



WASH Cluster
Water Sanitation Hygiene

Horn of Africa Advocacy Brief

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On the edge: the critical need for effective and accountable humanitarian WASH coordination to save lives in the region



BACKGROUND <<

Across the Horn of Africa¹, at least 36.1 million people will be affected by severe drought in October 2022, including 24.1 million in Ethiopia, 7.8 million in Somalia and 4.2 million in Kenya. This represents a two-fold increase from July 2022 and now more than 16.2 million people cannot access enough water of adequate quality for drinking, cooking and cleaning across the Horn of Africa, including 8.2 million in Ethiopia, 3.9 million in Somalia and 4.3 million in Kenya, according to UNICEF².

Many water points have dried up or diminished in quality, heightening the risk of water-borne diseases and increasing the risk of skin and eye infections as families are forced to ration their water use and prioritize drinking and cooking over hygiene. Water deficits have been exacerbated by very high temperatures, which are forecast to continue in October 2022. Women and girls are having to walk longer distances to access water—in many instances up to double or triple the distances they would walk during a regular dry season—exacerbating their potential exposure to gender-based violence and dehydration. Water shortages are also impacting infection prevention and control in health facilities and schools. The impact of the drought is already having global implications as food and fuel prices spike across the world and international attention focuses on the situation in Ukraine.

With the October to December 2022 rains projected to fail, food insecurity will rise in the months ahead, and between 23 and 26 million people will likely face acute food insecurity due to the Horn of Africa drought by February 2023¹. Immediate access to life-saving services such as safe water, sanitation and hygiene, is critical to prevent widespread malnutrition, starvation, illness and death. Together, we must urgently act to meet the needs of those in crisis and work jointly and actively to avert the global hunger crisis, save lives, and build resilience.



¹ Source: OCHA, *Regional Humanitarian Overview & Call to Action*, September 2021 - this does not include Eritrea & Djibouti

² Source: UNICEF, *Water Crisis in the Horn of Africa*, September 2022

³ Drought WASH People in Need of WASH assistance as defined by country clusters - October 2022

⁴ As per the *Financial Tracking Service (FTS)*, OCHA, October 2022, note that the data on funding received for Ethiopia has been provided by the cluster.



KEY CHALLENGES

1. Unsafe and hindered humanitarian access for WASH partners to reach drought and conflict affected populations.
2. More localized WASH coordination is needed to ensure a coordinated service delivery as well as monitoring quality gaps in the WASH response.
3. Lack of integration and inter-sectoral interventions to provide life-saving emergency assistance and livelihoods protection to meet the most pressing needs of the affected populations.
4. More sustainable response activities alongside rapid, emergency-stye actions are needed, so that future risks can be minimised by responsibly managed water-related infrastructure.



KEY MESSAGES

The WASH Clusters in the Horn of Africa are calling for governments, humanitarian agencies, and donors to ensure that:

- 1) **Access** for WASH humanitarian agencies to the hardest-to-reach conflict-affected areas is increased, so that children, women and men can receive holistic and timely humanitarian support;
- 2) Agencies in the region work **across sectors**, in recognition that WASH interventions are essential to prevent widespread malnutrition - this requires strengthened collaboration, joint strategic planning, and investment across sectors and along the development - humanitarian nexus;
- 3) **Adequate funding** is provided for both the immediate response needs and for the rolling out of sustainable humanitarian WASH interventions, such as climate risk-informed programmes, to build resilience with communities currently affected by the drought;
- 4) Active participation, meaningful representation, and decisive leadership of **local and national actors** is strengthened in existing coordination structures and mechanisms in order to achieve effective operational coordination at the local level.

Key links :

- WASH Cluster Somalia
- WASH Cluster Kenya
- WASH Cluster Ethiopia
- HoA OCHA Platform
- UNICEF Humanitarian Sitreps
- WASH Regional Platform for East Africa

Key country contacts:

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HOA DROUGHT AFFECTED POPULATIONS - OCHA/GWC - OCTOBER 2022

