

Drought Preparedness in the Horn of Africa

The recurrence of natural and man-made disasters in the Horn of Africa (HoA) has meant that populations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda require ongoing humanitarian assistance.

DG ECHO has been engaged in drought preparedness initiatives across the region since 2006 with a total budget of €70 million under the Regional Drought Decision or RDD. The main focus of the programme is supporting vulnerable local communities affected by the impact of recurrent drought cycles and promoting appropriate early responses to future droughts.

The programme is preparing communities to deal with drought conditions which are becoming ever more frequent. Population growth, resources based conflicts, deficient development and poor basic services as well as changes in climatic conditions are compounding the bad situation.

The RDD approach has a number of basic characteristics including a focus on natural hazards, a regional and cross border approach, an early response to disasters and a focus on the most vulnerable groups in high-risk areas. The preparedness is short-term, community-based and people-centred; very concrete and very practical. It promotes strong local ownership and includes awareness-raising, building local capacity and support to national and regional coordination on disaster response. DG ECHO projects are designed as pilot interventions to be replicated in order to mainstream the disaster/drought risk reduction approach into the humanitarian response strategies of Horn of Africa countries.

The drought preparedness programme shares a common approach with the ECHO Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) preparedness and mitigation programme which is currently operating in Southern Africa and in other parts of the world. They both use community-based preparedness and boost the coping capacities of the communities.

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