governments and local responders mobilize to respond, we ask that the US Congress simultaneously:

- Provide urgently needed assistance and remove obstacles to humanitarians accessing populations in need – especially diplomatic obstacles;
- Invest in building the resilience of vulnerable communities to prepare for, withstand and recover from shocks and stresses; and,
- Address the root causes of conflict and violence.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2017/2/569dba9f4/number-refugees-fleeing-south-sudan-tops-15-million.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/horn-africa-call-action-february-2017>

<sup>6</sup> <https://hs.unocha.org/appeals/overview/2017> as of Friday, March 24, 2017 at 12:00 pm.

### South Sudan

South Sudan is a prime example of how, when left unaddressed, long-term conflict can produce devastating consequences. After decades of conflict with Sudan, South Sudan experienced a brief moment of stability post-independence before conflict broke out once again in December 2013. Since then, tens of thousands of South Sudanese civilians have been killed and the ongoing civil war has forced more than 3 million people to flee their homes.<sup>7</sup> “Which home? I left it 2 years ago and have been running since then, always hungry and afraid,” a 20 year old mother of 4 shared with our team. Over 1.5 million people have fled to neighboring countries, including to Uganda (which is now hosting the largest refugee population on the continent), Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Central African Republic, with the latter two countries managing displacements from internal conflict as well.<sup>8</sup> After more than three years of war and repeated warnings about the deepening of the crisis in South Sudan, we now have one final chance to prevent a famine from spreading and engulfing more than one million people.

Of the many humanitarian needs within the country, the magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition experienced by South Sudanese is unprecedented. Despite fertile land, conflict has made it impossible for farmers to tend their fields.<sup>9</sup> To make matters worse, militias have been accused of intentionally destroying crops, looting cattle, burning homes and villages, and damaging vital water sources.<sup>10</sup> Currently, almost 5 million people are without enough food (IPC Phases 3-5), and of that some 100,000 people are on the brink of starvation.<sup>11</sup> If nothing is done, by July 2017, it is projected that the number of people without adequate access to food may reach 5.5 million.<sup>12,13</sup>

Horrifyingly, one in four South Sudanese children under the age of five is already stunted due to malnutrition and is especially vulnerable to the effects of constrained food consumption.<sup>14</sup>

### Somalia

Somalia has been ravaged by decades of conflict and insecurity, making access to many parts of the country difficult. When overlaid by multiple years of failed rains, the effect is catastrophic – as we saw in the 2011 famine that killed nearly 260,000 people.<sup>15</sup> This year, rains have failed again – and we have seen the tripling of water prices, the wiping out of crops and the death of livestock. Three million two hundred thousand people are in need of water, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH) and nearly half of the populations are in need of food security assistance.<sup>16</sup> Hundreds of thousands of children face acute malnutrition and potentially starvation. The Government of Somalia declared the drought a natural disaster at the start of March after 110 people died within 48 hours within the Bay region.<sup>17</sup> Unless a massive and urgent scale-up of humanitarian assistance takes place, famine could soon be a reality in some of the worst drought-affected areas of Somalia.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.unocha.org/south-sudan>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2017/3/88c6fa304/refugee-crisis-south-sudan-worlds-fastest-growing.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/famine-south-sudan-understanding-food-insecurity-unity-state>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/03/20/south-sudan-needs-peace-much-food>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-detail-forms/ipcinfo-news-detail/en/c/471308/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-detail-forms/ipcinfo-map-detail/en/c/471270/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/famine-in-south-sudan>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www1.wfp.org/countries/somalia>

<sup>16</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/humanitarian-action-children-2017-somalia>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/05/somalia-prime-minister-110-dead-hunger-past-48-hours-drought/>

Over the last two years, Somalia has seen increased refugee returns (both UNHCR supported and spontaneous returns) from the neighboring countries, primarily from Kenya (Dadaab). As of March 15, 57,329 Somali refugees had returned home since December 8, 2014, when UNHCR first started supporting voluntary return of Somali refugees in Kenya. UNHCR supported 17,359 in 2017 alone.<sup>18</sup> The conditions in many parts of Somalia are not conducive to mass refugee returns due to ongoing conflict, insecurity, and humanitarian conditions that have now been exacerbated by the worsening drought and possible famine, leading to further internal and external displacement of the local communities and returnees.

#### *Kenya*

The Government of Kenya declared the drought a national disaster early in February. The drought has caused widespread crop failure and water shortages, increased levels of hunger and malnutrition, threatened livelihoods -- particularly of pastoralists -- and caused rising rates of communicable disease. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has more than doubled from 1.3 million people in August 2016 to 2.7 million in February 2017. Close to 175,000 children are not attending pre-primary or primary school.<sup>19</sup> There is a critical nutrition situation in Turkana North, North Horr in Marsabit, and Mandera, indicating malnutrition rates in communities that fall within the IPC Phase 5 classification. In Marsabit county alone, the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) measurement is 31.5 percent and the water distance increase is 240 percent. An NGO partner operating in Turkana reported GAM rates of 55%.

#### *Ethiopia*

In addition to recovering from lingering effects of the 2015-2016 El Niño-drought, the lowland pastoralist areas are now contending with the impacts of a new drought. The government of Ethiopia continues to support 7.9 million Ethiopians through the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) with the help of partners. Despite these efforts, 5.6 million people will require emergency food assistance in 2017. An additional 2.7 million children and pregnant and lactating mothers will need supplementary feedings, 9.2 million people will need help accessing safe drinking water, 1.9 million will need livestock support, and 300,000 children will need to be treated for severe acute malnutrition.<sup>20</sup>

### **Mercy Corps Response**

#### *Saving Lives Now*

Across the region, Mercy Corps is working with our local partners to quickly deliver food, water, sanitation supplies, hygiene promotion, health care, and education in emergencies.

For example, over the last year in South Sudan in Unity State, we provided 80,000 people with emergency water and sanitation (WASH) services. Just a few of our activities between October and December of 2016 included treating and distributing potable water to 41,500 individuals, rehabilitating 32 boreholes, and helping respond to a cholera outbreak. While we appreciate the strong support of donors like the US, we also use private funding from concerned individuals. Through private funds, we are distributing crop and vegetable seeds, fishing nets and agriculture tools so that people get an option to grow their food and rebuild their lives. Where appropriate, we try to provide cash assistance that allows families to buy the items they need most while supporting and stimulating local markets and businesses. Since the declaration of the famine, we have scaled up our response in the counties which are at

<sup>18</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/54715>

<sup>19</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/horn-africa-call-action-february-2017>

<sup>20</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/horn-africa-call-action-february-2017>



heightened risk of famine in order to not miss this last chance to save lives, yet we are barely scratching the surface of the need.

In Somalia, Mercy Corps is using private funds to rapidly bolster ongoing WASH and livelihoods programming while also responding to the increasing levels of food insecurity. Without this programming, families are forced to drink unsafe water that leads to high risk of waterborne diseases. In addition, with OCHA funding we are providing water and emergency wet-feeding to 21 schools in the central regions of the country that have been most severely affected by the drought. This not only saves lives, but ensures access to education for over 4,000 school children and the continued operation of schools systems that would have otherwise closed due to the worsening drought conditions.

In Ethiopia, we are responding to the drought with OFDA and OCHA funding for commercial destocking project that provides income sources to households, protects the livestock assets of pastoralists, preserves deteriorating rangeland, stimulates market linkages between traders and producers, and supports the market prices of livestock. So far we have helped nearly 10,000 cattle, are gearing up to destock about 22,000 more livestock, and are serving over 24,000 families. We are also working to treat malnutrition in Somali region.

In Kenya, to date, there has been little donor funding released for the emergency response to the drought or help to bolster the efforts of the Kenyan government, which is doing what it can. What funding exists for the drought response has, in large part, been private funding. We have been able to do little in response to the drought, other than some limited water trucking and water infrastructure work. If we fail to respond now, we risk a much larger and costly emergency response later, with too many lives lost in the meantime.

#### *Humanitarian Access*

More funding is needed urgently to continue these responses, but humanitarian access in conflict zones is also a concern as aid workers continue to be killed, injured and harassed. Without the safe access to deliver food, water and vital supplies, especially in areas which are on the brink of starvation, we will not be able to save lives.

According to the UN, at least 67 aid workers have been killed by warring parties in South Sudan since the conflict erupted in 2013.<sup>21</sup> For example, in Unity State in South Sudan, famine has already been declared but humanitarians are currently unable to enter the areas in direst need and serve the worst-affected communities due to security concerns. In fact, after the famine declaration, about 28 humanitarians were evacuated from Mayendit county in Unity state, which is a famine-affected county. And just over a week ago, an NGO's attempt to provide aid was disrupted as the team of 8 was abducted for 3 days (the abductors wanted food and other aid supplies). Unless the guns fall silent and conflict stops, the humanitarian situation will continue to deteriorate. *"I still want to believe God is there, but based on what I have faced my patience and faith is running out,"* 19-year-old Julia told our rapid response team.

Securing access for the humanitarian response should be a top priority. More than ever, we need safe and uninterrupted humanitarian access. The international community needs to act now as the world cannot miss this chance to prevent catastrophe. Peter, a 30-year-old father of 5 grieved, *"I have lost everything, my house was burnt, everything looted and I do not know how to rebuild my life (you are doing very good work, all our blessing are with you)."* We cannot turn a deaf ear to Peter and Julia.

<sup>21</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/south-sudan\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/south-sudan_en.pdf)

The difference access makes on mitigating famine risks can be seen when comparing the constraints in South Sudan and Somalia to the proactive responses of the governments of Kenya and Ethiopia to the drought. The levels of food insecurity and malnutrition are sobering, but would even worse if they were not allowing the most vulnerable to be reached and contributing their own resources to the response.

*Money is needed urgently*

I was in Kenya as the impacts of the 2011 drought unfolded in Somalia and witnessed the consequences of ignoring early action. Looking at Kenya now, I am concerned we could repeat the same mistakes. While conditions in Kenya are not as overtly desperate as in other parts of the Horn, now is the time to double down on prevention activities that can help mitigate the drought's impacts on vulnerable populations. As a Feed the Future Focus country, the U.S. has helped contribute to those gains, including a 14 percent decline in the prevalence of child stunting in part of the Feed the Future target area in the country between 2008 and 2015.<sup>22</sup> The lack of rapid, preventive intervention now is placing at risk the gains made.

Some donors are already committing (or reprioritizing) large tranches of funding to provide this immediate life saving response. But funding is not being made available across the region, and what is available needs to be scaled up dramatically in the next days and weeks, not months. Not only do we need more pledges, we need more funds immediately going directly to those with access to the most vulnerable. Even if funding arrives in two months, the human cost of that delayed funding is too high.

*Building Resilience now and in the Future: Prevention at Work*

Considering the level of need, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. We at Mercy Corps though are pushed to action. And we continue to find evidence that our efforts to save lives and reduce poverty are having positive, sustainable impacts.

Besides the responsibility of saving lives now through humanitarian aid, I would like to stress to this subcommittee the fact that **we can prevent and mitigate food security crises**. It's also extremely cost effective: a study by the British government in Kenya and Ethiopia estimates that every \$1 invested in resilience will result in \$2.90 in reduced humanitarian spending, avoided losses and development benefits.<sup>23</sup>

To improve food security in the region, Mercy Corps has been implementing a variety of programs to strengthen a community's resilience to drought and other effects of climate change. New evidence from a USAID-funded Mercy Corps program in Ethiopia confirms what academic experts and aid groups already know: **food security resilience programs help communities survive crises and stop the cycle of recurrent humanitarian disasters**.

As mentioned earlier, in 2015-2016, one of the strongest El Niño cycles on record resulted in the worst drought Ethiopia has experienced in over 50 years.<sup>24</sup> At its height, more than 10 million people required food aid. In the midst of this crisis, Mercy Corps sought to measure the impact of its resilience activities under the Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion (PRIME) program.

<sup>22</sup> <https://feedthefuture.gov/progress2016/>

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/032217\\_Gottlieb\\_Testimony\\_REVIS01.pdf](https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/032217_Gottlieb_Testimony_REVIS01.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Using measures such as water shortages, crop losses, and livestock mortality. FEWSNET (2015, December 4).

PRIME is a five-year USAID Feed the Future project implemented by Mercy Corps<sup>25</sup> and designed to improve the lives and enhance resilience of pastoralist communities in Ethiopia's drought-prone drylands in Afar, Oromiya and Somali regional states. Begun in 2012, the project works to strengthen market systems to benefit poor and vulnerable households, and reduce their risks to the effects of drought and other natural disasters.

Researchers evaluated PRIME's impact on households' ability to cope and recover from the drought in the hard hit regional state of Somali<sup>26</sup> by collecting data from four *woredas* (districts) that compared 500 PRIME beneficiary households with more than 1,000 comparable households from similar communities not targeted by the program.<sup>27</sup>

PRIME beneficiary households were better off than their neighbors in multiple ways.

- *More Food Security, Less Food Insecurity:* Households in PRIME target communities had a more diverse diet, consuming nearly one additional food group per day. This indicates that the program improved income and/or access to markets to enable purchase and consumption of more nutritious foods even during an acute crisis.
- *Greater Wealth, Lower Vulnerability to Poverty:* PRIME interventions had a positive impact on households' ability to maintain important assets (including livestock) and avoid impoverishment in the face of the drought. The asset values (a proxy for wealth) of households in the program were 1.4 times higher than those of the comparison group. Households supported through PRIME were also four percentage points less likely to be at risk of being under the poverty line.
- *Better Animal Health, Fewer Livestock Losses:* Compared to the non-targeted households, PRIME beneficiaries were able to maintain healthier herds despite the severe drought conditions. They were less likely to experience animal deaths, and in particular were able to protect their breeding females, a critical component of a healthy and resilient herd. The lower animal mortality rate suggests that PRIME's support to veterinary care and animal markets allowed households to avoid losing weakened livestock.

This study demonstrates that innovative, long-term resilience programs like PRIME can help mitigate the worst effects of humanitarian emergencies and protect important gains in development goals such as child nutrition, maternal health, and economic growth and stability in vulnerable communities. Over the long-term, this type of multi-year, systematic approach creates households, communities and ultimately countries that are more self-sufficient and better able to respond and adapt when faced with crises.

And PRIME continues to be a part of the response to drought in Ethiopia. While continuing to provide veterinary products and helping governments make use of climate information, it is also providing cash transfers via mobile phones that will impact 12,500 people. This helps them open bank accounts, connecting people to financial institutions and introducing a culture of savings as people are provided financial literacy, in addition to proper nutrition practices.

<sup>25</sup> Mercy Corps works on PRIME in partnership with the Aged and Children Pastoralists Association (ACPA), Action for Integrated Sustainable Development (AISDA), CARE, Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD), Haramaya University, Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee (Havoyoco), Kimetrica, and SOS Sahel.

<sup>26</sup> Approximately 1.4 million people were estimated by the Ethiopian Government to be food insecure in this area, well above the five-year average and even greater than the previous drought in 2010-2011.

<sup>27</sup> The comparison group was matched to PRIME participants such that they were statistically similar - the only difference was whether or not they had benefited from PRIME. Using data from the African Flood and Drought Monitor, our research was able to control for levels of drought exposure, so that any differences observed between the two groups could be attributed to the program.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Even as we respond urgently to the crisis in the East Africa, we must continue to invest in opportunities to build communities' abilities to cope with shocks and stresses in the future. By helping these communities deal with risk, we can save lives from future famines and reduce the need for costly humanitarian investments over the long-term.

This innovative resilience approach to food security was also embraced by Congress last year when the Global Food Security Act (GFSA) was passed. I have to take a moment to thank Chairman Smith for his leadership and being the original sponsor of the House bill and thank the rest of the Committee for their help in passing this important bill into law so that we can continue to build and support more programs that deliver similar, powerful impacts.

PRIME is funded by the Development Assistance account. Feed the Future programs funded by this important account are exactly the type of programs we imagine the Chair and Congress want to see develop with the implementation of GFSA. Unfortunately, if the President's budget request for foreign aid is not rejected by Congress, these gains and innovative programs would not be able to continue.

*Hunger is Complex: Solutions Must be Multi-Sectoral*

In addition to Feed the Future, **non-emergency Food for Peace Title II programs are absolutely critical to building the resilience of families and communities to food insecurity.** While Feed the Future countries tend to be in more stable countries, Title II non-emergency programs are essential in staving off food crisis in some of the more fragile and complex countries. For example, the Karamoja region of Northern Uganda has been racked by war, nearly continuous raiding and neglect by the central government for decades. Sitting at a strategically important nexus between Kenya and South Sudan, cattle raiders from both countries continue to steal cattle and threaten the livelihoods of pastoralists and farmers in the regions. Further, while maternal mortality rates in Uganda are some of the worst in the world, with a ranking of 37 of 184, Karamoja has particularly high maternal mortality rates as well as the highest child mortality rate (under 5 deaths) of 72 per 1,000 births—more than triple that of Uganda's capital, Kampala. These factors are a dangerous combination that could not only drag down the economic potential of the region, but also risk exacerbating inequality and, if left unaddressed, increase instability.

In partnership with Food for Peace, Mercy Corps is implementing a five-year \$26 million Food for Peace "Non-Emergency" program, called Northern Karamoja Growth, Health and Governance (GHG). The program is addressing the complex drivers of food insecurity in the region, including through a range of economic, health, governance and peacebuilding initiatives that will build a foundation for broader self-sufficiency, while targeted food aid for pregnant and lactating women and children under the age of two. Mercy Corps works through a 'market-systems' approach that analyzes markets beyond basic supply and demand principles; instead, looking at how they are influenced by behaviors, government regulations and rules, relationships, and the environment to understand why markets do not work for the poor. This approach then facilitates structural or 'system' changes that increase the ability of vulnerable populations to participate in markets and lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

Lessons from this program are helpful for Congress to consider when thinking about breaking the cycle of famine and food insecurity. For example, last year, a drought in the Northern Uganda caused 60% of the crops to fail. With poverty rates of 51% percent--74% in the North East subregion alone--buying food was already difficult for vulnerable families and their children.<sup>28</sup> While some traders were starting to raise prices on commodities- in effect price gouging- Mercy Corps worked with traders to keep the price of commodities low. Using smart subsidies for transportation and storage, we partnered with traders not

<sup>28</sup><http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/381951474255092375/pdf/Uganda-Poverty-Assessment-Report-2016.pdf>

interested in price gouging and taking advantage of a drought, and were able to further lower their costs, keeping the price low of commodities they were selling on the open market. Other traders had to follow suit as their commodities were overpriced, causing the price of commodities to stay affordable. Poor families throughout the region were able to continue to purchase food on the market, despite the drought.

