

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

GREATER HORN OF AFRICA¹

The full implementation of this version of the HIP is conditional upon the approval of the transfer by the Budgetary Authorities.

AMOUNT: EUR 421 300 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2024/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes² is to serve as a communication tool from DG ECHO³ to its partners and assist them in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE THE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

Second modification as of 21 June 2024

Part one: Ethiopia

The compounded impact of conflicts (ongoing or its aftermath), climate hazards (drought and recent floods) and epidemics continues to hit hard vulnerable communities in Ethiopia, exacerbating their fragility, causing additional displacement and diminishing their resilience capacity and coping strategies. As per the latest OCHA figures, more than 4.5 million people are internally displaced across the country, with the ever-present possibility of clashes triggering more movements and exacerbating protection needs, in particular in the northern contested areas. Conditions in IDP camps are harrowing, with many unmet needs and overcrowding. The lack of access to safe water and sanitation services, especially among displaced populations is a matter of concern requiring immediate action. More than 1 million refugees are hosted in Ethiopia (including recent influxes from Sudan). They are facing very dire conditions due to gaps in the planning and delivery of adequate humanitarian response—, combined with insecurity and conflicts in the hosting areas.

The food and nutrition situation is of particular concern as access to adequate food and livelihoods is disrupted in areas of concern. Increased incidence of infectious diseases such as malaria, cholera and measles is increasing the number of severely acutely malnourished children with medical complications. The FAO/WFP Early Warning Hunger Hotspots update (June to October 2024) shows that acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate further during the outlook period. Without assistance, the current wide gap between an insufficient response and food security needs is projected to become even more acute during the lean season with catastrophic impact. According to FEWS NET, *emergency outcomes* (IPC 4) are expected in

¹ This HIP covers seven countries in the Greater Horn of Africa (GHOA): Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

² Technical annex and thematic policies annex

³ Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

areas of Tigray (north, east and south), Amhara (north) and Afar (west) during the period between June and September 2024. Crisis outcomes (IPC 3) are expected in the remaining areas of Tigray (except Western Tigray and Mekele), eastern Amhara, eastern and southern Oromia, southern South Ethiopia, eastern Central Ethiopia and most of Somali region.

In this context, the European Commission has mobilised an additional **EUR 42 million** from the Emergency Aid Reserve to support the scaling up of a multi-sectoral life-saving emergency response to the most acute needs in Ethiopia. Further specifications are provided in the Humanitarian Implementation Plan Technical Annex (HIPTA).

Part two: Somalia

Somalia remains one of the major humanitarian crises in the world, ranking second in the Inform Risk Index. While the country had not yet fully recovered from a historical drought, El Niño-related flooding has been unfolding in the first half of 2024, with projected La Niña and dry spells later in the year. Despite above-average *Gu* rainfall in April, rain in May was below average, exacerbating the country's already poor cropping conditions. As a result, food staple prices are expected to increase, while imported food prices continue to be higher than average, with a negative impact on households' purchasing capacity and their food security. Barriers to food access and continuous food gaps are expected to lead to IPC 4 outcomes in multiple IDP settlements until at least September 2024. At the same time, the health situation has drastically deteriorated, with a 55% increase in cholera suspected cases compared to the same period in 2023. Moreover, *Gu* floods are expected to trigger outbreaks in locations where cholera has been absent for several years, due to insufficient access to safe water and poor sanitation conditions.

In the first half of 2024, conflict intensification in central Somalia, as well as *Gu* floods have caused new displacement. The Somali Government's third round of operations against Al Shabab, ATMIS's withdrawal by December 2024, unclear post-ATMIS arrangements, and the non-renewal of UNSOM's mandate expiring in October will deteriorate the security situation in country, further exacerbate forced displacement and hamper access to extremely vulnerable populations.

In this context, the European Commission mobilised additional **EUR 40 million** for Somalia from the Emergency Aid Reserve. This additional funding is to scale up lifesaving humanitarian assistance delivered in an integrated way and by following an area-based approach. Further details are provided in the Humanitarian Implementation Plan Technical Annex (HIPTA).

