ReDSS
Unlocking Protracted Displacement

Pre-famine conditions, return and early solutions in Somalia (UPDATE)

Drought turning into famine means a massive displacement crisis in the making with influx of refugees and IDPs on the top of an already dire situation with more than a 1 million IDPs and almost 1 million refugees.

Did you know?

- **More than 278,000 people have been displaced in March alone within Somalia** due to the drought, bringing the total number to more than 536,000 since November 2016.
- **IDPs are highly vulnerable to drought** due to their lack of connectedness and so difficulty to borrow and to access markets, little social cohesion and connection to host communities, part of minority clans, etc.
- Although there is a common assumption that '**drought-displaced' refugees and IDPs** will go back home right after the drought, this is usually not the case as other factors such as security, access to services and education, **are part of displaced' decision to stay or return.** It is therefore critical to **address IDPs needs from the onset as the majority of 2011 displaced due to the famine are still displaced in 2017- early solutions.**
- **Drought does not always turn into famine.** Famine is linked to deeper structural causes such as weak governance and infrastructure, conflict, difficult access and lack of capacities on the ground. So to complement emergency response, **development actors have a critical role to play to continue to address sustainable solutions** to Somalia' endemic political, security and socio-economic problems and **to strengthen the capacity and leadership of Somali local authorities and FGS to manage drought and displacement and to find durable solutions**.
- At this point in Somalia, actors **need to work on the worst-case scenario** given that even if the Gu rains are better than foreseen, the crisis is already at a point where much of the damage has been done.

1. Facts and figures

- **Pre-famine conditions in Somalia:** Over 6.2 million people across Somalia (50 per cent of the total population) are facing acute food insecurity as a result of drought in parts of southern and northern Somalia and pre-famine warning was issued by the Food and Security Nutrition Early Unit on February 3, 2017.
- **Drought-induced displacement: Over 3,000 people a day** are being forced to abandon their homes in search of water and food. What is even more worrying, is that this is the highest displacement witnessed since the 2011 famine.
- **Over half of the people displaced are fleeing to three regions – Benadir, Mudug and Bay.** Since November 2016, a total of over 100,000 people have arrived in Baidoa, around 107,000 in Mogadishu, and over 26,000 in Mudug.
- **Majority of urban areas across Somalia have received the highest number of drought-induced IDPs** since November 2016. In Baidoa for instance, more than **70 new IDP settlements** have been established doubling the number of IDP camps to **147 settlements.** Furthermore, the majority of those displaced are women, children and elderly people.
- **Closure of Dadaab:** In 2011, **more than 130,000 Somali sought refuge in Dadaab Camp** which is not an option in 2017 as the camp is planned to close in May. Kenyan authorities will not postpone the closing of the camp citing that while in 2011, limited humanitarian access to affected populations and insecurity in South central Somalia led them to open their borders, this is not the case in 2017 and so Somali should return to their country while drought-displaced populations should be cared for in Somalia.
- **Return process: Since December 2014, 61,665 Somali refugees have returned home out of which 22,351 were supported in 2017 alone.** Currently, 20,991 refugees are registered for voluntary repatriation**.** But since the announcement of the closure of Dadaab, the ongoing repatriation process is fraught with challenges and several human right organizations and NGOs have described the process as coercive and contrary to international law. According to the UNHCR-led refugee population fixing exercise, 74% of Somali refugees in Dadaab are unwilling to return home, largely as a result of insecurity in Somalia. Due to the existing dire conditions in areas or return, the lack of absorption capacities and the lack of reintegration support beyond the return package, there is a high likelihood that most of the returnees will head to the already overstretched and under-resourced IDP camps.

2. Recommendations

Use of displacement related data to inform better drought response

- **Urgent need to better understand the profile/ vulnerabilities/ needs and movement** of different groups such as pastoralists, agro pastoralist, riverine, and IDPs to inform better preparedness and targeted response
- **Monitor population movements within and outside Somalia** to better prepare and respond and to ensure **protection of affected populations**: existing data mechanisms (PRMN and DTM) should work closely with FSNAU to inform joint analysis beyond food and nutrition data only
- **Monitor cross border trends and regional dynamics** – movement of refugees/ pastoralists/ but also supplies – and any other cross border essential information to inform and connect country planning and response
- **Urgent need to use longitudinal data to** better understand displacement trends and patterns to inform programing
- **Provide solutions in urban contexts** to increase absorption capacity and support urban preparedness as majority of those displaced are moving into urban centres

Prevention and management of drought-induced displacement in the search of durable solutions

- **Invest to prevent displacement when still possible and into identified hotspots** to ensure adequate preparedness and enhance early response capacity: based on ReDSS 2016 solutions analysis in Lower Juba , the following should take place:
  - **Preparedness and early response** in February and March **in larger hubs to increase absorption capacity of IDPs** across Somalia**:** for instance programmes in areas where affected southern agro-pastoralist will arrive (i.e Bay and Bakool), need to pivot already existing funding to absorbing IDPs in district centres as arrivals intensify in the coming weeks
  - **Minimize displacement and when feasible deliver aid as close to the rural population as possible** based on monitoring of access and availability of water and food
  - **Scale up cash response to be used as safety net** programmes and continue to **strengthen community resilience to prevent further displacement and support social cohesion**
- **Role of development actors**: It is of paramount **to continue linking immediate relief to long-term development** and continue to invest in preparedness to prevent further drought related displacement and to support sustainable development complementing humanitarian interventions
  - Humanitarian and development actors must engage in joint planning and identify collective outcomes under the leadership of the government
  - **Human resource capacity to focus on longer term planning activities in the early stages of displacement must be increased** through the early engagement of development experts such as urban planners, experts in local government development and community driven development, etc
  - **Strengthen the capacity and leadership of Somali local authorities and FGS** to manage drought and displacement in the search for durable solutions
- **Joint cross sectoral analysis and early actions needed between Durable Solution and Resilience Working Groups**: support the monitoring of food and water availability and prices, establishment of local area action plans and joint analysis on immediate response and early solutions (medium term) with local authorities, discuss with donors how to reallocate part of durable solutions funding to prevent further displacement complementing humanitarian funding
- **Halt the return process:** Given the impeding humanitarian crisis, UNHCR and the Governments of Kenya and Somalia need to take into account the consequences that **sustained repatriation may create**. Contingency measures, including further deferring repatriations, must be considered as areas of return are impacted by drought and pre famine conditions