These type of interventions are smart, cost-effective and have far reaching effects. Food for Peace has been an essential partner in fostering these types of interventions. Title II non-emergency programs have proven time and again that multi-year, flexible funding enables programs to address hunger within complex, interrelated systems effectively.

#### *Fighting Violence and Conflict*

Conflict directly and indirectly impacts hunger across East Africa. Not only do we need to address conflict where it is happening, but we also need to mitigate potential spillover effects that could further stress resource strapped neighboring countries and further exacerbate food insecurity. This is why Mercy Corps enhances the capacity of people and institutions to prevent and manage conflict. For example, Mercy Corps' programs in East Africa are working cross-border to mitigate cattle raiding, a major cause of conflict and resource loss for families. Through our USAID-funded program PEACE III, where we partner with PACT and local organizations, we are working with 'reformed warriors' to better integrate them into society and ensure they don't pick up arms again. As one example, Peter Acia, a warrior since he was 19, was a fierce fighter known by names like "Tetiamoi," or "one who kills all enemies." Working with PEACE III, he is now a "Peace Ambassador" and part of a support group of reformed warriors. Through the program Peter has benefitted from trauma healing sessions, trainings on peace building, entrepreneurship and life skills. Once a feared fighter, he now owns a small shop in Kaabong, Northern Uganda.

#### **Policy Recommendations**

We can and should do better as a global community in responding now to address the urgent needs. Congress has an integral role to play in helping prevent the spread of famine and create conditions that mitigate food crises from happening in the first place.

#### *Funding*

Specifically, Congress must:

- Prioritize funding in the FY 2017 omnibus or CR to aggressively respond to these crises and prevent the next crises from happening. Cuts or recessions to the FY 2017 CR levels for humanitarian and development cuts would be devastating to the response and should be fought at all costs.
- In FY 2018, Congress should fully fund the International Affairs 150 Account at no less than \$60 billion and ensure the 302b allocations for the State Department and Foreign Operations and Agriculture Appropriations bills are robust enough to respond to these growing crises and continue investments that mitigate against future crises.
- Within the appropriations bills in FY 2018, Congress must provide adequate funding for humanitarian and development accounts, including:
  - \$3.4 billion for International Disaster Assistance;
  - \$1.8 billion for Food for Peace, including no less than \$350 million for non-emergency programs;
  - \$3.6 billion for the Migration and Refugee Assistance; and
  - \$3.3 billion for Development Assistance and \$4.32 billion for Economic Support Fund Accounts which provide funding for Feed the Future and other critical programs.

These funding levels will ensure the U.S. can continue to lead the response and works with other donors to make sure they are also adequately contributing. Funding will:

- Provide immediate resources to respond to humanitarian needs and avert mass starvation and death
- Support development programs to build resilience, improve food security and mitigate the impact of disasters, both within the emergency response and by continuing to support community-led development wherever possible

*Resilience and Peacebuilding in the midst of emergency response*

The US government should continue to invest in programs that address the root causes of conflict and violence at all levels. The US government should also utilize a resilience approach to development when possible by enabling interventions to respond and stay relevant to rapidly changing conditions and needs, provide multi-year funding (like the 5 year Title II non-emergency programs), and allow for flexible, iterative program design.

*Diplomacy*

Both bottom up and top down diplomatic efforts are urgently needed to stop the man-made crisis in South-Sudan. In addition to local conflict prevention and management efforts, diplomacy and negotiation are desperately needed. The US and key allies should provide high level support to:

- Ensure quick and peaceful resolution to the conflict;
- Guarantee humanitarian access and ensure the safety and security of aid workers; and,
- Address governance, inequality and development issues that drive conflict and violence and support longer-term peacebuilding

**Conclusion**

Congress has considerable power and responsibility to help address these extremely critical problems.

I will close by referring you to the addendum I am including with my testimony. This piece, published in the Guardian in December 2016, is written by Deepmala Mahla, our country director in South Sudan. She illustrates the consequences of not changing how we respond in South Sudan. She reminds us that we can and should do better, in South Sudan, and in all our responses to crisis. Twenty years from now, when we reflect upon our collective response to this emergency, we want to be able to conclude that we did everything to save lives, and even more, we did everything we could to turn this story of malnourishment and starvation into one of recovery and development.

Thank you for your time and attention and I look forward to answering your questions.

**Addendum 1**

Published in the Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/dec/07/aid-in-south-sudan-were-mopping-up-while-the-tap-is-still-running>

*Aid in South Sudan: We're mopping up while the tap is still running*

Even the most experienced humanitarians are being ground down by the violence and short-termism in South Sudan

Written by: Deepmala Mahla, South Sudan country director, Mercy Corps  
 Date Published: Wednesday 7 December 2016 07:12 EST  
 Date Last modified: Wednesday 14 December 2016 05:56 EST

In September, South Sudan joined a club where the fees are exorbitant and no one really wants to be a member. Along with Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia, it became one of the countries that has produced more than a million refugees.

We all know the story. The birth of South Sudan in 2011 brought with it such hope and promise. But now, engulfed in a deadly and bitter conflict fuelled by a power struggle leading to ethnic-related violence, hope is dying and the future looks bleak.

At Mercy Corps the way we view the world is to find opportunity in crisis. But, for the first time in my career, I am finding this tough. The people of South Sudan are resilient, but with the number of people needing support to feed themselves and their families having doubled over the last year (now at 4.8 million) and most indicators of development on a downward spiral, it is difficult to identify the positives. And the truth is that although the war is at the heart of this crisis, short-term donor strategies and funding, crippling bureaucracy and a peace deal that the international community is holding on to, but which many South Sudanese have lost faith in, are all playing their part in making the situation worse.

No one is denying that conditions in South Sudan are gruelling. We work in a tense situation of ongoing conflict and violence trying to deliver aid to the most vulnerable. And while the fact that my team's lives are on the line day in day out, is concerning to me as their country director, it is not what is keeping me awake at night. Our profession comes with certain risks, which we knowingly accept. As aid workers we are trained to manage and implement programmes in times of conflict. We do this responsibly and sustainably, so that despite the fragility of the environment, we can move people along the road from relief to recovery.

But in South Sudan, we are not able to do this and it is this that grieves me. Just to begin with, we are suffering from diminished humanitarian capacity in the country, after the surge in violence in July, many humanitarian and institutional staff left and are yet to return. Moreover, while the NGO community perseveres in continuing to share best practice and recommendations for programmatic responses – both for urgent relief and medium term recovery – we are consulted only occasionally by donors on their strategies despite our rich on-the-ground experience and knowledge of what communities want and need.

For example, NGOs implement more than 70% of all programmes in South Sudan, but yet the main support from state actors is provided through pooled funding. What this means is that money is firstly put into a common pot, and from there it is donated to NGOs. This is not only an expensive way to operate, but it slows down implementation. Donating direct to NGOs would be more efficient, especially as there is no shadow of a doubt that the needs of South Sudanese people are exigent and cannot wait.

However, the most pressing concern affecting recovery is that the vast majority of our funding is received in short tranches: a couple of months, a couple of months and then another couple of months. What this means is that we are unable to plan long-term and nothing is guaranteed. We establish our programme, hire staff, implement for perhaps five months, and then wind down the programme again. We may (or may not) receive more funding for that programme, and so we start the cycle all over again. This is the reality in which we are working. We can do better.

In July, Mercy Corps with support from the British government began implementing a programme to stimulate economic recovery in some of the most inaccessible areas in Unity state. This is a four-year programme, virtually unheard of in the recent times in South Sudan. We are providing cash transfers to

households and traders to kick-start market recovery, as well as provide business training and livelihoods support for fishing and farming. It is precisely this type of programming that allows us to work sustainably in a manner that builds capacity and ultimately, enables the project to be taken over by the community. It is also more cost effective as we can plan efficiently, procure smarter, recruit better, and engage communities more meaningfully.

We cannot say that our programmes will not be interrupted by violence and conflict, but should this mean that we surrender all hope to help the South Sudanese people move forward beyond urgent relief and handouts? No. It means we adapt, we change our way of thinking and working. It means that donors become more flexible in their approach and understand that when there is an uptick in violence we will need to pivot from our recovery programmes to urgent relief, and then when we can, back again. Around the world, Mercy Corps has implemented programmes with such nimbleness to shift between relief and recovery to fit the context, it requires trust, partnership, and commitment.

Without this change in approach, I will not be surprised if more international organisations leave South Sudan, or scale back their operations in the next six months. While we must have a peace deal that is firm, assuring and definite, that ensures the protection of civilians as well as aid workers, we also desperately need donors to reinvest and recommit to the future of South Sudan.



Mr. SMITH. Mr. Bowers, thank you so very much for your leadership as well and the recommendations you've made. They will—they will go from you to a whole lot of people from this hearing. So I do thank you for that.

Mr. Maphosa.

**STATEMENT OF MR. THABANI MAPHOSA, VICE-PRESIDENT  
FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE, WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL**

Mr. MAPHOSA. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the east Africa hunger crisis. Your continued leadership and focus on these humanitarian issues is critical and it matters.

I testify today on behalf of World Vision but also as a person born and raised in Africa who has experienced hunger on several occasions in my native country of Zimbabwe.

In 1983, a civil war or a near civil war in the southern part of the country disrupted funding activities and many were left without food, including my family.

In 1992, a major drought across the country meant there was not enough food for a greater part of the year. It was then that I first experienced first-hand the generosity of the American people when my family received the yellow corn, famously called Kenya in my country because it was coming through Mombasa.

While the focus on my testimony today is to put light to the unfolding situation in east Africa, I also want to take this opportunity, Chairman, to say thank you to you and the members and the American people for the help that you provided to me during the hardest time 25 years ago.

Those who testified before me today have captured the real and the grim situation in South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. The crisis is affecting over 20 million people who require urgent and lifesaving assistance. There are other pressing humanitarian needs across the globe, as you mentioned earlier on when we touched on Yemen, Nigeria and the like.

But what is unique about east Africa is that a formal famine declaration has been issued in parts of South Sudan. As an African, I would like to tell you that it is very uncommon for African governments to lift their hands and declare these famines and when they often do it is a little too late.

Without an elevated and immediate response, we are gravely concerned that the situation could worsen in regions of South Sudan, Somalia, and other countries as well.

We have spoke today about the refugee situation. World Vision is working in Kenya, Uganda. In Uganda, we are receiving refugees. We are currently have 200,000 refugees that we are dealing with and that number has not stopped. They are coming, as Mr. Isaacs said, 2,000 a day crossing into the country.

So the burden of South Sudan is actually spilling over to other countries and that needs to be noted.

World Vision's mission requires us to work tirelessly to address the needs of children and their families. As a child-focused organization, we are particularly concerned about the more than 3.5 mil-

lion children under 5 who are acutely malnourished and the nearly 850,000 children who are severely malnourished.

Interventions made today will not only save their lives but also reduce the possibility of long-term chronic malnutrition and stunting that can occur in the critical first 1,000 days of a child's life.

World Vision has been a partner in these response efforts and specifically in east Africa where we have been operational for the last 2 to 3 decades.

We have experienced achievements and challenges and we have refined our programming and we have used every lesson that we have learned.

While this crisis remains complex, I would like to present three key recommendations or points for this subcommittee's consideration.

The United States Government must maintain its position as a global leader through continued and robust support of humanitarian development programs.

For example, I would like to highlight the flexibility that we have seen shown by Food for Peace in places where programs were already existing and they made sure that they extended those programs to respond and to pivot to the needs that were emerging.

We have also seen great coordination between the Offices of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food for Peace where they have tried to coordinate to make sure that their resources are stretched and go much further.

But furthermore, it is essential to note that the U.S. Government cannot be alone in these things. As such, other governments, international donors, and humanitarian actors should all join and act swiftly to prevent the crisis from worsening.

Just like my colleagues have said, I would like to urge this subcommittee to advocate for funding and programs that will respond to this crisis.

This includes strong support to the international affairs budget as Congress finalizes 2017 spending bills and begins discussions around 2018 appropriations.

The U.S. Government and its partners need to adopt multi-year multi-sector funding to achieve lasting impact in fragile contexts. We can thus empower communities to pull themselves out of poverty and create a more enabling environment that mitigates against future shocks.

We have experienced this in our work with USAID and the World Food Programme in South Sudan, in Ethiopia, in Kenya, and I would say a little story from South Sudan when I visited some time last year. We saw this community that we have been giving food for a while. But over a certain period when we invested in resilience projects—and this was a fish pond, fish ponds in water view—in just a year we didn't need to actually be helping that family.

And sometimes I think it is important to help those in need but come out of that space of needing to help them again.

During these crises, one of the things that I've noted is that resources are disproportionately skewed toward the short term. No wonder we find ourselves in the same situation too often.

Our investment needs to be balanced and we need to have staying power. Last but not least, while we do our best as humanitarians, we call upon recipient governments, donor governments, and the African Union to seek political solutions to the conflicts that continue to undermine food security in some of these countries.

I think it has been pointed out well today that it is not only undermining it for the long term but also in the short term. I want to reiterate that your leadership counts. One story that hasn't been told here today is that we have made tremendous progress in our fight against hunger.

The number of hungry people has dropped by 200 million since 1992 and I am one of those that in 1992 needed yellow maize from this country. We know the decisions are hard but we are also aware how close we are to achieving a hunger-free world.

Thank you for taking an important step today by holding this critical hearing. We thank you. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Maphosa follows:]



**East Africa's Quiet Famine**

**Testimony before the  
House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human  
Rights, and International Organizations**

**Mr. Thabani Maphosa**  
Vice-President for Food Assistance and  
Senior Director for Food Security & Livelihoods  
World Vision  
March 28, 2017

### **Introduction**

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the East Africa hunger crisis. Your continued leadership and focus on these critical humanitarian issues is more important than ever.

I testify before you today as both the Vice-President for Food Assistance and as the Senior Director for Food Security & Livelihoods with World Vision.

World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organization serving millions of children and families in nearly 100 countries. Our 42,000 employees are dedicated to tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice. This work includes emergency relief and preparedness for people impacted by natural disasters and armed conflict; long-term economic and agricultural development; programs to support the health of mothers and children, including water, sanitation and hygiene and training of community health volunteers; preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children; mobilizing children, youth and local communities to hold their governments accountable; and advocating for effective systems, laws, and policies that protect vulnerable populations where the social fabric is especially weak.

World Vision US has more than one million private donors in every state and Congressional district, partners with over 16,000 churches in the United States, and works with corporations and foundations. We are motivated by our Christian faith to serve every child in need that we possibly can, whether they are of any faith or none. We partner with faith leaders throughout the world, equipping them to be champions for the needs of their communities. We are part of the global federation of World Vision International, which last year implemented more than \$2.7 billion in programming to help children and communities through international relief, development, and advocacy assistance. Although private donors support much of our work, the US Government is an invaluable partner. We leverage this partnership to reach many more vulnerable children and ensure that the precious resources of the American taxpayer are prudently used to promote and protect the well-being of children and communities abroad.

World Vision maintains a significant and long-time presence in East Africa, working in Ethiopia since the early 1970s, Kenya since 1974, in South Sudan since 1989, and Somalia since 1992. In addition, we have an East Africa regional office that provides technical and programmatic support to the entire region.

### **Famine and Food Crisis in East Africa**

In East Africa, a new arc of fragility has quietly emerged and given rise to a complex hunger crisis driven by drought, conflict and poor governance. This crisis is currently affecting over 22 million people, who require urgent, life-saving assistance. More than 3.5 million children under five are acutely malnourished, and 844,900 children are severely malnourished, with an estimated 14.4 million people in need of health assistance. In Kenya, South Sudan, and Somalia, certain areas have already reached or are approaching famine levels. At the same time, the number of people escaping conflict and hunger is dramatically increasing across the region with more than 3.3 million people now living as refugees. Somalia and South Sudan remain two of the largest sources of refugees globally. Host countries, such as Uganda which is home to more than 800,000 South Sudanese refugees, are reaching capacity limits.

The immediate needs in this crisis are clear – food assistance and nutritional support must reach the region quickly and efforts by donor governments and the international community must be scaled up. At the same time, the international community cannot ignore the long-term impact of malnutrition, particularly in children and pregnant mothers. Should we fail to address this crisis soon, not only will we witness more deaths from hunger, but we will see an increase in stunting in children that will have long-lasting impact.

The interventions required in these crisis situations go beyond immediate life-saving food assistance and nutritional support. Famines and food insecurity cause a ripple effect across communities and families, impacting health, child protection and economic security. As clean water for drinking and household sanitation, like handwashing, becomes scarce, we see malnutrition exacerbated by diarrhea, cholera and other diseases. As families are displaced or leave their homes to find water and food for themselves or for livestock, there is a need to ensure access to latrines, education and basic health services. A lack of access to consistent health care services means that mothers do not get needed prenatal care, which may cause complications during pregnancy and childbirth, and children do not receive vaccinations for preventable diseases. As communities migrate, millions of children are forced to leave school, putting their education, careers and dreams on hold. As families' exhaust coping mechanisms, children become more vulnerable to hazardous child labor, child marriage, trafficking, and recruitment in armed forces and other groups.

Additionally, much of the humanitarian need today is driven by civil wars, instability, and unresolved political disputes. The famine in South Sudan is largely a man-made catastrophe and in Somalia, the humanitarian crisis is a result of the combined effects of the drought and ongoing conflict. Standing on a 30-year history of working in many of the world's fragile states, World Vision remains committed to scaling up interventions that prove effective in supporting countries as they transition out of fragility towards greater stability and lasting peace.

In recognition of these evolving complexities, World Vision has worked to improve integrated programming models for addressing poverty and vulnerability, including famine and food insecurity. We are looking at and testing models that allow us to commit to longer-term projects in specific geographical locations focusing on the holistic needs of children, their households and communities, through multi-sector and integrated programming with a focus on rebuilding livelihoods, water resources, health, and education systems. At the center of this work is community relationship building and collaboration with government ministries, local leaders, women's group, children and youth to create sustainable impact.