Part three: South Sudan

As South Sudan faces continued violence, the impact of climate change and of the conflict in Sudan, the population of South Sudan is facing increased vulnerabilities and displacement. South Sudan has one of the highest proportions of population in need of humanitarian assistance and remains one of the countries with the largest share of population facing high levels of acute food insecurity, including 79 000 people projected to be in famine-like conditions (IPC 5) by July 2024. Health indicators follow suit the food insecurity indicators with more than three million people lacking essential health care services, epidemic outbreaks, water-borne and endemic diseases particularly in IDP sites, refugees' camps and congested settlements. The prospect of new floods as of September 2024 will also affect areas that have

not recovered yet from the previous four consecutive years of floods (2019 – 2022). In parallel, the country is hit by a sharp economic crisis since the beginning of 2024, with a very steep currency exchange rate deterioration and inflation threatening considerably the food security situation and basic needs of the most vulnerable people.

Finally, the country is heading towards its first ever elections in December 2024. Those elections could mark the end of the transition period but may also bring a risk of related violence and instability, which will further increase humanitarian needs in the country.

In this context, the European Commission mobilised additional **EUR 40 million** for **South Sudan** from the Emergency Aid Reserve. This additional funding is to scale up lifesaving humanitarian assistance delivered in an integrated way to the most acute needs in South Sudan. Further details are provided in the Humanitarian Implementation Plan Technical Annex (HIPTA).

First modification as of 15 April 2024

Sudan crisis – including Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia⁴

A year into the conflict, the humanitarian situation is reaching a critical point in Sudan, which has become the largest internal displacement crisis in the world, with nine million people internally displaced. In addition, two million people have fled to neighbouring countries and need immediate lifesaving humanitarian assistance. The new numbers underscore the urgent need for intensified humanitarian efforts.

Part one: Sudan

Due to the conflict, the food security and nutrition situation in Sudan has deteriorated significantly. The last Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report published in December 2023 indicated 17.7 million people food insecure but was covering what is traditionally the best period of the year. Since, several projections indicate an accrued deterioration with pockets of hard-to-reach areas already reaching famine (IPC5), and the situation will likely only deteriorate. The IPC alert released in March 2024 indicates that Khartoum and Gezira States as well as Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan, where the delivery of humanitarian assistance remains extremely challenging, could face catastrophic outcomes. Sudan already has one of the highest rates of child malnutrition globally, with close to five million people acutely malnourished, and acute malnutrition expected to further worsen. In addition, the conflict has shattered access to basic services for millions of people and protection concerns are extremely high, especially for children and women, with alarming conflict-related gender-based violence reported.

In order to address the risk of famine and the consequences of the conflict, the European Commission has mobilised an additional amount of **EUR 45 million** for Sudan from the DG ECHO Operational Reserve. These additional resources will support food assistance, nutrition as well as emergency lifesaving assistance and protection in hard to reach and conflict-affected

⁴ Additional support covering the impact of the Sudan crisis in Chad and Egypt are covered by other HIPs

areas of Sudan. Further specifications are provided in the Humanitarian Implementation Plan Technical Annex.

Part two South Sudan:

In South Sudan, over 630 000 people, mostly South Sudanese returnees but also Sudanese refugees, are arriving in communities that are still impacted by insecurity, floods and with very limited services and infrastructures. The temporary settlements in and around Renk are becoming more permanent and are over-congested with limited services, with a risk of intercommunal tensions and spread of communicable diseases. The upcoming rainy season will isolate more the North of the country from Juba and the main supply roads. Continued support for transportation is required to decongestion transit centres and offer to the continuous flow of displaced people from Sudan a dignified temporary stay.

In this context, the European Commission has mobilised an additional **EUR 8.7 million** for South Sudan from the DG ECHO Operational Reserve. This additional funding will support life-saving emergency assistance, as well as support for onward transportation of the most vulnerable people displaced from Sudan. Further specifications are provided in the Humanitarian Implementation Plan Technical Annex.

Part three: Ethiopia

Since the beginning of the crisis in Sudan, there have been thus far more than 120 000 new arrivals in Ethiopia from Sudan, out of which approximately 52 000 are refugees or asylum seekers.