Recognizing household vulnerability to drought, conflict and other disasters, we are also working to prioritize community-led disaster preparedness and management plans linked to early warning systems. When shocks are forecasted, World Vision aims to quickly modify project plans by accessing additional emergency public or private funding and link communities to other available safety net programming.

#### **Country Overview and World Vision's Response:**

World Vision's East Africa regional office is leading the coordination of our famine response and programming efforts with our national offices in Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan. Given the recurring nature of food insecurity in East Africa, our life-saving interventions have and will continue to address the vulnerabilities and shocks that brought about this crisis with the further objective of building resilience among communities in our areas of operation. However, additional international aid and response is urgently needed to avert this looming catastrophe.

#### **South Sudan**

World Vision partners with the World Food Program (WFP), UNICEF, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other partners to bring life-saving interventions to the most vulnerable around the world. This is no more apparent than in South Sudan, the world's youngest country. South Sudan plunged into civil war in 2013 and the protracted, precarious, and intensely violent nature of the conflict has resulted in untold suffering experienced by millions of South Sudanese men, women, and especially children.

The conflict and the immense internal and external human migration it has caused is wreaking havoc on the country's food security. Coupled with the effects of climate change, the conflict, general insecurity, human migration, land degradation, economic collapse, and years of underdevelopment, the humanitarian community declared the presence of famine in two counties in the former Unity State of South Sudan where roughly 100,000 people are on the verge of starvation. This is among the over 5 million individuals estimated to be experiencing severe food insecurity across the country – the highest ever recorded year on year.

If the situation remains, the level hunger and malnutrition experienced across the country will continue to deepen where it already exists, while also continuing to spread. This is particularly true for urban populations who are experiencing collapsed markets and inflation rates over 835%. For example, based on the most recent analysis, over 230,000 individuals, or 71 per cent of the population in Juba alone is considered food insecure.

In response to the complex crisis, in FY 2016 alone World Vision reached over 1 million beneficiaries with multi-sectorial interventions through its emergency response activities across the country. It has also scaled up its food assistance programming using a variety of modalities to provide life-saving food and nutrition support to vulnerable households through activities such as general food distribution, conditional cash and voucher assistance, and others to reach an expected 950,000 beneficiaries in both rural and urban areas across the country.

#### **Somalia**

The humanitarian situation in Somalia is rapidly deteriorating, and hundreds of thousands of children and their families need immediate life-saving assistance including access to food, water, medicine, and other basic services essential for their survival. Currently, 5 million people, almost 40 percent of Somalia's population is food insecure with 322,350 children under five acutely malnourished, and 57,140 children severely malnourished. Last week, the International Committee of the Red Cross warned that there is a small window of only three to four months to save millions of lives before the worst-case scenario in Somalia and Yemen is realized.

In Somalia, World Vision has been responding through resilience and nutrition programming working with the World Food Program (WFP) as well as USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP) and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). The coordination between FFP and OFDA on resilience underscores our recommendations for working beyond relief-only solutions. Through partnership with WFP, World Vision is supporting more than 53,000 people to create productive assets in their communities which either prevent the effects of disasters or support land reclamation and development for agriculture to promote long-term resilience. A further additional 68,000 people are being supported with food assistance and targeted trainings to improve rates of food security in some of the areas hardest hit by drought including Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia. Lastly, in cooperation with the Office of Food for Peace, World Vision is implementing a \$2.5 million voucher program to provide life-saving assistance to 2,611 households in Somaliland and South Central Somalia who have been adversely affected by drought; this enables families to meet the monthly food needs of their families.

World Vision supports USAID's ongoing efforts to distribute food rations to the most acutely food-insecure people, as well as provide food and cash transfers in exchange for participation in vocational training or productive asset building activities. Specifically, we also support efforts by USAID to modify existing awards and provide flexibility to partners to meet growing emergency needs in a timelier manner, and thereby helping to curtail future food crises.

#### **Ethiopia**

In Ethiopia, 5.6 million people are now in need of direct food assistance to stem the effects of multiple seasons of failed rains and drought in more than 360 districts throughout the country. Cross-border movements by families in search of fodder and food continue in the southern areas of the country where food insecurity has reached crisis levels. Malnutrition in children under the age of five has increased severely and access to water in affected areas is decreasing daily.

World Vision Ethiopia currently implements a multiyear integrated food security development program called "Strengthen PSNP 4 Institutions and Resilience" in some of the areas hardest hit by the drought in Ethiopia. The PSNP is the government's Productive Safety Net Program which is currently in its fourth iteration. In collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia and other partners, the program supports the country's Productive Safety Net Program which enhances the ability of communities to adapt to, recover from and mitigate against disaster through immediate food assistance and creation or rehabilitation of productive community assets. This program is expected to reach nearly 530,000 people over the next five years and it will support the development and maintenance of a more efficient, responsive and effective safety net program across the country.

Under the leadership of Catholic Relief Services with the support of the USAID Office of Food for Peace, World Vision is also implementing a Joint Emergency Operations Program responding to critical food needs of nearly 160,000 of the most vulnerable households across Ethiopia, many which are in areas that have been hardest hit by the drought.

#### **Kenya**



In Kenya, more than 2.7 million people are food insecure and an estimated 357,000 children under five are acutely malnourished. Staple food prices in the country have risen by close to 30 percent in the past three months. In certain areas of northern Kenya, severe acute malnutrition levels have reached double the emergency level with nearly 30 percent of children on the brink of starvation.

World Vision Kenya is responding in 15 out of the 23 most drought affected counties: Turkana, Baringo, Marsabit, Isiolo, Makueni, Garissa, West Pokot, Kilifi, Samburu, Taita Taveta, Wajir, Narok, Kajiado, Kitui and Lamu. In partnership with national and county government, WFP and other development partners, World Vision's immediate responses are prioritizing cash transfers for food, rehabilitation of water sources and water trucking for domestic and livestock use, school meal feeding programs to mitigate school drop-out, and support for the Ministry of Health to conduct nutrition surveillance and manage acute malnutrition.

Other medium and long-term interventions include the creation of community assets that increase people's resilience to future food security shocks such as farm ponds, promotion of relevant climate smart agriculture technologies to increase crop and livestock productivity, the construction of water facilities for increased access to safe water, and support to strengthen county governments to coordinate drought response activities.

#### **Recommendations**

In these highly violent and volatile circumstances, the humanitarian system is struggling to deliver enough emergency relief today, enhanced livelihoods for tomorrow and sustainable security for the future. Despite these challenges, World Vision believes international and national actors are capable of re-building a resilient, peaceful and prosperous future in East Africa for children and their families. To do this, all actors—governments, UN and multilateral agencies, donors, faith communities, and more—must protect rights and uphold the rule of law, provide emergency water, help build economic resilience, and look at the many other vulnerabilities, including violence, that particularly impact children.

#### **Robust Funding & Program Support for Emergency Food Assistance Interventions:**

- *Scale-up emergency hunger and malnutrition interventions, with a focus on the first 1,000 days of life and other vulnerable populations, such as lactating and pregnant women, the elderly, disabled, persons living with HIV and AIDS or TB, and robustly fund the USAID Offices of Food for Peace and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) that support these programs.*
- *Leverage the full range of food assistance modalities, including U.S., locally, and regionally purchased food commodities, ready-to-use therapeutic and supplementary food, vouchers and cash transfers, as contextually and culturally feasible and with the aim of reaching as many food insecure persons as possible.*
- *Advance more flexible emergency response through existing programming, ensuring quick response as food deficits are identified. During the massive drought induced by El Nino last year in Zimbabwe, World Vision was the recipient of a \$19 million cost modification to our Title II- Food for Peace funded ENSURE program. This flexibility from the U.S. Government enabled us to quickly respond to the needs of the hardest hit households with more than 18,000 metric*

*tons of US commodities. Also, through the cost modification, supplemental feeding rations were also provided to more than 313,000 people, helping to protect earlier gains made in building community assets and long-term resilience.*

**Access:**

- *Seek solutions that secure safe, sustained and unhindered access for humanitarian workers to all the locations where needs have been identified, including occupied territories.*
- *Collaborate closely with implementing agencies to provide more flexibility in funding and transportation modalities when access is not allowed due to a variety of issues.*
- *Work to resolve bureaucratic impediments that would otherwise result in a more efficient and effective response in the countries where we are seeking to operate.*

**Coordinated Multi-Sectoral Response**

- *Support grant mechanisms that allow for cross-sectorial, flexible, and holistic responses to famine and food insecurity that utilize technological innovations to provide more targeted and coordinated programming.*
- *Ensure cooperation and collaboration between USAID bureaus and offices to ensure a holistic response to community needs using funding tools that allow for integration of sectors and innovation in emergency response.*

**Long-Term Investments and Resilience-Building**

- *Adopt multi-year, flexible funding, with an aim to improve long-term investments in fragile states to build resiliency, provide greater sustainable impact and increase community ownership. By intervening in fragile states before they become failed ones, future famines and food insecurity crises can be averted.*
- *Promote development food security programs that support communities in coping with shocks and risks associated with climate change and severe weather patterns. To mitigate current and future emergency food assistance needs, long-term investments in development food assistance programs that empower vulnerable communities to “grow their own way out” of poverty through the promotion of agricultural production practices that include natural resource and drought cycle management, as well as land and water conservation techniques.*

**Conclusion**

The number of hungry people globally has declined from about one billion 25 years ago to about 795 million today, and agricultural production has, on average, doubled as well. Ending hunger and malnutrition in our lifetimes can be achieved. But, as evidenced in East Africa, we do face growing challenges in achieving this goal, and in other regions and countries prone to fragility and severe impacts from climate change and other extreme and increasingly unpredictable weather.

Despite these obstacles, we have also never been as well prepared to overcome them. World Vision, along with our partners, will remain focused in responding to the immediate needs of affected communities in South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. But, we are seeing the window of opportunity to avert a larger catastrophe rapidly closing. Historically, the United States has led the international community as the largest single donor for humanitarian assistance, and we believe that if other governments, international donors and humanitarian actors all join together, and act swiftly to meet the current global need, we can prevent this crisis from worsening. If we don't act now, we will have failed in living out our American values, and for many of us, a Christian call, to care for the least of these and we will have stood by while millions suffer and die. We will also have to address the consequences of migration and displacement that will lead to increased conflict, not only through competition over land, water and other resources, but also a potential for those in need to look for other sources of food and income, like armed or terrorist elements.

We hope that Congress and this Subcommittee will continue to provide strong leadership and advocate for the funding and programs that are needed to respond to this crisis. This includes strong support for the International Affairs Budget as Congress finalizes fiscal year 2017 spending bills and begins discussions around 2018 appropriations, and for much-needed humanitarian funding alongside any defense emergency supplemental appropriations in 2017.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today.

#### **Appendixes**

- World Vision East Africa Hunger Response Situation Report- March 13, 2017
  - World Vision Somalia Appeal
  - World Vision South Sudan Hunger Crisis Appeal
-

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Maphosa, thank you very much for your leadership and for being a person who, having been helped, has been helping others ever since, and so thank you.

That is a tremendous witness to all of us of someone who just gives back and gives back and gives back some more. So thank you.

I would like to now recognize Ms. Wabwire. The floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF MS. FAUSTINE WABWIRE, SENIOR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE POLICY ADVISOR, BREAD FOR THE WORLD INSTITUTE**

Ms. WABWIRE. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass and esteemed members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify before the subcommittee today on this critically important issue of drought and famine in the east Africa region.

I am here in my capacity as the senior foreign assistance policy advisor for Bread for the World Institute. Bread for the World advocates for policies and programs to end hunger.

Our 2017 hunger report focusses on the urgency of addressing crises in some of the world's most fragile environments, including those we are here to talk about today.

I would like to mention that I have a copy of the most recent report, which outlines some of the strategies that governments could do, that multi-lateral agencies could do, and what governments themselves are doing to address such crises.

Given the scale and the severity of the crisis, Mr. Chairman, Bread for the World urges Congress to reject the administration's proposed skinny budget cuts to foreign assistance in the face of such serious crises.

The proposed cuts include slashing or eliminating altogether the very accounts that finance the U.S. Government's support for emergency response, and I would just like to highlight three specific accounts that will be severely impacted if the cuts in fact come to effect.

One, is the Food for Peace account, which funds food aid. The second is the International Disaster Assistance, which funds nonfood items including water and medical services.

We know what conditions look like in refugee camps. They are breeding grounds for all kinds of diseases. So this account is critically important.

The third account I would like to highlight is the Migration and Refugee Assistance account which provides U.S. support to refugees in affected countries, neighboring countries—for example, refugees right now residing in Kenya and Ethiopia.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to focus my remarks on three points today. The fact that has been rightly mentioned by my colleague on the panel this crisis comes at a time when we have made tremendous progress against hunger and poverty around the world. And it can be overwhelming because a lot of people think we keep doing this but where is the evidence that we are actually making a dent.

I am here to testify that in 1990 approximately one in four people lived with hunger on a daily basis. By 2015, the hunger was cut nearly in half and stood at one in nine.

Over the same period, Mr. Chairman, extreme poverty was cut in half by even more—one in three people in the world to one in 10. That is progress.

Countries across the continent have invested in efforts to address hunger and poverty including reducing stunting which, as you mentioned in your opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, is a serious—in fact, it's a hidden hunger issue.

We know that when children are affected by hunger, especially in the critical window between birth and 2 years old, their cognitive development is severely affected.

It means that even when they grow up they are not as productive individuals of society, cannot contribute to the economic growth that we all hope to see in their own respective countries.

These trends reinforce my belief in the feasibility of ending hunger and poverty. I must acknowledge that at the same time conflict and severe droughts related to a rapidly changing climate are making it much harder for countries to keep up with the progress that I just mentioned.

I recently visited Kenya in December 2015 and January 2017. One of the things that really struck me was the effect of the drought, especially on communities that have managed to feed themselves all of these decades but are now in severe need of assistance.

The early warning system, as was mentioned earlier, is a great tool that today helps us assess the extent of the crisis and find ways to mitigate its effect.

FEWS NET mentions that today 6.2 million people in Somalia are in dire need of food assistance and especially if the own oncoming rains expected in the April season will not be to the level that it's supposed to be.

It's noteworthy also to mention that although we have this kind of cycle of issues going on in Somalia, we are at a much different place, and I would like to echo what Mr. Nims mentioned earlier, that there is relatively more access to communities in Somalia compared to when we had the famine in 2011.

In 2011, I also remember that we did not have any form of government in place. The entire country was pretty much under the control of the militant group al-Shabaab. Some progress has been made on that front. As we speak right now there is a government in place in Somalia.

In fact, the government has declared the drought a national disaster and is willing to work with partners to address this. So that's an opportunity right there that we can jump onto.

I would like to mention that at a time of intense debate over the U.S. budget and proposed cuts to foreign aid let us remember that investing in food security helps to promote economic growth. It also promotes global stability, which we all wish for.

My final point is about the fact that we are not a hopeless people. We have the tools that we need to address this crisis. The United States has demonstrated leadership through a range of tools including long-term development assistance and humanitarian assistance, as some of my fellow panelists have already mentioned.

I just want to focus on one of the long-term development programs that I am very familiar with and which I would like all of you to support and continue to exercise your leadership on because it has made such progress in the countries where it works.

Feed the Future is a U.S. Government's global food security initiative. It complements funding from countries themselves, works with American businesses and universities to promote long-term agricultural development.

It takes a comprehensive and sustainable approach such that countries own their own plains and eventually are able to fund their own initiatives.

In addition to all the bilateral assistance I mentioned I would also like to add that U.S. leadership in the multilateral world is critically important.

An example that I would like to highlight and which has helped to see the gains that we are seeing in Somalia today is the United Nations Peace Fund. This Fund promotes co-existence and peaceful resolution of conflict.

It supports the government's priorities for stabilization and peace and also focuses on creating jobs. Another important multilateral program that the U.S. Government participates in is the World Bank's International Development Association. It also focuses on supporting countries efforts to build local institutions, strengthen governance issues which are so critical to addressing some of the issues we are talking about, and to prevent future calamities from happening.

At this point, I would just like to offer three broad points upon which I believe that a U.S. Government response strategy should look like.

The administration and Congress should quickly adopt a response that does three things—combines food assistance and cash vouchers, allowing people to purchase food in local markets. It should also specialize on nutrition for most at-risk populations such as children, pregnant women, and the elderly.

And finally, provide financial and logistical support to countries that host refugees to prevent the spillover effects like have been mentioned before.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Wabwire follows:]



**Statement of Faustine Wabwire**  
**Senior Foreign Assistance Policy Advisor, Bread for the World Institute**

U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations

Hearing on:

**East Africa's Quiet Famine.**

March 28, 2017

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Bass:

Thank you for inviting me to testify before the Subcommittee today on the critically important issue of drought and famine in the East Africa region. I am here in my capacity as the Senior Foreign Assistance Policy Advisor for Bread for the World Institute. Bread for the World advocates for policies and programs to end hunger. Our 2017 Hunger Report focuses on the urgency of addressing hunger crises in some of the world's most fragile environments.

Bread for the World urges Congress to reject the administration's proposed "skinny budget" cuts to foreign assistance in the face of severe droughts and famine. The proposed cuts include slashing or eliminating the very accounts that finance the U.S. government emergency response:

- Food for Peace, which funds food aid
- International Disaster Assistance—which funds non-food assistance such as water and medical services
- The Migration and Refugee Assistance account, which provides U.S. support to Somali refugees in camps in Kenya and Ethiopia.

I will focus my remarks on three points:

- First, the crises in East Africa come at an unprecedented time of progress against hunger and extreme poverty in human history. It is in fact feasible to end chronic hunger by 2030. But we must work much harder to support the efforts of people caught in these very challenging and fragile environments.
- Second, the U.S. government has all the tools needed to help address the crisis in East Africa.
- Third, this is not the time to be cutting development and humanitarian assistance.

**The famine comes at a time when we've made dramatic progress** in reducing hunger and poverty around the world. In 1990, approximately one in four people lived with hunger on a daily basis. By 2015, the hunger rate was cut nearly in half and stood at about one in nine. Over the same period, extreme poverty was cut in half by even more, from one in three people in the world to one in ten.<sup>1</sup> Finally, many countries have shown remarkable progress in reducing stunting, a serious form of child malnutrition that hampers those who survive for the rest of their lives. In Ghana, for example, stunting rates have almost halved – from 36 to 19 percent– in just 11 years. Malawi has made impressive progress on reducing anemia and promoting breastfeeding, which saves lives in poor countries.<sup>2</sup>

These trends reinforce my belief in the feasibility of ending hunger and poverty. At the same time, conflict and severe droughts related to a rapidly changing climate are creating near-famine conditions in some countries and threatening to reverse the world's gains of the past decades.

When I visited Kenya in December 2016 and January 2017, I saw the devastating effects of drought on communities across the country. Pastoralists in the north have been most affected, since there is little water for the livestock they rely on. More than 2.7 million Kenyans are now food insecure, a number that's likely to reach 4 million by April. The Government of Kenya, in collaboration with the United Nations, will soon launch an appeal for \$200 million to provide timely life-saving assistance and protection.

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)<sup>3</sup> analysis of Somalia finds that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is expected to increase from 5 million in September 2016 to 6.2 million between February and June 2017, at the height of the pre-harvest hunger season. That is more than half the population of Somalia. Somalia has one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the world. Even brief periods of hunger or malnutrition can cause death or lifelong damage to a child's growth and development. When these occur during the 1,000 days between pregnancy and his or her second birthday, the damage for those who survive is largely irreversible and can mean lifelong health problems, diminished physical and cognitive development, and a more difficult time earning a living.<sup>4</sup> This is why measures to address the current crisis must reach that population quickly.

<sup>1</sup> [Bread for the World Institute 2017 Hunger Report: Fragile Environments, Resilient Communities](#)

<sup>2</sup> [International Food Policy Research Institute: 2016 Global Nutrition Report](#)

<sup>3</sup> FEWS NET: Created in 1985 by USAID after devastating famines in East and West Africa. FEWS NET provides objective, evidence-based analysis to help government decision-makers and relief agencies plan for and respond to humanitarian crises.

<sup>4</sup> [One Thousand Days: Fact Sheet](#)



According to FEWS NET, an estimated \$825 million is required from January to June 2017 to implement the Somalia Operational Plan for Pre-Famine Scale Up of Humanitarian Assistance. As of March 13, 2017, a total of \$183.8 million had been received—that's less than 23 percent of what is absolutely essential.<sup>5</sup>

Complicating response efforts is the fact that large parts of southern and central Somalia remain under the control or influence of Al-Shabaab, a militant group. This has restricted access to markets, basic commodities, and services. People's livelihoods are severely disrupted. Blockades of crucial facilities such as markets, and the extortion of "taxes" from already desperate communities, prevent farmers from transporting their grains to markets, disrupting supply of food and other essential goods and services.

It's noteworthy, however, that in spite of the serious challenges in Somalia, there is much reason to believe we can avert the crisis if we respond thoughtfully and quickly. In 2011, when famine was declared in much of Somalia, the country was in much worse political turmoil and without a functioning government. Unfortunately, by the time the famine was declared and a robust response launched, it was far too late for many. About 260,000 people, half of them children under the age of 5, died in that famine.

The situation is much different today. Despite immense challenges, including an ongoing civil war, Somalia conducted peaceful elections in early 2017. The government recently declared drought a national disaster and has appealed for help from international partners. Lessons from the 2011 famine have helped strengthen data systems so that officials can assess the crisis more accurately. Humanitarian partners now have a better system in place to get people help in forms they can immediately use.

At a time of intense debate over the U.S. budget and proposed cuts to foreign aid, it is important to remember that investing in global food security and supporting developing countries' own efforts to feed their people literally saves lives, promotes economic growth, and promotes global stability. We also save money in the long run. We know from experience that natural disasters such as drought can destroy crops and disrupt food production, but this does not have to lead to a crisis on the scale we are witnessing today if governments and aid agencies intervene in time.

The experience of East Africa, particularly, shows that effective safety net programs can pay off very dramatically. A good example is Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP).<sup>6</sup> In spite of numerous challenges, this innovative program has played a significant role in reducing hunger and food insecurity in Ethiopia. Between 2005 and 2008, the PSNP in Ethiopia led to the construction of many community assets:

- 2.1 million kilometers of stone embankments to prevent soil erosion and improve water conservation;
- About 1 billion trees planted to restore degraded watersheds and improve soil and water conservation;
- 7,000 kilometers of small-scale irrigation canals and 191,600 ponds constructed to provide water for agriculture.

---

<sup>5</sup> FEWS NET

<sup>6</sup> World Bank: Productive Safety Net Project

As a result, during the 2010-2011 famine in the region, nearly 500,000 fewer people in Ethiopia needed external assistance than in past hunger emergencies.

**We have all the tools to address the current crisis as well as to prevent similar ones in the future.**

The United States has demonstrated leadership through a range of tools: long-term development assistance, as well as humanitarian assistance such as food aid, and non-food assistance.

*Humanitarian and diplomatic assistance*

The nature of the current crisis is largely man-made. We have the ability to stop the famine, and prevent millions of deaths. But the window of opportunity is very limited. We must act decisively—now—not later. The region’s most immediate needs include interventions to improve food access and address health and nutrition challenges—particularly for children and pregnant women. The appropriate response strategy has to be rapid and comprehensive, and should prioritize three things: deliver a combination of food assistance, digital cash cards, and cash vouchers that allow people to buy food in local markets; provide specialized nutrition support for mothers and children; and increase financial and logistical support for peace building initiatives to countries and communities that are hosting refugees. This should be done through bilateral and multilateral programs, including agencies such as the through the World Food Program.

The flexibility to provide assistance in ways that people can immediately use—for example, food or cash vouchers—helps people get food more quickly, helps avoid disrupting local markets, and helps save money so that more people can be reached with the same funding. Working with refugee-hosting countries and communities is important because failure to address their needs causes disruption in local economies, increasing instability and the likelihood that conflict will spread across entire regions.

*Long-term development assistance*

The United States should continue to lead by example, providing encouragement and motivation for global actions that prevent the need for repeated humanitarian interventions. The challenge presented in East Africa—frequent, severe droughts related to climate change and weak governance institutions—requires sustained investments. While emergency aid is vital right now, we must think beyond the current crisis. We know that it is much more cost-effective to invest in building agricultural and economic systems that are sustainable in the long run. Over the past 15 years, U.S. foreign assistance has paid greater attention to long-term investments in women and children and in country-led initiatives that lay foundations for sustainable agriculture and livelihood strategies. This will pay off in the longer term.

A good example is Feed the Future, the U.S. government’s global food security initiative. The program complements funding from partner countries themselves, and works with American businesses across sectors to improve livelihoods through agriculture value chains. Feed the Future takes a comprehensive, sustainable approach to agricultural development. Investments focus on country-owned plans and emphasize the importance of gender, nutrition, response to climate change, and natural resource management. In Kenya, through support from USAID, the

U.S. Department of State, and USDA, Feed the Future prioritizes resilience-building efforts in the face of erratic rainfall and frequent drought. Because food security and climate conditions are interrelated, Feed the Future targets areas of recurrent crisis that historically have had high humanitarian needs.<sup>7</sup> Drawing on resources and expertise from 10 federal agencies, Feed the Future is helping countries, including 19 focus countries, transform their agricultural sectors and sustainably grow enough food to feed their people.

U.S. multilateral leadership—in collaboration with partners—is as essential as bilateral U.S. assistance in achieving positive results and preventing calamities in future. In our increasingly interconnected world, investments in programs such as the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. In Somalia, The Fund promotes coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflict in, and aims to support the government’s priorities for stabilization and peace, including investment in jobs. Another important mechanism is the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA). IDA, the World Bank’s fund for the poorest countries, is particularly critical in the face of climate change, fragility, conflict, and the worst refugee crisis since World War II. Strong U.S. support for IDA18 replenishment is critical, with particular attention to fragile and conflict-affected states.<sup>8</sup> This is the time to redouble our efforts and accelerate progress to end hunger once and for all.

The administration and Congress should work together to review program time frames and establish a mechanism outlining appropriate oversight to ensure that U.S. assistance in fragile and conflict-affected situations takes into account the need for effective coordination and patient capital. The current crisis is largely political. To achieve lasting peace, political solutions—in addition to humanitarian assistance—are key. The United States could step up its power to leverage mediation efforts through its diplomatic ties and presence in affected countries. Mediators should work with local communities, regional leaders, and the international community to encourage dialogue at the community, national, and regional levels to find lasting peace.

#### **It’s time to sustain progress, not cut foreign aid**

U.S. leadership on global hunger and food security has been instrumental in leveraging substantial additional resources and reversing decades of decline in funding for agricultural development. The United States has significantly helped to raise awareness of the urgency of improving nutrition in the critical window between pregnancy and age 2. In July 2009, when G-8 leaders gathered in L’Aquila, Italy, to respond to the 2007-2008 global food price crisis, the U.S. proposal to invest significantly more effort and resources in agriculture leveraged support from other donor countries, who committed to providing \$22 billion in financing for agriculture and food security. U.S. assistance plays a catalytic role to leverage other partners, including the private sector. Initiatives such as Power Africa are mobilizing more than \$40 billion from private sector partners, delivering power to 6 million people to date.<sup>9</sup>

I would like to leave the Committee with a few recommendations:

<sup>7</sup> [2016 Feed the Future Progress Report: Growing Prosperity for a Food-Secure Future](#)

<sup>8</sup> [World Bank: The Demand for IDA 18 Resources and the Strategy for the Effective Use](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Power Africa Annual Report, September 2016](#)

1. Launch a robust U.S. Government response: A massive, strategic response is urgently needed to prevent death, total loss of livelihood, and further instability. The administration and Congress should work together to review program time frames and establish a mechanism outlining appropriate oversight to ensure that U.S. assistance in fragile and conflict-affected situations takes into account the need for effective coordination and patient capital.
2. Support Multilateral Assistance: The U.S. should work with the international community to increase official development assistance to conflict-affected countries such as Somalia, including through multilateral mechanisms such as the World Bank's International Development Association, the World Food Program, and the United Nations Peace Fund.
3. Strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus by expanding social protection programs: Social protection programs have been critical to progress on reducing hunger crises in the region. Providing regular and predictable cash transfers to poor households often plays a critical role in terms of filling immediate food gaps, but can also help improve the livelihoods of poor families by alleviating constraints on their productive capacity.
4. Take the long view and work with local actors to address climate change: Work with affected communities, national governments, donors, and the private sector to improve access to new technologies, knowledge, and skills for climate change mitigation, as well as facilitate networks to share information and develop new adaptation strategies. Agricultural research and extension programs, for example, should pay attention to the affected communities' significant hardships as climate change causes their communities to suffer growing resource scarcities. Efforts must focus on increasing their adaptive capacity to deal with the shocks, while also providing the necessary support—such as social protection and financial and technical assistance—to cushion their communities against additional stressors.

I sincerely thank the Subcommittee for its attention to this important issue, and for extending me the honor of testifying today.

---

Mr. SMITH. Thank you for your testimony and your leadership as well. Let me begin. If I could ask you a question. Others might want to join in on an answer as well, and thank you for underscoring the devastating impact of stunting.

The outward appearance is mirrored by an inner tragedy that occurs when a mind is artificially held back because of lack of nutrition and stunting is a direct result, as we all know, of insufficient nutrients and food during the critical period, as you pointed out, from conception to the second birthday.

And this subcommittee and this chairman has made the first 1,000 days one of my highest priorities because if you get the first 1,000 days right you get the rest of the life most likely to be far better.

The immune system is bolstered and, of course, cognitive abilities once lost are very hard to reclaim later on. So it's an early intervention effort that we have been promoting very aggressively as a subcommittee for some time now.

And we have actually convened the African Diplomatic Corps recently and heard from three Ambassadors tell of what they are doing in their respective countries on this effort of global food security, particularly focused on mother and child so that mothers are healthier and babies both unborn and newly born into that second birthday are healthier as well.

So if any of you would like to expand upon that because it seems to be the progress that is being made is at risk of being severely reversed and lives crippled by that lack of food security.

Second, Mr. Isaacs, you mentioned the issue that many of the governments do not have control of these militias and as you go down the line the men with guns increasingly report to a warlord or somebody else—my question is how hard are the governments themselves trying to rein in on that practice?

Are they taking a laissez-faire attitude or are they really trying to say, we need a cohesive military unit with a command and control structure that truly if we say do this, this happens?

Because when Greg Simpkins and I spoke to Salva Kiir, we had every indication that they were in control and that we wonder if that's at all true when, again, people with guns, even people who had the insignia of his corps were the ones who were committing atrocities in Terrain, if you could speak to that.

Let me also ask are we doing enough? I asked this of Mr. Nims earlier. Are we doing enough right now? Are we mobilized sufficiently with enough money to make a difference?

Again, as I said earlier, the President and every President since I've been in Congress has made recommendations, some of which were draconian in their cuts.

There was a 20 percent cut envisioned by President Obama on issues like neglected tropical diseases as well as tuberculosis, an issue that I know members on both sides of the aisle care about very, very deeply and there are suggestions for some severe cuts, which I don't believe in an instant are going to happen.

But there is still reason for concern because they are on the table as something that might happen so we have to make sure that they don't, especially in light of the crises that we are facing.

So is there enough money in the kitty right now? Are we doing enough to really make a difference here? And I have other questions but let me ask you to respond to those and then I'll yield to my—

Mr. ISAACS. I'll start with speaking about the security sector reform in South Sudan. So the South Sudanese—the Sudan People's Liberation Army were formulated over a lot of different visions that came together, and Dr. John Garang built that into a national vision that ended up being the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the Government of National Unity.

And in the end, the South decided to vote and they went for independence during the referendum.

But when you look at the different military units they were never cohesive around the vision. They were cohesive around the individual leaders.

So the building of the SPLA—there was a core contingent of it that, let's say, was in the vision and then the rest of it was I made a deal with this person and they would come in and swear allegiance. So then all the guys that came with that person would put on the uniform.

But the allegiance or the command and control capability doesn't necessarily extend down, and as you saw starting from December 2013 when the civil war began, when there is a rupture between relationships at the top it goes all the way down.

But then there can be another rupture down below that and another rupture down below that. So reform in the security sector for South Sudan is something that is desperately needed. The other thing I would like to answer quickly is, "Are there enough resources?"

I am not familiar with the details of everybody's budgets but here is what I do know. About 6 months ago, the World Food Programme pretty much across the board reduced everybody's daily rations by 30 percent and that wasn't just in South Sudan.

That was about 6 months or 8 months ago. Do you remember this? Okay. So I am not the only one that has experienced this.

We haven't talked here and they are shaking yes, they remember, too. But this went not only in South Sudan. It was in Uganda. It was in Iraq. It was in Syria, Turkey, and Greece.

Everywhere straight across the board there was a 30 percent cut and I think that's reflective that there are so many displaced people, there are so many refugee people in the world today and now with this drought and other food needs, insecurity on top of that, I don't think there are enough resources. And this is going to breed greater instability, ultimately.

Mr. SMITH. Your point about the 30 percent cut, I chaired a hearing 2 years ago on why the massive exodus out of the refugee camps run by the UNHCR, and the UNHCR representative said it was the 30 percent cut.

Mr. ISAACS. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. And then people had said, they are not going to take care of us—we are voting with our feet, so to speak, and were going to just—were just going to leave.

Mr. ISAACS. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. So in essence it is an ongoing problem.

Mr. ISAACS. And I am—I am not kicking World Food Programme there. I am just saying I don't think that they are being adequately funded and I also don't think that it's solely the role of the United States.

I think that by the United States exerting leadership in the humanitarian sector that means other countries have to come forth.

And if I may make one last comment—Mr. Nims said it earlier but I just want to reemphasize it. Humanitarian aid will never resolve political conflict and I think that political decision makers in the world today when they can't get a political resolution have a tendency to put more pressure on the humanitarian players to get a conflict resolved and that's never going to work.

Political division, political strife requires political resolution. Yes, sir. Thank you.

Mr. BOWERS. Just a few comments, Mr. Chairman.

We have talked about men with guns. Often, they are boys with guns. But I also want to portray a more positive story of what can be lost as well due to budget cuts and some of our nonemergency food programs funded by USAID, which is integrating these men and boys back into society when they do put their guns down.

So a program that we work in northern Uganda is doing just that. And in many ways Uganda, though still going through a lot of challenges, has succeeded in looking at how do you deal with a restive part of your society that has taken up guns for different reasons.

So there are positive ways actually you can work on this issue with men with guns. Now, South Sudan is not at that place yet.

But, clearly, when you look at where cuts will be made, and peacekeeping/peace-building programs with impacts on communities' resiliency, helping young men, helping boys, reintegrate into society and put those guns down is part of that food security challenge that we want to get to. Because part of the reasons driving them and a lot of recruitment of Boko Haram, frankly, was over economics, not just ideology of an extremist group.

A report we put out last year proved that point. A lot of them were in debt and they were looking for other financial means just to make their life successful by recruitment in.

So some of these programs have to be done in conjunction with other activities both humanitarian as well as development assistance that works on security and safety.

And then finally on the issue, I guess, is if there is enough in the kitty. No. Because the world has never been in a place we are at today.

Sixty million people are refugees or IDPs; globally the largest ever since World War II. And now we have basically a food and famine crisis brewing.

Now, we have been focused inherently over the last few years on what breaks the humanitarian system. Is it simultaneous wars in Yemen and Syria? Is it a large natural disaster that hits Nepal, et cetera?

Well, this is another data point in that kind of terrible story that we are getting to—that without enough resources and certainly without FY 2017 rescinded money people will be without food.

So the WFP account was reduced because essentially WP lends to itself in emergencies. It has its own emergency reserve. So it pulled internally its funding to meet Nigeria needs, staff up, et cetera. They exceeded that amount and then WFP basically had to start dialing back.

Ms. WABWIRE. I'd like to briefly respond to the question on nutrition and how some of the existing programs are responding to this.

In September 2015 I visited a village in northern Kenya and I was sitting with this grandma who is 82 years old. After a couple of times, a ton of children came to her and three of those were her grandchildren.