There are significant gaps in the emergency humanitarian assistance and protection services provided to the refugees from Sudan in the hosting conflict-affected regions of Ethiopia, with high needs for healthcare and essential medications, access to clean water and sanitation, emergency shelters, non-food items, food and protection services. The funding available for the Sudan refugees' response is very limited.

In this context, the European Commission has mobilised an additional **EUR 2.6 million** for Ethiopia from the DG ECHO Operational Reserve. This additional funding will support the scaling up of a multi-sectoral life-saving emergency response to the people arrived from Sudan in Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz. Further specifications are provided in the Humanitarian Implementation Plan Technical Annex.

1. CONTEXT

Over 70 million people in the Greater Horn of Africa (GHOA) are in immediate need of humanitarian assistance. The region continues to face multiple security, political and socio-economic challenges compounded by both human-induced disasters and natural hazards, recent and protracted, causing complex humanitarian crises of unprecedented scale. Such disasters destroy lives and livelihoods, drive large parts of the population into temporary or protracted displacements and induce severe food and nutrition insecurity.

The two main drivers of humanitarian needs in the region are conflicts and natural shocks. Over the past 4 years, the stability of the GHOA has deteriorated and conflicts have multiplied. The two main changes over the last year include the most recent conflict that started in Sudan on

15 April 2023, between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), displacing millions of people and exacerbating existing humanitarian challenges, both within Sudan and in neighbouring countries. The second major change is in Ethiopia where the two-year Northern conflict came to an end in November 2022 with the signature of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement although some areas in Tigray remain claimed by Amhara region (for Western and Southern Tigray) and occupied by Eritrea (for borders areas between the two countries). Meanwhile, other regions in the country are affected by ethnic tensions, internal conflicts, including Western Oromia and a fresh conflict in Amhara region that is now contributing to instability in the country. In Somalia, the Federal Government continues its fight against Al Shabab and in Somaliland, political and territorial disputes feed armed clashes. Years after signing the revitalised peace agreement, South Sudan continues to face endemic violence and conflict with very little progress on the peace agreement implementation.

The entire region faces environmental risks and climate shocks, including desertification, deforestation, droughts as well as floods. Climate change is accelerating the frequency and intensity of weather extremes and increasing the impact of disasters in the region, putting some of the world's most vulnerable populations on the frontline of the climate crisis and leading to further conflicts over resources and to population displacements. Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan are on the list of countries with the highest risk of combined climate and humanitarian crises. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia have faced a historic drought and more recently flash floods while severe and recurrent floods are affecting South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. After two and a half years of La Niña, the climate forecast models predict a transition to El Niño, and a positive Indian Ocean dipole, which should increase the chance of enhanced rainfalls and replenishment of water sources. However, this also brings high risks for flash floods and landslides due to excess rainfall in the eastern part of GHoA and dry spells with consequences on agropastoralism and livelihoods in its western part.

Conflicts and climate shocks have two major humanitarian consequences in the region: forced displacement and acute food and nutrition crisis. The GHoA is the scene of large scale forced displacement, both within countries and across borders. Over 4.5 million refugees are hosted in the region, with Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia hosting the highest numbers of refugees in Africa. In Sudan, the recent war triggered cross-border movements of already over a million of people taking refuge or returning to neighbouring countries. Kenya and Uganda also see significant new arrivals of refugees due to instability and natural hazards in neighbouring countries. Refugee policies vary across the region. The most positive examples are Uganda, with an open-door progressive and inclusive policy and Kenya, which used to have a stricter policy but now intends to adopt a settlement policy that should allow refugees to access livelihoods. Most countries of the GHoA also face large-scale internal forced displacement caused by the same drivers. An estimated 18.3 million people are internally displaced in the GHoA although the number is likely underestimated. Those populations fall directly under the primary responsibility of the respective governments with limited capacities to respond.

The acute food and nutrition crisis that the GHoA is facing, caused by the same two main drivers, is deteriorating by the day with an estimated 56 million people food insecure in the region. This is an increase of over 30 million in the last three years and with the current dynamics in the region, the prospect of any improvement soon seems wishful.

Poor access to basic services including health and nutrition care constitute additional challenges in the region. Epidemic outbreaks are frequent, often linked to poor sanitary conditions particularly in displacement contexts, such as overcrowded camps, but also the lack of access to or non-functional basic health services and infection prevention measures. Weak disaster management capacity compounds the situation.

Against this background and with the global impact on food prices of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the economic situation continues to deteriorate in the GHoA, with hyperinflation and currency depreciation limiting access to and maintenance of basic services. This, combined with the long-term political instability in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, economic, ethnic tensions, political divides, weak governance structures, corruption, and lack of accountability further undermine the region's stability.

Political instability, conflicts, and economic challenges also drive migration flows within the region and towards other countries, particularly the Gulf States through the East Route, the main migration corridor for populations in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya). This route is extremely dangerous as recently illustrated by Human Rights Watch's report on mass killings of Ethiopian migrants along the border between Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Since many years, torture, abuse, extortion, kidnapping, maiming, killing by smuggler rings, armed groups and authorities in the transit and destination countries are reported along that route and the constant vicious cycle of migration / forced deportation back to country of origin (primarily Ethiopia) observed during those years does not allow for hopes that the situation will improve anytime soon.

The INFORM⁵ Risk Index 2024 shows that countries of the region continue to be at very high risk from humanitarian crises and disasters that could overwhelm national response capacity. The region is one of the most vulnerable worldwide, with five of the fifteen countries rated at "very high risk" in the region⁶.

⁵ INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters.

⁶ Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda

| | Djibouti | Ethiopia | Kenya | Somalia | South Sudan | Sudan | Uganda |
|---|--------------------|------------------|-------|---------|-------------|-------|--------|
| INFORM Risk Index (0-10)⁷ | 4.9 | 7.0 | 6.6 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 7.3 | 7.0 |
| Hazard and Exposure | 3.2 | 7.2 | 8.3 | 8.9 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 7.2 |
| Vulnerability | 5.9 | 7.2 | 5.9 | 8.2 | 9.2 | 7.9 | 6.9 |
| Lack of Coping Capacity | 6.1 | 6.7 | 5.8 | 8.5 | 9.4 | 6.7 | 6.9 |
| INFORM Severity Index (0-5)⁸ | 3 | 4 | 3.7 | 4.7 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 3.2 |
| Impact of the crisis | 2.5 | 4.2 | 4.1 | 4.8 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 3.2 |
| Condition of people affected | 3.3 | 4 | 3.8 | 4.9 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 3.4 |
| Complexity of the crisis | 2.6 | 3.9 | 3.1 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.7 | 2.9 |
| Number of People in Need (millions) | 0.072 ⁹ | 20 ¹⁰ | 6.4 | 8.25 | 9.4 | 24.7 | 1.56 |
| Human Development Index (0-1) | 0.509 | 0.498 | 0.58 | 0.46 | 0.385 | 0.508 | 0.525 |
| Total Population¹¹ (in million) | 1.1 | 123 | 53 | 17 | 10.9 | 46.8 | 47 |

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

2.1. People in need of humanitarian assistance:

Humanitarian needs across the seven countries of the region have continued to increase. The total number of people in need has surged to over 70 million that include forcibly displaced people and large portions of the populations due to a combination of conflicts, climate change events, food availability and inflation.

Forcibly displaced populations

Throughout the Greater Horn of Africa, an estimated 22.9 million people are forcefully displaced of whom 4.5 million are refugees and asylum seekers and at least 18.3 million are internally displaced. The region faces a combination of protracted displacements - including multiple ones for the same people - and newly displaced populations. Climate shocks, conflicts in Sudan and Somalia, ethnic conflicts and violence in Ethiopia and South Sudan, as well as political developments all cause forced displacement¹² and call for an adapted and differentiated response, using protection-sensitive and context-specific approaches towards the most vulnerable together with solid risks and conflict analyses¹³.