We had been talking about the challenges in the area and she explained how the frequency and severity of droughts have been increasing over the years, over the course of her lifetime.

One thing that she told me that really stuck with me was the fact that she feels so helpless to know that she cannot provide nutrition support to her grandchildren.

She was able to raise her children but today, because of the effects of climate change, rapidly changing and erratic weather patterns, she's simply not able to.

So hunger is also an issue that affects people's dignity and I think as we talk about addressing some of the world's challenges it really speaks to the issue of our moral obligation and the values that we hold as a human society.

Leah came to me and greeted me and the first thing she said to me—this was an 8-year-old girl—she said, I feel really dizzy. By looking at her, I could tell she hadn't eaten for a while. I didn't have to ask her.

Because I have seen so many of these every time I visited countries where a number of U.S. programs are working I get to see communities like this.

One of the programs that I really want to expound on a little more is Feed the Future and how it's working to change that around. As we may remember, the food price crisis of 2008, riots across 40 countries all over the world.

The Arab Spring was largely as a result of the food price crisis where a lot of people could not afford to buy food. The following year in 2009 at the G8 Summit in L'Aquila, Italy, the U.S. Government stepped forward and called upon partners to reverse the decades of neglect in agriculture development. Feed the Future was born out of that initiative.

Today, Feed the Future is very serious and keen on turning around the crisis of malnutrition and the way that Feed the Future works is that it works with governments. It focuses on areas that bring returns on investments. Addressing nutrition is one of those.

Like I mentioned earlier, lack of proper nutrition in the critical 1,000 days window destroys people's lives.

After that, I visited Senegal, a country that's doing very well on Feed the Future, and the Government of Senegal has actually adopted a lot of the tools and is carrying on much of the work on its own.

So Feed the Future, a program run by USAID, speaks to the effectiveness of U.S. assistance when it is targeted. But I also want to speak to the fact that we need stronger institutions. We need a



USAID that's able to carry out these functions like it's currently doing.

Over the last course of about 10 years we have seen major reforms across the Agency and I think it's very unfortunate that a lot of the stories we hear about this Agency being ineffective and wasteful is totally not correct.

One of the issues I wanted to highlight is the monitoring and the evaluations that are happening currently at USAID. Since 2011, USAID has conducted more than 1,000 evaluations by independent third parties.

Ninety-eight percent of these have been used to shape the Agency's policies and programs. Feed the Future is one of those programs.

I also wanted to highlight the foreign assistance dashboard. Out of continued effort from the NGO community, most of whom are represented in this room, have continued to advocate for U.S. foreign assistance to be more effective, return on investment, but also deliver for the people that it serves.

And we are seeing a lot of progress on that front. We are seeing more country-led initiatives, governments that are willing to work in partnership with the U.S. Government to address their own problems.

So I thought I would use the nutrition piece to just highlight the effectiveness of the Agency, USAID that would be severely impacted and would reverse the decades we have made if these cuts come into effect.

Mr. MAPHOSA. Thank you, Chairman. On the topic of nutrition I did mention the 1,000 days in my opening remarks and, you know, I would like to bring this to life with bringing a situation that I came across in the field.

When we talk about 1,000 days we talk about a pregnant mother. That's where we begin, and we talk about a child who is under 2 who is receiving lactation.

I met this mother who is pregnant. She has got a child who is under 2 years of age and she has a child who is 5 years old.

And she's going through a program where we have said we are focusing on the first 1,000 days because our resources are fewer. And she asks me the question, what would you have me prioritize? The child who is in my tummy that I don't see or this child that I am lactating or this child that is crying loud that is here?

These are choices that women face every day when programs are not able to meet their needs but also when, really, they are not able to provide for themselves.

So the first 1,000 days is critical but it is also a very difficult one for a parent who will be having children of that age group sitting with them.

Are we doing enough right now? I will say that the stress migration that we are seeing or we are beginning to see in Somalia gives me a sense that we are not doing enough because otherwise people wouldn't move if we are doing enough.

It is important for them to be kept or to stay where they would rather be productive than to move into a camp. That's the last place people want to be. But when you see them moving into that space it's because they are actually stressed out.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Before yielding to my distinguished colleague, just remind everyone—I think the record should clearly show it—that there has been a strong bipartisan effort on food security.

President Bush, beginning in 2002, had the initial foresight to elevate the important role of food security in the U.S. foreign policy, especially in Africa, via the Initiative to End Hunger in Africa, or the IEHA, which was funded through development assistance and implemented through USAID.

At the same time, the Millennium Challenge Corporation began making substantial investments in agriculture-led economic growth programs, particularly in Africa. And as you pointed out, I would say to my friend that it was built upon at the G8 Summit meeting in Italy in 2009.

I would like to yield to Ms. Bass.

Ms. BASS. Thank you. Just adding to that, Feed the Future had definitely been a program that has been—has had bipartisan support and we actually moved it from just being a program to putting it into statute.

So I've seen it myself personally work in the hills of Kenya and to me I think it's an example of really how a lot of our foreign aid should be transformed so that it's not just about us providing direct services but it's about helping to build the capacity on the ground. So, major support here.

And I think along with that, I mean, I think Electrify Africa follows in the same vein. You know, Mr. Isaacs, you started by talking about your aid workers and I was just—I don't remember if you said what happened—if they were returned or if they were released.

Mr. ISAACS. They were safely released. So the SPLA—

Ms. BASS. Were they South Sudanese?

Mr. ISAACS. Yes, they were all South Sudanese. They were roughed up a little bit but none of them were killed. None of them were hurt. And after we did the debriefing we have a six-page report—the blow by blow detail is fascinating.

So they are kidnapped in a village by a local garrison whose wife of one of the guys they kidnapped went down and chewed out the garrison and said, “What are you doing with my husband? You got to let him go,” and he said, “Well, I can't let you and your kids go now because we want to fight those other guys tomorrow. So now you've got to stay with us.” It's sort of comical but it could have been tragic—

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. ISAACS [continuing]. And it could have been horrific. They were all released safely and we have gone back. We have talked with the commissioner in the area and we have even confronted the guy and talked to him, and we are trying to build an environment where there is some kind of stability that we can come back and help people. I mean, it's in the middle of a swamp.

Ms. BASS. Yes.

Mr. ISAACS. Why would anybody want to come in the swamp and fight?

Ms. BASS. Well, and I think you raise a real important issue about where South Sudan is these days—that it's not really a situation of two factions but many.

Mr. ISAACS. It's multiple factions.

Ms. BASS. And so it's fine to say there needs to be a political solution but I am not exactly sure what that is or how that comes about.

I mean, to me without—that's why I always go back to the AU even though I know the AU has its challenges. But I love what happened in the Gambia as a perfect example and I wish, obviously, that wasn't a situation that had ridden to the level of war but the fact that the countries came together to resolve a situation is what I certainly hoped for. But I don't see how it's just political and not militarily as well.

You also mentioned within Uganda that there was a problem and you mentioned that a percentage of the people were from South Sudan.

I was wondering in terms of hunger, famine—I mean, I don't think that there is famine that is beginning Uganda unless you were saying that, and then what percentage of that is because of the refugees versus is Uganda having a problem.

Mr. ISAACS. Right. So Uganda is in a level right now that's probably considered stressed because the agricultural production and the markets are considered stressed due to lack of rainfall.

But with now 800,000 people from South Sudan that have flooded into the area and the Ugandan Government, as Mr. Bowers said earlier, they have a pretty good handle on how to organize that.

Ms. BASS. Right.

Mr. ISAACS. But that's drawing resources out of society somewhere. It's drawing resources out of the WFP pipeline and that's more resources that need to be replenished or it's going to create more insecurity somewhere, and there are thousands of people coming every day, fleeing Sudan.

Ms. BASS. So I am thinking of the cuts that have been made and also we are doing a resolution tomorrow in full committee about the famine.

But none of it was going to Uganda. You know, that's not what we are recommending and I am just wondering if we shouldn't include Uganda.

Mr. ISAACS. So I would say that—I don't know how your budgetary process works but if you're considering funds to Food for Peace and some of their requests are to help South Sudan refugees, a substantial portion of them are in Uganda now.

So however that funding stream runs. But I think that there needs to be consideration made for those refugees to feed them.

Ms. BASS. Okay. And Mr. Bowers, you mentioned PRIME in Ethiopia. Is—and it sounds—I mean, I have read about it in your testimony. Is PRIME—does PRIME exist outside of Ethiopia or is it just in Ethiopia?

Mr. BOWERS. Well, that particular project was designed for arid parts of Ethiopia. But I think the construct is what my colleague was saying because it is a Feed the Future program as well. It's a 5-year program; over 50 million U.S. dollars were invested.

Ms. BASS. Where are we in the 5 years?

Mr. BOWERS. We are at the last year. But the proof is there. We know the evidence is there to demonstrate, again, that sort of metric that Matt Nims mentioned today. A dollar spent can actually reduce humanitarian needs by over \$2.90.

So that's a pretty impressive metric, and in an area of the world where we know there will be cycles of drought again. So the whole point of resiliency, the whole point of sort of a systems approach, is looking at the diverse drivers that make people more resilient so that they are not dependent on us handing out food again.

Ms. BASS. So what happens? Does it need to go on beyond 5 years or is 5 years—

Mr. BOWERS. Well, I think we are always looking for opportunities to continue to build a momentum where the need and the government are both in alignment. And Ethiopia has shown itself to be quite progressive in championing these types of systems approaches in the region.

Kenya is getting there as well. I think it's more difficult to do in areas in Somalia but not impossible. And then, finally, Uganda is another area where we are championing a lot of these multi-year programs that are building resiliency in the midst of coping with, as Ken mentioned, 800,000 refugees.

So, you know, these are the signature programs that the USG should really be championing in addition to our humanitarian accounts because those are critical for saving lives.

Ms. BASS. I do think it's something that we need to lift up in terms of the role African countries have been taking in taking in refugees. We often think of the migration out but do not acknowledge often that so many refugees are absorbed by other countries and they do it in principle, which I think is something that—

Mr. BOWERS. I would just quickly add on the fluidity of that region, obviously, as many people on the subcommittee know, borders there don't really exist in reality and many of these societies have cross border trade, cross border realities that go beyond.

Ms. BASS. Yes, but not for 800,000 people.

Mr. BOWERS. So the markets are all cross border there—religions, ethnic groups. So the fact—

Ms. BASS. That's because the borders were never real.

Mr. BOWERS. So whatever legislation language you come up with, I think acknowledging that cross border dynamic is very important.

Thank you.

Ms. BASS. So I wanted to ask you, Mr. Maphosa, you mentioned that the leaders don't want to call it a crisis and I am not sure if you were making reference to say, for example, there is a problem in Kenya and it's not really clear whether the Kenyan Government is saying that there is a crisis, and I am thinking also specifically of Nigeria. So how do we help Nigeria if the issue is Boko Haram?

Mr. MAPHOSA. So that was in specific reference to South Sudan.

Ms. BASS. Oh, okay. I see.

Mr. MAPHOSA. I was noting that when you see them accepting that there is a famine, they are not crying wolf anymore. In fact—

Ms. BASS. Oh.

Mr. MAPHOSA [continuing]. They may be behind the curve because traditionally for them they would not want to be the first ones out. You need to push them a little bit more.

Ms. BASS. I got it. Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. Garrett, gentleman from Virginia.

Mr. GARRETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to credit the ranking member for stealing my favorite question. But I do appreciate the follow-up, Mr. Isaacs, on your aid workers, that at least it dovetails with another question.

Four extraordinarily effective good organizations represented on the panel. How many members of your organization have you had abducted? How many are still being held and what can be done to help them?

I know it's beyond the purview of the meeting but I think appropriate in light of the testimony.

Mr. ISAACS. So I can say that we have had people kidnapped over the years. I don't know the exact number. We have been blessed not to have too many and we have none that are held now.

Mr. GARRETT. None currently?

Mr. ISAACS. Yes.

Mr. GARRETT. Thank you.

Mr. MAPHOSA. I would say for us we have been fortunate not to have those situations. But the near misses type of situations is where we have had to evacuate staff when we sensed that there was danger.

Mr. GARRETT. Sure.

Mr. BOWERS. I would just add, usually we don't comment on these things publicly because some of these cases may be active.

Mr. GARRETT. To the extent that you're not comfortable commenting on it I would ask that you reach out to any members of the subcommittee with whom you are familiar and comfortable. Let us know so that we might be able to help.

Mr. BOWERS. Sure. And we are happy to provide additional sort of international data on that. I mean, most of the abductions currently are in Syria.

Mr. GARRETT. All right. Well, any number of places and sometimes the government actions might not be classified as abductions.

But yes, let somebody know and there are members of this subcommittee, Mr. Smith in particular, who have had some wonderful success in sort of humanitarian efforts to help folks out of bad situations, for lack of a more appropriate term.

How about Bread for the World? Are you all in the same circumstance where—

Ms. WABWIRE. No, actually because we are not a direct service agency. Fortunately, we don't have that problem.

Mr. GARRETT. I appreciate that. That's better news than I thought I might here. So that's very good.

Ma'am, you also spoke to the conditions in the refugee camps and how, obviously, they are breeding grounds for disease, infection, et cetera.

Can you also speak to the circumstances as it relates to exposure to extremism, people who are hopeless and how their circumstances

in some of these camps might lead them to make decisions they might not otherwise make.

Ms. WABWIRE. Absolutely. As I began my remarks, I highlighted this report which I will just mention again. And the reason I do that is because, as we were preparing—putting together this report, we traveled and interviewed lots of people—including young men in Somalia, a country that, obviously, is severely affected.

One of the people that presents a story here is a young man called Mohamed. He works with the Global Youth Innovation Network. This is a group of young Somali men who, in spite of all the challenges around them, have committed to try and prevent recruitment from happening in their own villages.

So what Mohamed and his team do is they bring together young men whom they know are prone or susceptible to influential recruitment by al-Shabaab and plan for a lot of livelihood strategies. They've opened businesses with support from external partners, to a very large scale, though, have helped to build roads and canals—just very impressive initiatives.

And this is really to alleviate opportunities where grounds for breeding of such extremists happen.

Mr. GARRETT. So at the risk of sounding like my colleague, Mr. Castro, earlier and ending my question with what do you think about that, I would sort of soliloquy, Mr. Chairman, that you very rarely see young people make decisions that relate to transition to extremism where there is an opportunity where there is hope.

And so the work that we are doing here and I think the bipartisan commitment to ensure that we continue to do it will save lives that we will never be able to quantify because we will see fewer people pushed toward extremism, I think.

And I think that it's hard to—it's hard to do that in numbers but what you all do, God bless you and thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I don't know if this would be an appropriate time. I had spoken to you prior to the meeting about some information that I have received from the Ambassador to the Republic of Sudan that he wished to have read into the record.

So I will hand that to you now and ask that it be included in the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection it will be made part of the record.

Mr. GARRETT. If I might articulate very briefly, Mr. Chairman, I have had some conversations with leadership from the Republic of the Sudan on semi-related issues.

Obviously, the Ambassador is not able to testify at this hearing. But they are trying to make it abundantly clear that they hope to become better partners, particularly as it relates to transportation of assets and resources in the South Sudan by virtue of being landlocked and also that they hope to integrate themselves better into the region and the world, moving forward.

And I will tell you, Mr. Chairman, for the record that I have found them to be engaging and well intentioned, and past activities notwithstanding I think worthy of sitting down and maybe having some greater discourse moving forward and I thank you for your indulgence.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Garrett, thank you very much and this submission from the Ambassador will be made a part of the record. So thank you very much for that.

Ms. Wabwire, you have referenced that summary of recommendations. To the extent possible, particularly things like the executive summary and some of the recommendations, we would like to make that a part of the record.

So afterwards we would like to go through it and pull out some of the most important and salient points to make it part of the record.

Ms. WABWIRE. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Suozzi, gentleman from New York.

Mr. SUOZZI. I don't have any questions, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank each of you for your testimony today and for your great service that you provide to people. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to yield to Mr. Donovan, the gentleman from New York.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Chairman.

I don't know how I am going to get liked more than Tom Suozzi right now. That's wonderful.

I also got a chance to ask some questions earlier and I know they are going to call the votes in 5 minutes. So is there something else that any of you want to tell us, whether it's to understand the issue better, to understand the problems, understand the solutions? I offer that up to you until the bell rings.

Mr. ISAACS. If I may bring up one other thing.

All of the localities and the populations that we have talked about today we have not mentioned two people groups. In the southern part of the Republic of Sudan—that's the people in Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile—and they have been totally cut off with no humanitarian access since June 2011 and they continue to be cut off today. And this is a population of a total of about 1.5 million people.

So while the words from the Embassy of Sudan are gracious and I have no doubt that they maybe have made some progress in some areas, there has been no humanitarian access allowed to that and that is something that I am very familiar with and I would ask that you look into that and pressure them to allow access into those areas.

Mr. SMITH. I would add that in the past we have actually had hearings that focused on the Nuba Mountains almost exclusively because of that lack of humanitarian access.

So I think your point is extremely well taken and I thank you for it. Would anyone else like to add before we close? Any comments? Yes.

Ms. WABWIRE. I think I will just close with where I started—that in order for us to make an effective response to one of the world's largest humanitarian crises we have got to protect funding.

We have got to oppose the proposed cuts and I am really encouraged, Mr. Chairman, by your confidence that these are going nowhere. That makes me feel a lot more encouraged and motivated and especially because this is for some of the most vulnerable people around the world.

This is not for our organizations. This is for mothers and fathers who watch very helplessly their children die of things that are so solvable like hunger.

And so just very quickly, a robust U.S. Government response is needed urgently. We have got to act fast because millions of lives are on the brink of starvation.

Secondly, please support multilateral assistance including World Food Programme and the U.N. Peace Fund, which helps build institutions for peace building over a long period of time.

But at the same time also help to bridge the gap between the humanitarian and the long-term development assistance because I think that's where we are not making fast enough progress.

And finally, as we respond to the current crisis, let's take that long-term view so that hopefully in a few years we are talking about a whole different story and how we have made a difference. And I thank you all very much for the opportunity to testify.