Displaced populations continue to be highly dependent on external assistance for their survival. The pace of displacement and severity of needs among those displaced vastly surpass current humanitarian efforts, even in accessible areas. Unaccompanied minors, children, elderly and disabled people and women are among the most vulnerable categories requiring specific

⁷ INFORM Risk is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters. Data from the 2024 Risk Index. <https://drmhc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk>

⁸ The INFORM Severity Index is a way to objectively measure and compare the severity of humanitarian crises and disasters globally. Data from the August 2023 Index. <https://drmhc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Severity>

⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/djibouti>

¹⁰ Ethiopia: Humanitarian Response Plan 2023

¹¹ World Bank data, year

¹² Notably the displacement and deprivation of liberty of some groups due to their perceived affiliation with a party to the conflict or the growing push for returns

¹³ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/rbehag/>

attention and tailored assistance. In many areas of the region, pastoralist communities have been displaced due to droughts. Many have lost their livestock, which constitute their main livelihood and they cannot return to their areas of origin where the pastoralist model is no longer viable. Host populations often face similar risks and vulnerabilities as displaced persons and should therefore be considered for humanitarian assistance depending on their needs and vulnerabilities. The growing economic difficulties feed tensions between displaced and host communities.

Across the region, many forcibly displaced people are forced to return, either by the authorities or due to insecurity, lack of livelihood opportunities or sufficient aid. Returnees face significant obstacles and often do not benefit from minimal conditions of safety and security, dignity, voluntariness, and sustainable reintegration.

Djibouti continues to be an important transit country for migrants to and from the Arabian Peninsula in dire conditions and with very limited assistance available.

Ethiopia hosts close to 1 million refugees including significant arrivals from Sudan and Somalia in 2023 and has close to 4.4 million IDPs and 3.2 million returnees, mostly from the recent northern conflict. Other internal conflicts, as the recently emerged armed conflict in Amhara, are expected to have implications on displacement and pose a potential risk of spreading over other regions if not resolved. Intercommunal conflicts in other regions as well as drought have generated many displacements. Return of internally displaced people is a complex issue in Ethiopia that has faced many waves of large-scale displacement over the past decades. Forced return is a recurring issue.

Kenya is now hosting close to 700 000 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from Somalia and South Sudan. The government of Kenya has recently modified its policy approach towards refugees, with the 2021 Refugee Act and the new Shirika Plan providing an enhanced protection environment for refugees and proposing to transform long term camps into integrated settlements, where refugees and hosts communities have equal access to services. While the drought has also heavily impacted Kenya in 2022 and 2023, causing food insecurity, nutrition crisis and internal displacement in the country, the impact of El Nino in 2024 is expected to cause erratic rainfalls and unprecedented flooding.

In **Somalia**, millions of people were already displaced before the onset of the drought and more have been displaced by drought, floods and conflict to reach almost 4.6 million IDPs. Constrained humanitarian access into hard-to-reach communities challenge the inclusivity and impartiality of the response.

The conflict that erupted in **Sudan** in 2023 is currently generating the highest number of forcibly displaced persons in the region. As of beginning of September 2023, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix reports over seven million internally displaced, including over four million newly displaced since the beginning of the conflict. Sudan continues to host about a million refugees, while over a million people have fled to neighbouring countries since the beginning of the conflict.

About 20 % of the population of **South Sudan**, i.e. 2.3 million people, are currently internally displaced, while over 2.3 million South Sudanese are refugees in neighbouring countries. Continued conflict and instability combined with recurrent flooding are the main drivers of

large-scale displacement. The conflict in Sudan is generating an unprecedented wave of returns, with people crossing the border presenting critical immediate basic needs while stuck in congested transit places. It may also generate tensions over land tenure issues and a wave of economically weak people settling in urban centres.

Uganda is Africa's largest refugee hosting country with close to 1.6 million refugees including more than 890 000 Refugees from South Sudan. Every month, thousands of new refugees fleeing conflicts and natural disasters in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan are increasing the pressure on the Ugandan refugee-hosting model.