Mr. SMITH. As we close, one of the reasons why we have called this hearing was to hear from the experts who have just absolutely compelling information that needs to be heard by this subcommittee, the Congress, the appropriators, and that's why it was scheduled for today.

And also we wait for a new USAID Administrator and other key personnel because personnel is policy. As you know, Mr. Isaacs, having served—others too as well—the key is having the right person, the right people in those gatekeeper positions and a lot of that has not happened yet. So we are not flying blind but we don't have the visibility that we should have.

So this hearing and, again, your testimonies become very, very, I think, informative and motivating going forward. So I want to thank you very, very strongly for that leadership because we will take your statements.

The full record won't be ready, it is never done overnight, the Q&A part, but your written testimonies especially it'll get very wide distribution. And so I thank you so deeply.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:36 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]



# A P P E N D I X



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

**SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

**Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations  
Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), Chairman**

March 28, 2017

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held by the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations in Room 2200 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 28, 2017

**TIME:** 2:30 p.m.

**SUBJECT:** East Africa's Quiet Famine

**WITNESSES:** Panel I  
Mr. Matthew Nims  
Acting Director  
Office of Food for Peace  
Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance  
U.S. Agency for International Development

Panel II  
Mr. Ken Isaacs  
Vice President  
Programs and Government Relations  
Samaritan's Purse

Mr. Michael Bowers  
Vice President  
Humanitarian Leadership and Response  
Mercy Corps

Mr. Thabani Maphosa  
Vice President for Food Assistance  
World Vision International

Ms. Faustine Wabwire  
Senior Foreign Assistance Policy Advisor  
Bread for the World Institute

**By Direction of the Chairman**

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5921 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.



**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations HEARING

Day Tuesday Date March 28, 2017 Room 2200 Rayburn HOB

Starting Time 2:31 p.m. Ending Time 5:11 p.m.

Recesses 1 (3:15 to 3:51) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_) (\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_)

Presiding Member(s)

*Rep. Chris Smith*

*Check all of the following that apply:*

Open Session   
 Executive (closed) Session   
 Televised

Electronically Recorded (taped)   
 Stenographic Record

TITLE OF HEARING:

*East Africa's Quiet Famine*

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Rep. Karen Bass, Rep. Ami Bera, Rep. Joaquin Castro, Rep. Tom Gurrett, Rep. Dan Donovan, Rep. Tom Suozzi*

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an \* if they are not members of full committee.)*

*Rep. Eliot Engel*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes  No

*(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)*

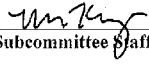
STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

*2017 Bread for the World Hunger Report, submitted by Rep. Chris Smith  
 Statement of Sean Callahan of Catholic Relief Services, submitted by Rep. Chris Smith  
 Statement of the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan, submitted by Rep. Tom Garrett  
 World Vision East Africa Hunger Crisis Overview, submitted by Mr. Thabani Maphosa  
 World Vision Somalia Emergency Appeal, submitted by Mr. Thabani Maphosa  
 World Vision South Sudan Situation Report, submitted by Mr. Thabani Maphosa*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or

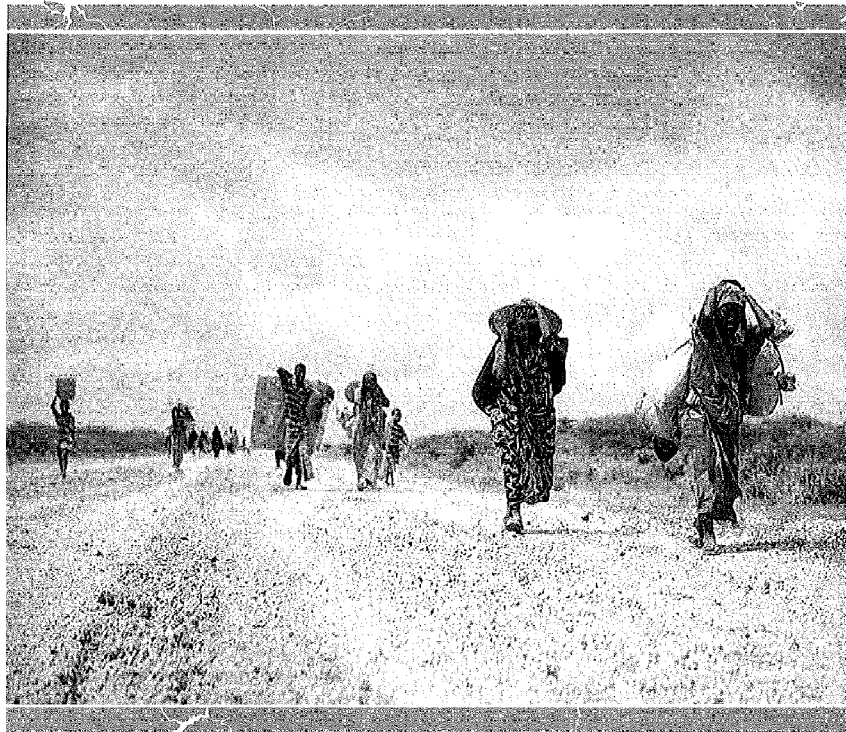
TIME ADJOURNED 5:11 p.m.

  
 Subcommittee Staff Associate

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,  
A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND CHAIRMAN,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTER-  
NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

2017 Hunger Report

## Fragile Environments, Resilient Communities



## Executive Summary

The world has made dramatic progress against hunger and extreme poverty in recent decades. In 1990, approximately one in four people in the world lived with hunger on a daily basis. By 2015, the hunger rate was cut nearly in half and stood at about one in nine. Over the same period, extreme poverty was cut by even more, from one in three people in the world to one in ten.<sup>1</sup>

At no other time in human history has progress against hunger and poverty occurred so rapidly. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided a framework to mobilize global action against hunger and poverty and other development objectives. The MDGs were not the only reason for this dramatic progress but they made a difference. Buoyed by this progress, in September 2015, heads of state and government from around the world adopted a new and much more ambitious set of global goals known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 17 interrelated goals include goals to *end hunger and poverty* by 2030. See Figure ES.1.



### Ending Hunger in Fragile Times and Fragile Places

Recent trends give optimists good reason to believe that ending hunger and poverty is within reach. At the same time, the world faces daunting challenges. Tragedies on an unimaginable scale are occurring in different parts of the world. The wars in Syria and South Sudan and the near famine conditions in places where war and climate change collide are enough to challenge anyone's optimism about ending hunger and poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Syria and South Sudan are among a group of nations the international development community often refer to as fragile states. While there is no universal definition of fragility, these are nations where high rates of hunger and poverty are compounded by civil conflict, poor governance, and vulnerability to climate change. Fragile places present the greatest challenge in ending hunger and poverty.

Conflict is one of the greatest threats to ending hunger. More people die from hunger and disease in conflict zones than from violence.<sup>2</sup> Paul Collier, author of *The Bottom Billion*, describes the effects on nations as "development in reverse."<sup>3</sup> Within two years of the start of the Syrian civil war, the country had lost 35 years of development gains, including 3,000 schools damaged or destroyed, another 2,000 converted to shelters for displaced people, nearly a third of all public health centers destroyed, half the population living in poverty, and half the workforce unemployed.<sup>3</sup>

**Post-conflict societies are more likely to relapse into conflict if hunger remains a major problem.**

The potential for climate change to destabilize countries in some of the most volatile regions of the world is why the U.S. military considers it to be a threat to national security.<sup>4</sup> The international community cannot afford to ignore the challenges in fragile states. Conflicts spill over national borders and threaten regional security, with ramifications for the security of nations around the world, as we've seen repeatedly since the 9/11 attacks in the United States. Fragile states are a breeding ground for terrorism. Violence in Syria and Central America drive refugees and undocumented immigrants into Europe and the United States.

Countries that are governed well have a 30-45 percent lower risk of conflict.<sup>5</sup> While a nation's leaders are the face of governance, state institutions are what make it possible for governments to function and serve the public. Access to health care, education, and other services, especially among groups who have historically been excluded, are important steps towards achieving durable peace. The record shows that post-conflict societies are more likely to relapse into conflict if hunger remains a major problem.<sup>6</sup>

Any country can have fragile regions or communities. Some U.S. communities have poverty rates of 50 percent or more. As a community becomes poorer, there are more and more barriers

Every minute, **24 PEOPLE** leave everything behind to escape war, persecution or terror.

Hunger rates in developing countries in conflict are almost **3x** higher than in other developing countries.

© 2014 World Food Programme

Figure ES.1 The Sustainable Development Goals



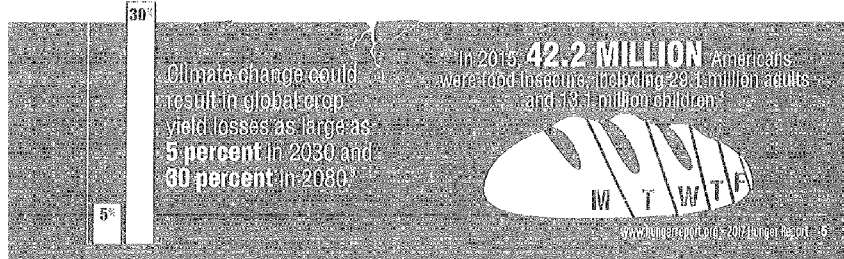
Source: Adapted from United Nations, 2016

to people lifting themselves out of poverty. The difficulties reinforce and amplify each other. A survey of the literature on concentrated poverty shows that the most negative correlates of poverty (e.g., high levels of food insecurity, failing schools, large numbers of youth dropping out, chronic joblessness, and violent crime) generally do not appear before neighborhood poverty rates reach 20 percent, and then become endemic as poverty rates rise to 40 percent or more.<sup>7</sup>

**A Call to Action: Investing in Resilience at Home and Abroad**

Ending hunger is a moral imperative. It is especially so in fragile situations where the odds are stacked against vulnerable people and the barriers that they face are the highest. If we continue on the current path, it is estimated that by 2030, two-thirds of the people who experience hunger will live in fragile states.<sup>8</sup>

The guiding principles of the SDGs are to “leave no one behind” and to “reach the furthest behind first.”<sup>9</sup> The average poverty rate in the countries the World Bank classifies as fragile





Elie Van Houster / USAID

USAID pre-positioned emergency relief supplies in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to ensure rapid deployment to affected communities in advance of Hurricane Matthew in October 2016.

Diplomacy and defense are obviously crucial to ending conflict and securing peace, but much more must be done to prevent crises and to ensure that a short-term crisis today does not turn into a long-term crisis through the intergenerational effects of malnutrition and the disruption of health care and education, especially among vulnerable children. A child in a developing country that is affected by conflict is twice as likely to be hungry and nearly three times as likely to be out of school as a child in a developing country at peace.<sup>15</sup>

The United States government is currently involved in fragile states. The U.S. military is present or assisting in many of these countries, and the United States is the largest contributor to the international humanitarian system. Between 2004 and 2015, humanitarian funding from all donors increased six-fold, from \$3.4 billion to \$21.8 billion, and fragile and conflict-affected countries have been the largest recipients of this assistance.<sup>16</sup> But in spite of this dramatic increase in resources, donors meet less than two-thirds of the annual humanitarian needs.<sup>17</sup> In 2014, and then again in 2015, the World Food Program had to temporarily suspend food aid to millions of refugees because of funding shortfalls.<sup>18</sup>

We need new tools and a new approach that focuses on building resilience through local institutions, so that communities and countries can avoid, cope with, and bounce back from crises. To address the long-term challenges posed by fragility, the United States should take a more comprehensive and balanced approach, with greater investments in diplomacy and humanitarian and development assistance. U.S. global development programs that build resilience in

is 51 percent.<sup>10</sup> The World Bank's 2011 World Development Report, *Conflict, Security, and Development*, noted that no fragile state was on track to achieve any of the MDGs.<sup>11</sup> By 2015, several of these nations had met at least one of the targets, but overall, the record leaves little room for doubt: fragile countries are furthest behind.<sup>12</sup>

Addressing the root causes of fragility now will prevent future conflicts, save lives, build resilience and put the world on a path toward ending hunger. In other words, investments today will reduce the need for humanitarian response and military intervention in the future.

At the beginning of 2016, there were 33 active conflicts around the globe,<sup>13</sup> and the number of people forcibly displaced by conflict had reached 65 million, the highest number since World War II.<sup>14</sup>



## A Focus on Fragility at Bread for the World

*Jordan Deegan, Bread for the World Institute*

Many of the issues and legislation that Bread for the World works on are important to people living in fragile states. From food aid reform to poverty-focused development assistance, Bread for the World faithfully advocates for policies and programs that assist the most vulnerable people and their countries.

The Global Food Security Act (GFSA), passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in July of 2016, includes a provision to authorize emergency food assistance and food disaster response to populations affected by manmade and natural disasters. GFSA will ensure that millions of people in fragile and conflict-affected countries receive the humanitarian assistance that they need. Bread for the World also pushes for greater flexibility in U.S. food aid programs so that in a crisis aid can reach those in need faster and respond to emergency conditions in the most appropriate, cost-effective way.

The U.S. global food security plan mandated by the GFSA promises to expand USAID assistance for agriculture and nutrition in fragile states. GFSA also will make sure that all U.S. global food security programs build the capacity of local communities to better withstand shocks due to conflict or climate change. GFSA was a focus of both the 2016 and 2018 Bread for the World Lobby Days, and Bread members made thousands of phone calls and sent thousands of emails to their members of Congress, wrote support for the bill, and many engaged key members of Congress in more personal ways by visiting them in their district offices and on Capitol Hill.

The Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act (FATAA) was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in July 2016. FATAA focuses on tracking foreign assistance spending and programs across all U.S. government agencies and will help make U.S. humanitarian and development assistance more accountable and effective in fragile states. Bread for the World and its members have been advocates of foreign assistance reform since the organization was founded and foreign assistance reform has been the focus of three Of the Mind Matters campaigns since 2009.

Bread for the World and its members have helped achieve increases in funding for poverty-focused development assistance (PFDA) in each of the last five years. PFDA supports programs that help build resilience such as agricultural development, nutrition, education, and global health in low-income countries, as well as those programs that respond to humanitarian crises such as violent conflict, natural disasters, or famine. In addition to ongoing, yearly advocacy on the federal budget and appropriations for PFDA, Bread members focused on increasing funding for PFDA in four Of the Mind Matters campaigns over the last decade. This means that hundreds of thousands of personal letters and phone calls have reached members of Congress from Bread for the World in support of increasing funding for PFDA in recent years.

Bread for the World has also addressed budget issues at the macro level, working with others to maintain a circle of protection around programs focused on people in poverty in the United States and worldwide. Being in the deep across-the-board cuts in poverty-focused programs has made it possible to pursue increases in international humanitarian and development assistance.

For more than forty years, Bread for the World's advocacy has helped to strengthen the U.S. government's leadership in reducing hunger and malnutrition in some of the most fragile places in the world.

*Jordan Deegan is the International Policy and Advocacy Director at Bread for the World Institute.*

**Bread for the World advocates for policies and programs to reduce hunger and malnutrition in some of the most fragile places in the world.**



Joseph Keenan / Bread for the World

Two-thirds of people in the world who are hungry live in rural areas and earn a living as farmers or landless agricultural workers.

but they come and go without being brought to scale. We need a long-term commitment to resolve the many interconnected problems in high-poverty communities. There is no one-size-fits-all or a single all-encompassing policy solution. To aggressively reduce the rate of concentrated poverty, policymakers will need to use all tools at their disposal.

Bread for the World welcomes the ambitious agenda of the SDGs. We believe ending hunger and poverty by 2030 is within reach in all countries. We recognize that fragile environments present major challenges. We also know that with political will focused on the challenges we can succeed.

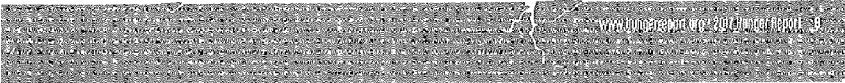
countries that are vulnerable to fragility are underfunded, especially relative to defense spending, and limited in scope. The legislation that governs U.S. foreign assistance was written in a different era for different challenges. Programming lacks flexibility, making it difficult to work across sectors and to address diverse needs on the ground. It is in our interest to take a pragmatic, forward-thinking and sustainable approach to fragility. This includes our engagement with international institutions. The SDGs and the Paris climate agreement in December 2015, which produced a global framework to fight climate change, are the most impressive displays of collective action to date. The annual conference on climate change provides a forum for all countries in the world to come together to address perhaps the biggest long-term development challenge facing humanity. U.S.

leadership at the global level can help bring people together and can leverage resources from other partners.