2.1.1. Populations affected by food insecurity and under-nutrition

The Greater Horn of Africa is facing an unprecedented food and nutrition crisis. A combination of extreme weather conditions, conflicts and insecurity remain the primary drivers of acute food insecurity in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, while climate shocks and socio-economic crisis are the main drivers in Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda.

56 million people in IPC3+¹⁴ are in a state of crisis characterised by elevated levels of acute food insecurity. 9.3 million people are in IPC 4 and over 83 000 in IPC 5 (South Sudan and Somalia).

Staggering malnutrition figures are reported for the region with more than 11.5 million children under five acutely malnourished out of whom 2.9 million severely malnourished (Severe Acute Malnutrition - SAM) and in need of treatment. In the first semester of 2023, the region has reported a record level of SAM admissions compared to the last five years. In South Sudan and Kenya, the highest numbers in SAM admissions were recorded over the last 3 years. In Ethiopia and Somalia in the first and second quarters of 2023 the highest SAM admissions were reported in comparison with the same period over the last four years.

There is limited information on the **Djibouti** food security situation and malnutrition figures vary depending on the source of information. The most recent nutrition screening performed in Djibouti city found 5 000 children reported as SAM, and 13 000 children reported as MAM (Moderate Acute Malnutrition) and while they are not representative of the nutritional situation, they depict a deterioration in nutrition situation in comparison to previous years.

In **Ethiopia**, 20.1 million people in 2023 were in need of food assistance, caused by a combination of prolonged conflict in Tigray, other conflicts, insecurity spread across the country and climate shocks caused primarily by drought over the past 2 years. Approximately 4.2 million children are estimated to be acutely malnourished with 1.2 million of them suffering from SAM in 2023.

There are notable disparities in the prevalence of malnutrition across counties in **Kenya**. Substantial differences exist between areas frequently impacted by recurring droughts and affected by acute food insecurity and other counties. Meanwhile, malnutrition rates consistently remain elevated in refugee camps. Countrywide, as of July 2023, nearly 1 million children under five are estimated to be acutely malnourished with 217 000 expected to be severe in 2023. As of May 2023, there was a steep increase in SAM admissions (more than a 59%) compared to the same period in 2022 that could be an indication of a worsening situation.

¹⁴ [IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](https://www.ipcinfo.org/)

Across **Somalia**, 4.3 million people are facing high levels of acute food insecurity. The consequences of extreme rainfall and flooding to a population already severely affected by drought, food insecurity, and disease outbreaks are potentially severe. The estimated burden of acute malnutrition among under-fives is 1.5 million including 331 000 SAM. The main drivers of acute malnutrition and mortality are household-level reductions in food and milk consumption, disease outbreaks (measles) and associated high levels of morbidity among children and lack of access to basic services.

In **South Sudan** 8 million people (64 % of the population) are experiencing severe food insecurity by the peak of the 2023 lean season. Extremely high levels of acute malnutrition exceeding emergency thresholds continue to be reported during the lean season, with an estimated burden of 1.4 million children suffering from acute malnutrition including 346 000 people projected to be severely acutely malnourished.

In **Sudan**, due to the ongoing crisis, it is estimated that 20.3 million people are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (over 42 % of the country’s population). Compared to the results from the last IPC analysis conducted in May 2022, the number of highly food insecure people has nearly doubled. The country is also recording the highest rate of child malnutrition on a global scale with approximately 3 million children under five suffering of acute malnutrition before the current crisis, among whom more than 650 000 are suffering from severe acute malnutrition. The displacement of households due to conflict has amplified vulnerability to malnutrition, further worsening the nutrition situation.