To end hunger in the United States by 2030, public policies and resources must be more focused on reducing concentrated poverty. In 2014, 55 percent of all people in poverty lived in a community where at least 20 percent of the population was poor—up from 43.5 percent in 2000.<sup>19</sup> Some small-scale demonstration projects have shown promise,

| MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY  |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>INTERNATIONAL:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a whole-of-government plan to coordinate and expand U.S. government engagement in fragile states.</li> <li>Work with the international community to increase official development assistance to conflict-affected and fragile countries, including through multilateral mechanisms such as the World Bank's International Development Association.</li> <li>Work with the international community to ensure timely and reliable funding to respond to crises through bilateral programs and international organizations.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulfill U.S. commitments to the Paris climate agreement adopted in December 2015, including through the Green Climate Fund.</li> </ul> <p><b>DOMESTIC:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set a medium-term goal to end concentrated poverty in the United States, defined as no more than 20 percent of the population within a community, by 2025.</li> </ul> |

| OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS HUNGER REPORT   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>INTRODUCTION: THE FRAGILITY CHALLENGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow for much greater flexibility in how USAID partners with governments and civil society in fragile countries.</li> <li>Increase funding to address the growing gap between humanitarian needs and resources.</li> <li>Strengthen coordination of humanitarian and development activities to build resilience to shocks and stresses.</li> <li>Invest in social protection and rural development with a focus on small-scale farmers, especially women farmers.</li> <li>Help countries build more effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions for all.</li> </ul> <p><b>CHAPTER 1: CONFLICT FRAGILE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all people who are forcibly displaced are protected and their basic needs met.</li> <li>Provide more and better support to countries and communities hosting people who are forcibly displaced.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the capacity of national institutions in fragile states to deliver public services.</li> <li>Invest in sectors, such as agriculture and infrastructure, shown to have the greatest potential to reduce poverty and generate large numbers of jobs.</li> <li>Recognize and protect the legitimate land tenure rights of vulnerable groups.</li> </ul> <p><b>CHAPTER 2: CLIMATE FRAGILE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in climate-smart social protection strategies so the people most vulnerable to climate change are not forced to adopt negative coping strategies.</li> <li>Strengthen the capacity of national and local partners to prepare for and respond to natural disasters.</li> <li>Make gender equality a core principle of all U.S. climate change assistance.</li> <li>Identify guiding principles and institutional frameworks to prepare for the relocation of large groups of people displaced by climate change.</li> </ul> | <p><b>CHAPTER 3: U.S. FRAGILE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide housing assistance to all families with incomes of less than 30 percent of area median income.</li> <li>Extend the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to childless workers.</li> <li>Reform the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to ensure sufficient fooding, increase states' accountability, and better connect families to child care and job training services.</li> <li>Create a public jobs program focused on connecting workers who have barriers to employment with in-demand job skills.</li> <li>Reform the criminal justice system by decriminalizing poverty, ending for-profit policing, and reducing barriers to work for formerly incarcerated individuals.</li> </ul> |



[www.hungerreport.gov/2021/hunger-report](https://www.hungerreport.gov/2021/hunger-report)

The complete version of this document can be accessed at: <https://go.usa.gov/x58WC>

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,  
A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND CHAIRMAN,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTER-  
NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**Testimony Submitted by Sean Callahan,  
President and CEO of Catholic Relief Services  
to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Africa, Global Health, Global Human  
Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee**

**Hearing on “East Africa’s Quiet Famine”  
March 28, 2017**

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Bass, on January 25, 2017, the Famine Early Warning Network (FEWSNET) issued a press release highlighting the impending emergency food situations in South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen, warning that famine was possible in all four countries. The United Nations declares a famine only when 1) at least 20 per cent of households in an area face extreme food shortages with a limited ability to cope, 2) acute malnutrition rates exceed 30 per cent, and 3) the death rate exceeds two persons per day per 10,000 persons. By the time a famine has been declared, it is too late for many. On February 20th, famine was declared in Unity State of South Sudan.

As the international humanitarian and development agency of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Relief Services has operations in three of the countries listed in the FEWSNET press release – South Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria. We are actively responding to needs on the ground in these countries and are working to further scale up our response. The magnitude of the challenge these countries collectively represent require a substantial and immediate response by the United States and the international community. We urge Congress and the Administration to channel resources to the region to ensure emergency needs are met and the instability they represent does not spread.

We must recognize though, that conflict is the cause of, or has exacerbated, the food insecurity in each of these countries. While there are food security and other development challenges in the countries and regions surrounding these conflict zones, those challenges are orders of magnitude less severe. Conflict, poor governance and gross corruption these countries in crisis add burdens to neighboring countries – for instance, 2.7 million people from South Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria are presently living as refugees in neighboring countries. These crises also create ungoverned spaces that offer armed actors hostile to U.S. interests safe havens, which breed conditions for further instability in the region. To address the underlying causes of these food security emergencies, efforts to build peace and promote good governance in these countries must also be prioritized.

**South Sudan**

For the last three years, South Sudan has been embroiled in a civil war between its two largest ethnic groups, and tens of thousands have died in violent clashes between government and rebel forces. This violence has interfered with normal food production in the country, as farmers have abandoned their fields and fled to avoid becoming victims of violence. An estimated 1.9 million are Internally Displaced People (IDPs), and at least 1.6 million people have been forced to flee to other countries as refugees and asylum seekers, including 813,000 to neighboring Uganda.

The instability caused by the civil war has resulted in severe food shortages and hyperinflation of 800%. Staple food prices have recently seen spikes of more than 10 times five-year averages in several key

markets, making food difficult to purchase when it is available. Famine was declared on February 20th in two counties in Unity State (Leer and Mayendit), with an elevated likelihood that famine will occur in two additional counties. Affecting approximately 100,000 people, the famine has forced many to scrounge for any form of sustenance, like water lilies. It is estimated that over one million children under age five are acutely malnourished and last month 12,558 children were treated for severe acute malnutrition. In fact, seven out of the country's ten states have reached the emergency threshold of 15 percent global acute malnutrition. While food assistance is important, livelihood and development support is critical to prevent further household asset depletion and reduce negative coping mechanisms. Overall, an estimated 4.9 million people (42% of the population) are severely food insecure, and this number is expected to increase to 5.5 million by July.

In addition to food insecurity and malnutrition, the spread of disease is also of concern as people are unable to access basic health services and live in makeshift conditions as they flee violence. Health actors are reporting increased cases of cholera and measles. As of March 3rd, there were a total of 5,300 suspected cholera cases, including 122 deaths, since the initial case was identified last summer. Additionally, more than 1.3 million malaria cases have been reported across South Sudan since the beginning of 2016, an increase of 350,000 reported cases during the same period in 2015. Malaria continues to be the main cause of morbidity and mortality of children under five in South Sudan.

Catholic Relief Services implements two United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded programs; the Resilience Food Security Program, funded through the Office of Food for Peace (FFP), and the Livelihoods Recovery and Resilience Program, funded jointly by FFP and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). Together, these programs reach 800,000 beneficiaries in parts of Lake State and throughout Jonglei State – the largest and most populous State in South Sudan. They provide an integrated programming approach that includes food security, water and sanitation, livelihoods, and nutrition programming, that together help communities be more resilient to the shocks their country is experiencing. A key component of the Jonglei Food Security Program is the distribution of U.S. food aid to needy families in exchange for work on community projects like road habilitation and irrigation channels. Overall, this assistance is helping to protect people from the worst effects of the crises. Catholic Relief Services has also partnered with the World Food Program (WFP) to deliver emergency food supplies to 143,000 people in remote parts of Jonglei State, at times using WFP's airlift capacity to parachute food supplies into otherwise inaccessible areas. Catholic Relief Services is also using our own private funding to implement an anti-cholera program in Lake State, reaching 16,000 individuals with hygiene promotion, borehole rehabilitation, and latrine construction. We are also using funding from Caritas Austria to provide emergency food assistance to 10,000 people in Upper Nile State.

### **Somalia**

In 2011, Somalia experienced famine that claimed the lives of 260,000 people. Recent years have not been kind. The 2016 Deyr rainy season (October-December) was late and did not benefit most of the country, resulting in significant water availability deficits across the country. While the poor rains in 2016 were largely attributable to the effects of La Nina, many parts of Somalia have experienced drought conditions for two or more years. Prolonged drought conditions have adversely impacted pasture, water supply, livestock, and crops, leading to a large depletion of vegetation cover across the country. Approximately half the population of Somalia, 6.2 million people, need urgent humanitarian assistance. As many as 363,000 children under the age of five are acutely malnourished and 71,000 are at risk of dying. Nutrition support is urgently needed to keep them alive. The Somali government declared a

national disaster due to drought on February 28th, and without assistance, there is a strong likelihood of famine in some of the worst drought-affected areas of the country.

It is estimated that approximately 1.1 million people are internally displaced, with the majority being women and children living in camps in urban centers. High rates of malnutrition are being reported in children at these camps. Our assessments in Bay, Bakool, and Gedo States in the Southwest of Somalia indicate loss of livelihoods, limited access to food and drinking water, and limited access to basic services such as health, education, and sanitation, all of which is driving more people from their rural homes into IDP camps in city centers. The situation is worsened by some 250,000 Somali refugees returning from Yemen as they flee the violence and hunger in that country. The United Nations has appealed to the international community for \$864 million, but thus far only 31 percent of this funding has been secured.

Catholic Relief Services' current programming in Somalia is concentrated in the regions South and West of Somalia's capital Mogadishu, which has traditionally been the breadbasket of the country. Catholic Relief Services implements three USAID funded projects, and is permitted to operate in Somalia under the USAID's humanitarian license granted by the Office of Foreign Asset Control. The first project, Program for Enhanced Resilience in Somalia (PROGRESS), jointly funded by USAID/FFP, OFDA and the U.S. Mission in Somalia, is designed to increase household resilience to recurrent shocks. The project works to improve smallholder farmers' production and marketing skills like introducing new farming techniques that are more water conscious, provides vouchers to needy families to buy necessary food items in local markets, organizes saving and internal lending groups, builds water access points, and works with communities to develop participatory disaster risk assessments and corresponding plans to mitigate those risks. The OFDA funded Humanitarian Assistance for Conflict and Drought-Affected IDPs and Host Populations provides support to IDPs and host communities to provide basic nutrition, health and protection services, ultimately making it easier for host communities to care for IDPs. The third project is a small pilot project which is testing electronic cash transfer modalities. Catholic Relief Services Somalia programs in FY16 reached 289,000 direct beneficiaries and 646,000 indirect beneficiaries. These ongoing programs provide Catholic Relief Services the capacity to quickly scale up emergency response, and Catholic Relief Services recently dedicated use of \$300,000 in private funds in this way to provide additional assistance to 2100 households.

### Nigeria

For the last seven years Boko Haram has staged attacks in northeast Nigeria killing more than 13,000 people. Boko Haram has planted bombs in public places, abducted women and girls, forcefully conscripted young men and boys, destroyed villages and farmland, seized livestock, and forced markets and farms to shut down amid the violence. In some areas, people have been unable to plant or harvest for three years. As a result, an estimated 7.1 million people are experiencing severe hunger and more than 515,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition.

At least 1.76 million people are internally-displaced in Nigeria by the violence, with the vast majority living with host families, and the remainder in camps, makeshift shelters and unfinished buildings. Because the crises in northeast Nigeria has spread to neighboring countries in the Lake Chad basin, including Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, there are also approximately 630,000 IDPs across these countries. Families who have fled lack essential supplies like soap, cooking sets and clothes, while sanitation and hygiene conditions are dire. The situation is compounded by overcrowding and limited access to health facilities. Recent reports indicate increased sexual and gender-based violence, particularly among young girls and women. The violence has also forced over 200,000 Nigerians to flee to neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and

Niger. On March 2, the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria signed a tripartite agreement with United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) requesting the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees living in Cameroon.

Catholic Relief Services is implementing a USAID/FFP program in Borno and Yobe Provinces that provides over 10,000 households with monthly e-vouchers to purchase food and non-food items, and another OFDA program in Borno province provides shelter, water infrastructure rehabilitation and hygiene promotion activities for over 14,000 households. Under an existing USAID food security project, Catholic Relief Services is expanding agriculture and livelihood programming to southern Borno and Adamawa states. In addition to USAID resources, Catholic Relief Services has also received funding from Latter Day Saints Charities and Caritas Germany for water and sanitation work.

#### **Other Challenges of Note**

While the focus of this hearing is rightfully on the ongoing food emergencies in South Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria, we must bear in mind other current and likely situations that require a U.S. and international response. For instance, close to 2.7 million refugees have fled to countries neighboring these conflict zones. As noted earlier, Uganda alone is hosting 813,000 South Sudanese refugees, with 2,000 new arrivals daily. Uganda has recently surpassed Ethiopia as the country hosting the most refugees in Africa (note, Ethiopia is hosting around 811,000 refugees, with about 350,000 from South Sudan and 250,000 from Somalia). Governments like that of Uganda are providing what services they can, but they do not have the resources themselves to provide needed food, water and other supplies to maintain these refugee populations. They rely on United Nations bodies like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and aid implementers like Catholic Relief Services to meet the basic needs of the refugee populations.

The challenge to serve refugee populations is also great for countries like Kenya, which is suffering from the same drought affecting Somalia. There, approximately 3 million people need emergency food assistance. While the Government of Kenya has pledged \$99 million of its own resources to respond, this is less than half of the projected \$208 million required and has led the Kenyan government to issue an appeal to the international community to cover the balance. These domestic challenges come on the heels of last year's announced closure of the Dadaab refugee camp that has accommodated around 300,000 Somali refugees for several years. Recent reports indicate Somali refugees are beginning to move into Kenya again, underscoring the need to support Kenya in both its drought response and the assistance being provided Somali refugees in the country.

Another concern we must keep in mind is the possibility of another El Nino event. Last year, El Nino caused what was described as the worst drought in a generation in Ethiopia and across many Southern African in countries like Madagascar, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. In Ethiopia alone, over 10 million people required emergency food assistance, and Catholic Relief Services played a significant role in drought response there and in other impacted countries thanks to foresight of USAID programs (see below for additional discussion of this). Some forecast models indicate an increasing chance of another El Nino developing by the end of the year. Food and monetary reserves in many of these El Nino impacted countries have been exhausted, and if another El Nino occurs later this year the strain on resources would likely be unprecedented.

### **Humanitarian Response Must Cover Multiple Needs**

While it is the picture of starving children that draws media attention to the unfolding emergencies, as aid implementers we know hunger is only one of the challenges facing people in these crises. Our assistance must provide more than just food to the people we are aiding. For instance, people who have fled their homes in search of food, or security, left most of the of their limited possessions behind. In their desperation, they have made long treks across inhospitable land, usually by foot. When they arrive to displacement camps, or urban centers, they have little more than the clothes on their backs. For these people, meeting basic needs in addition to food and water includes shelter, clothing, basic hygiene products, cooking and kitchen wares, water storage canisters, and host of other supplies.

Most often the lack of food is accompanied by a lack of clean drinking water. Driven by extreme thirst, people will drink water they know is contaminated. This leads to a host of water-borne diseases, including cholera, diarrhea, and parasites, all of which require immediate responses. Additionally, efforts supporting and improving sanitation practices – latrine construction and handwashing – are essential to preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

Refugees and IDPs are also easy targets for violence and exploitation. Rape and other gender-based violence are common in displacement camps. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation – put in the horrific position of trading sex for food and water, or being targeted for human trafficking. Providing protection for vulnerable people and safe spaces for children are necessary to deter exploitation of this kind.

In many of these cases as well, we know that people will not be able to return to their homes for a long time. For these conflict-affected families, we must look at more mid-term solutions with alternative livelihoods and a means to provide for themselves.

### **U.S. Humanitarian Resources Must be Robust and Reliable**

The United States leads the international community in responding to crises, like the ones threatening famine in Africa, as it has historically been the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance. This moral leadership motivates and guides other countries to contribute their fair share. United States funds humanitarian assistance primarily through three main accounts – 1) International Disaster Assistance, 2) P.L. 480, Food for Peace, and 3) Migration and Refugee Assistance.

The International Disaster Assistance account funds USAID/OFDA, which provides funding for non-food items and services to people in emergency need, including IDPs and refugees. These non-food items include things like shelter, water, hygiene kits, protection, livelihood opportunities, livestock support, and the like. OFDA also supports agricultural recovery by funding emergency seed distributions, which is commonly provided to small farmers who would normally save their own seed for replanting, but lose everything when rains and their harvests fail.

Using a combination of resources from International Disaster Assistance and P.L. 480, emergency food assistance is managed by USAID/FFP. Under the auspices of the Emergency Food Security Program, recently authorized in the Global Food Security Act, FFP utilizes International Disaster Assistance funding to finance cooperative agreements for cash and voucher based emergency food assistance, while also drawing on P.L. 480 to finance cooperative agreements to purchase, ship, and distribute U.S. commodities in emergency programs. Implementing partners like Catholic Relief Services work with FFP to determine



the optimal form of food assistance in a given situation, and FFP then uses resources from the corresponding account. In some cases, like in South Sudan, the import of U.S. commodities is the right choice because there is very little food available due to violence induced interruptions in production. In countries like Somalia and Nigeria, voucher and cash based food assistance is a better option because food is still available in functioning markets.

The Migration and Refugee Assistance account funds the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, which provides emergency aid to refugees and IDPs to return home, re-integrate into their communities, or resettle in third countries. Significant amounts from this account are being channeled through international bodies like UNHCR and UNICEF, to provide assistance to the 1.8 million displaced from Nigeria, 1.7 million from South Sudan, and 1.2 million from Somalia.

We appreciate that Congress has been responsive to the great needs being met by these accounts. Many millions of people are alive today because of this generosity. In the FY2017 Continuing Resolution, overall funding for the International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee Assistance accounts saw increases that put funding at \$3.41 billion and \$3.35 billion, respectively. Note, while these accounts are important contributors to the famine response in Africa, they are also heavily relied on to assist Syrian war refugees. Also, in the FY2016 Omnibus the P.L. 480 account was funded at \$1.716 billion, which included a one-time \$250 million increase to respond to emergency conditions seen at the time. Given the critical roles that the International Disaster Assistance, P.L. 480, and Migration and Refugee Assistance accounts play, we urge Congress to oppose any reductions in funding to these accounts in FY17 or FY18. In fact, we believe the magnitude of these emergencies require funding way beyond these levels. As such, we ask Congress to consider providing immediate and significant supplemental funding in FY17 to address these famines and famine-like conditions. We know what works and what will save lives, and we know we must act now if we want to avert the worst that these food security crises can bring.

#### **Mechanisms to Quickly Scale Up Response**

To its credit, USAID has explored various ways to build capacity to scale up response during food security emergencies. In our own experience, the clearest example of this is the Joint Emergency Operation Program (JEOP) in Ethiopia. The JEOP is a multiyear emergency food aid program funded through P.L. 480. In a typical year, Catholic Relief Services and its partners provide emergency food rations to about 700,000 people. In addition, the program is designed specifically to quickly scale up because it has an established pipeline of food coming into the country, partnerships have been created port authorities that help move food quickly into the country, warehouses to store food are reserved, and a network of on-the-ground relationships with local leaders that facilitate food disbursement activities was created. In 2016, this capacity to scale up was tapped when Ethiopia was struck by a major drought caused by El Nino, resulting in over 10 million people in need of food assistance. Catholic Relief Services' food distributions were quickly ramped up to cover more than 2.9 million people, helping to avert famine even in the depth of Ethiopia's food security crises.

We have also seen USAID use the footprint of Development Food Aid Programs (DFAPs) to provide emergency response, which have had invaluable results. DFAPs are five-year multisectoral development programs funded by P.L. 480, which target highly vulnerable communities. In South Sudan, Catholic Relief Services operated the Jonglei Food Security Program as a DFAP before violence broke out there. When the conflict spread to Jonglei State, we were given flexibility to shift to emergency response as conditions in target communities no longer allowed for development activities. Today, the program is now called the Resilience Food Security Program and is a hybrid of emergency and development programming. In

both capacities, the program injects much needed food into the region and has been a factor in keeping conditions in Jonglei from deteriorating. More recently USAID has begun integrating “crises modifiers” into DFAP awards that anticipate emergencies and allow implementers to shift development resources if the need arises. Utilizing this model, Catholic Relief Services moved resources from its DFAPs in Madagascar and Malawi to scale up food-for-asset programming and unconditional food transfers, when they too saw El Nino droughts last year. Congress should continue to encourage USAID to experiment and develop other innovative ways of scaling up emergency response, while maintaining investments in long-term economic development.

#### **Peacebuilding, Diplomatic Response, and Development**

Recurring conflict has been the main driver of the food insecurity we are witnessing in South Sudan and Nigeria. The international community has a responsibility to meet the humanitarian needs of the victims of violence in these conflicts, but it must also work to address the underlying reasons for conflict, and thus must respond with efforts to promote a lasting, just, and durable peace between conflicted parties. Building such a peace requires long-term political and diplomatic engagement, as well as commitments from the affected parties at grassroots levels.

South Sudan serves to illustrate the enormous challenge of peace building. In that war-torn country, Catholic Relief Services partners with the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), to implement a \$6 million grant from USAID designed to launch a National Action Plan for Peace predicated on three pillars: advocacy, neutral forums and reconciliation. In its advocacy work, SSCC aims to change the narrative of South Sudan’s culture of violence by sending Bishops to meet with leaders in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya seeking advice, buy-in and support for concrete steps towards peace. They also have reached out to the influential South Sudanese Diaspora. Under its neutral forums pillar, the SSCC creates for militia leaders, women, chiefs/elders and youth to share their experiences, grievances, regrets, and hopes with one another without fear of retribution. And finally, under the reconciliation pillar, the SSCC is guided by the Committee for National Reconciliation, Peace and Healing to training peace mobilizers to work at the grassroots level to help war-torn communities to reconcile.

Similarly, in norther Nigeria, Catholic Relief Services strengthens social cohesion in deeply divided communities using a methodology we call “the 3Bs – Binding, Bonding, and Bridging.” Binding activities provide space for internal reflection and personal transformation, including trauma healing. Bonding activities strengthen relations within respective identity groups through dialogue and collaboration with other members of the group. Bridging activities bring together oppositional and adversarial groups to interact purposefully in a safe space to promote mutual understanding and trust so that they can overcome their differences, engage in mutually beneficial activities, and jointly construct a shared vision of a peaceful future for their communities and society.

We strongly recommend that the United States continue to invest in efforts like these to make and build peace. The path to peace is fraught with setbacks and challenges, but it is the only path that will bring an end to the humanitarian catastrophes we are witnessing. Further, to support these community-driven efforts, the United States must have a robust diplomatic engagement with leaders in these countries, with their neighbors and with the international community to convince them to support peaceful resolutions to these conflicts. To ensure the United States is diplomatically engaged in this way, we urge the Administration to nominate qualified individuals for key diplomatic posts in these countries and in the region.

Once peace is established, good governance and development investments will be need to avoid these kinds of life-threatening insecurities. The United States must work with other actors in the international community to help build effective systems of governance characterized by inclusive politics, effective delivery of services, uncorrupt judicial systems, and accountability to all populations. Disputes over fair treatment, resource allocation, and unmet grievances all have played roles in the conflicts we are focusing on. Building good, responsive governments, and providing these governments the support they need to rebuild and provide for the needs of their people, which development programming can support, is the path to a more stable situation for each of these countries.

#### Conclusion

Pope Francis, in response to the ongoing food insecurity crises in South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, and Yemen, recently said, "Now more than ever there should be a commitment by everyone to not just talk but contribute food aid and allow it to reach suffering populations." He voiced his concerns that millions of people were being "condemned to death by hunger."

Catholic Relief Services and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops greatly appreciate Congress' past support and global leadership in providing resources for disaster assistance, food aid, migration and refugee assistance, and peacebuilding. As an implementer of U.S. humanitarian and development assistance, we know these programs have saved countless lives and are essential to the continued survival of the people of these war-torn countries. We also note that U.S. funding has helped us leverage the private resources made available to us to respond to these challenges, which has allowed us to extend lifesaving aid to even more.

We urge Congress to continue its moral leadership by robustly supporting those accounts that deliver this aid to the millions of people in South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, Yemen, and in the surrounding countries. If these people are to survive, not only must we continue to provide the food, shelter, water, and basic supplies made available through these accounts, a rapid and immediate scale up of this assistance is necessary. In the face of the unprecedented number of people suffering violence and hunger, anything short would surely lead to famine. We commend USAID's efforts to find innovative ways of rapid scale up, and hope to see further examples in the future. Furthermore, a refocusing on peacebuilding and governance is necessary to attack root causes of famine and insecurity in the region. Until we double our efforts to alleviate conflict and promote peace, the current 'quiet' crises we face will only repeat themselves and grow louder.

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE THOMAS A. GARRETT,  
JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

**Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan**

Washington D.C.



سفارة جمهورية السودان  
واشنطن

**Sudan's Government response to the Famine and  
Humanitarian Crisis in the Republic of South Sudan.**

The recent serious and positive engagement between Sudan and the United States of America in the last two years specifically the last nine months, has achieved significant changes and reached vital goals of their mutual interests and addressed numerous areas of genuine concerns. The five tracks plan that worked out by the two countries has covered very important issues including counter terrorism, secession of hostilities, counter LRA, humanitarian assistance and situation in the Republic of South Sudan. All those issues have been addressed in very efficient technical manner through the professional relevant authorities in the two countries in term of strengthening the bilateral relations between Sudan and USA, along side with addressing some regional and international issues of concern.

Regarding the humanitarian situation in the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of Sudan remains fully committed to assist in alleviating the burden of humanitarian crisis and the dire famine situation from the shoulder of our brothers and sisters in South Sudan. We share with them their needs and demands for security and stability. As of today Sudan is hosting 560,000 refugees from South Sudan who fled the country as a result of war, in addition to more than 1 million who are residing in Sudan as foreign citizens.

There is tremendous endeavor and efforts have been exerted by the Government of Sudan to respond to the ongoing famine and humanitarian crises in South Sudan, so it can be elaborated as follows:

1. Sudan has granted 2,500 metric tons of sorghum in addition to tents and food supplies to people of South Sudan.
2. His Excellency President Omar Hassan Ahmed Albashir has granted 10,000 metric tons of sorghum as an immediate response to the threat of famine in South Sudan.
3. The government of the Sudan has implemented the directives issued by his Excellency President Omar Hassan Ahmed Albashir to open new corridors on the borders to distribute the humanitarian aid in the affected areas by famine in South Sudan.
4. Sudan's Government has extended the tripartite Humanitarian Aid Agreement signed with the UN and Government of South Sudan to allow the delivery of 65,000 metric tons of humanitarian aid by the (WFP) across its territory to the needy people in affected areas by famine in South Sudan.
5. The Humanitarian Aid Commission in Sudan as Governmental Department is in full coordination with the Sudanese Council of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) to mobilize their partners inside Sudan to facilitate Relief and food supplies distribution in South Sudan.
6. To accelerate the humanitarian aid process and reach out to the needy people, the Government of Sudan has agreed with (WFP) to buy food supplies from Sudanese markets.
7. The Government of Sudan issued directives to form a national committee under the chairmanship of Sudan's former

President field Marshal Abd Elrahman Swar Aldhab to assist those who are affected by famine and to create another committee to enumerate South Sudanese Refugees in Sudan so that they can be provided with basic necessities.

In recognition of what Sudan has offered, as part of its efforts, to help addressing the famine crises in South Sudan, the The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Ms. Marta Ruedas, issued statement on 03/26/2017 in which she welcomed the decision by the Government of Sudan to open a new humanitarian corridor for food aid to be delivered by the (WFP) from El Obeid in central Sudan to serve 100,000 people in Unity State, South Sudan who are enduring famine (a copy of the statement is attached).

Based on the cooperation in various areas between the two countries, Sudan is looking forward to work closely with the United States of America to maximize the benefits of mutual interests and help lasting peace and stability in the region.

March 28, 2017

**Statement attributable to the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan,  
 Ms. Marta Ruedas, on Sudan opening a new humanitarian corridor for food aid into  
 famine-struck South Sudan**

**Khartoum, 26 March 2017.** The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Ms. Marta Ruedas, today welcomed the decision by the Government of Sudan to open a new humanitarian corridor for food aid to be delivered by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) from El Obeid in central Sudan to Bentiu, a town in Unity State, South Sudan, where 100,000 people are enduring famine amid a deepening humanitarian crisis across the country.

"By opening this cross-border corridor, the Government of Sudan is showing its commitment to the people of South Sudan and further strengthening cooperation with the international community to pull South Sudan back from a widening famine that could affect another 1 million people," said Ms. Ruedas. "This decision also comes at a critical time just before South Sudan's rainy season, which starts in May and usually renders these roads impassable."

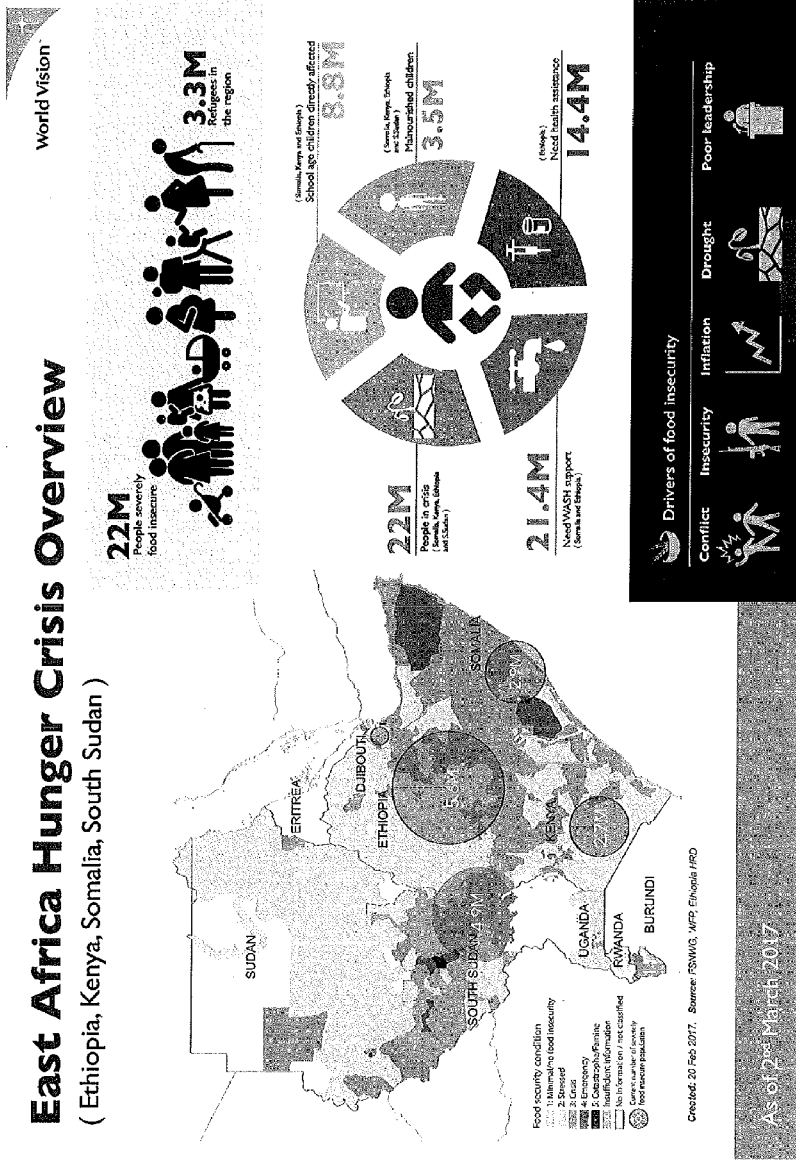
This week, WFP will be moving an initial delivery of 11,000 metric tons of sorghum – including 1,000 metric tons donated by the Government of Sudan – in seven convoys of 30 to 40 trucks, which is enough to feed 300,000 people for three months. The convoys will take up to four days to complete the 500km journey. The humanitarian corridor will not only allow for the timely delivery of the food aid, but will also help reduce reliance on air operations, which cost six to seven times as much as moving food by river and road.

At least 7.5 million people across South Sudan – almost two thirds of the population – need humanitarian assistance. Sudan is also currently hosting over 350,000 South Sudanese refugees, who have arrived since the conflict erupted in December 2013.

\*\*\*

For further information, please contact Samantha Newport, Chief, Communication & Information Section, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Sudan ([newport@un.org](mailto:newport@un.org) / +249 912 174 454).

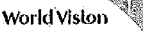
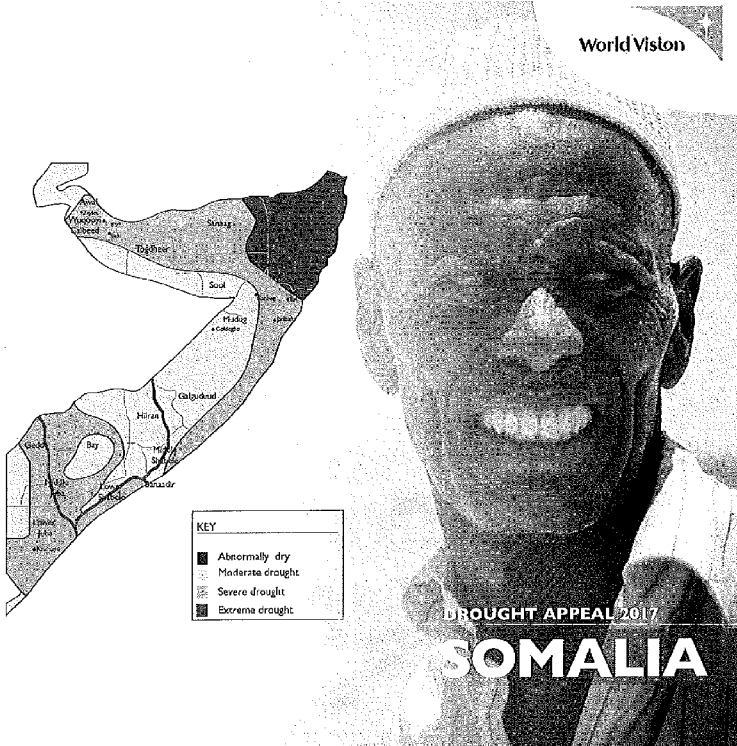
MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY MR. THABANI MAPHOSA, VICE-PRESIDENT FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE, WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL





MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY MR. THABANI MAPHOSA, VICE-PRESIDENT FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE, WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL

EMERGENCY APPEAL

**DROUGHT APPEAL 2017**  
**SOMALIA**

**World Vision Somalia appeal**

World Vision is seeking US\$18.5 million to provide life-saving assistance to 530,000 drought affected people in Puntland, Somaliland, South West State and Jubaland between January – December 2017.

**KEY WY SOMALIA MESSAGES**

- Hundreds of thousands of children and their families need immediate life-saving assistance to have access to food, water, medicine and other basic services essential for their survival.
- Immediate action is needed to respond to millions of Somalis facing starvation and to reverse the alarming malnutrition levels currently affecting 322,350 children under-5 years who are acutely malnourished and over 57,140 who are severely malnourished.
- Urgent efforts are needed to relieve human suffering and strengthen the resilience and self-recovery capacity of drought-affected communities throughout the country.

The complete version of this document can be accessed at: <https://go.usa.gov/x58WF>

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY MR. THABANI MAPHOSA, VICE-PRESIDENT FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE, WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL

**WORLD VISION SOUTH SUDAN  
REGIONAL HUNGER RESPONSE  
SITUATION REPORT NO.1  
MARCH, 2017**




**KEY MESSAGES**

- Due to fighting that broke out in early February near Malakal town, close to 30,000 individuals have fled north to Kodok and Aburoch in Fashoda County in search of safety and humanitarian services. On February 28th, 28 aid workers were forced to evacuate the famine hit county of Mayendit due to armed conflict in the immediate area. At the time of writing, humanitarians access is still denied.
- The total number of South Sudanese displaced due to the conflict stands at more than 3.5 million.
- On February 21, famine was declared in two counties in South Sudan, Leer and Mayentit. Ongoing armed conflict and widespread general insecurity, economic shock, market failure, and access restrictions for on civilian and humanitarian interventions have resulted in a compounding affect leaving a record 4.9 million individuals experiencing sever food insecurity. If the situation remains the same, the number of food Insecura will rise to 5.5 million country wide.
- On February 22nd, The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for South Sudan cited the need for USD 1.6 billion for the humanitarian community to reach the 5.4 million considered the most vulnerable to the overall current humanitarian crisis. However, the total number of individuals who are in need of humanitarian and protection services far more. While interventions aimed at reaching those experiencing famine conditions in South Sudan must be a priority, stakeholders must not lose sight of the wider needs of the 7.5 million individuals in need of humanitarian and protection services across the country.

**HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OVERVIEW**


- Ongoing conflict, denial of humanitarian access, and the accelerated rise in general insecurity across the country continue the primary factors contributing famine conditions in South Sudan. As always, children are the most vulnerable to the affects of conflict. Children who suffer from moderate acute malnutrition are 2.5 times more likely to die than a well-nourished child if they don't receive treatment. If the malnutrition is severe, they are 9 times more likely to perish. In February alone, World Vision teams operating in the conflict affected areas across the country reached 24,129 children under 5 with 143 metric tones of CSB+-. As the needs continue to rise, World Vision is preparing to scale-up its response to the famine affected areas of the country with a hybrid Mobil response providing nutrition and protection interventions.

**RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS**




**140**  
women cured and discharged from TSFP

---




**737,438**  
litres  
provided to IDPs in Greater Upper-Nile/day

---



**6274**  
IDPs  
were reached with Shelter and Non-food Items (NFI)

---



**24,129**  
children  
0 - 69 months screened for malnutrition

The complete version of this document can be accessed at: <https://go.usa.gov/x58W7>