In **Karamoja Region of Uganda**, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, about 582 000 people are estimated to face severe acute food insecurity in 2023.

| | Djibouti | Ethiopia | Kenya | Somalia | South Sudan | Sudan | Uganda |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Refugees | 30 751 | 933 035 | 636 024 | 36 107 | 319 616 | 963 400 | 1.58M |
| <i>Disag. by sex/age</i> | | 53% female 56% 0-17 44% 18-99 | 51% male 68% 0-17 31% 18-59 1% >60 | 51% female 51% 0-17, 49% 18-60+ | 52% female 59% 0-17 37% 18-59 2% 60+ | 46% female 41% 0-17 52% 18-59 7% 60+ | 51% female 56% 0-17 40% 18-59 2% 60+ |
| IDPs | 10 000 | 4.38m | - | 4.6M | 2.25M | 7.1M | NA |
| Returnees | NA | 3.23M | - | 7 466 | 774 843 (31 July 2023) | NA | NA |
| People in IPC 3+ | 285 413 | 20.1M ¹⁵ | 2.8 M | 4.3 M | 7.7M | 20.3M | 1.4M (2022) |
| Children < 5 MAM | 27 762 | 3M | 729 000 | 1.12M | 1M | 2.44M | NA |
| Children < 5 SAM | 5 562 | 123 803 | 217 000 | 331 000 | 345 890 | 611 000 | 28 830* |
| Out of school children | 32 156 | 3.88M | 2.5M | 4.8M | 3.4M | 6.9M + 8.6M (current conflict) | 150 500* |

* Incomplete data. Data missing from 2 out of 13 refugee settlements.

¹⁵ Ethiopia HRP 2023

2.2. Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

Humanitarian needs across seven countries of the region have increased and all indicators show a continued deterioration of the situation. The total number of people in need has increased and their needs concern multiple sectors and are interrelated.

Humanitarian protection

Conflicts, violence and instability in the Greater Horn of Africa expose individuals and communities to human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL) violations, such as killings, arbitrary detention, attacks against health care, evictions, family separation, sexual and gender-based violence, grave violations against children's rights (including attacks on schools, forced marriage and child recruitment by armed forces), restrictions of movement and massive internal and/or cross-border forced displacement. These violations and abuses have lasting impact on individuals and communities. Moreover, the protection risks, stemming from the direct correlation between natural disasters and conflict, negatively impact the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. Due to extreme food insecurity and limited access to humanitarian assistance, vulnerable people turn to negative coping strategies (such as early marriage, child labour, transactional sex) and migration, further exposing themselves to high risks.

Food assistance and Livelihoods

The worsening levels of acute food insecurity over the last two years are expected to persist through 2024 due to conflicts, economic shocks, weather and climatic conditions. Famine-like conditions are affecting populations in Somalia and South Sudan. In addition, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine continues to affect the region, impacting the prices of food and non-food items, and widening food consumption gaps due to the already limited purchasing power capacity. The Sudan crisis further disrupts food production in the country as well as the supply routes, in particular to South Sudan. The severity of food insecurity and malnutrition is increasing in Ethiopia as a consequence of the aid diversion which led to the suspension of all food assistance, also heightening the protection risks. Despite efforts in some countries such as Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, to reinforce existing safety nets, the coverage remains insufficient. Major access constraints coupled with insufficient current food assistance responses (inadequate coverage and reduced rations) have worsened the situation. Refugees in all countries are affected by food ration cuts as pipelines remain underfunded and are critically low, with further cuts foreseen in the food ration and/or reduction of beneficiaries as is the case in Uganda. There is a need to significantly scale-up timely, adequate, targeted and effective assistance to cover unmet basic needs of the most severely food insecure within an integrated and multi-sectoral approach. DG ECHO prioritises the streamlining and scaling-up of common and interoperable delivery mechanisms of multipurpose cash (MPC) fostering transparency, accountability and tracking capacity of food and cash movements.

Further coordination is required to improve the effectiveness of the IPC as the key source of food security information and analysis in the Greater Horn of Africa, strengthening the real-time assessment and monitoring, expanding the multi-stakeholder essence of the IPC expanding the transparency and plurality of actors engaged in data gathering and active participation in analysis fora.

Nutrition

Malnutrition rates remain high in all countries, due to devastating food insecurity, new and protracted conflict, unfavourable macro-economic conditions, limited access to basic services (such as healthcare and safe water), poor sanitation and hygiene, and inappropriate child-feeding practices. In Ethiopia the suspension of food distribution following the aid diversion in 2023 and the ongoing conflicts in Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan are affecting access and functionality of the health system. National systems and institutions, when functional, do not have the capacities and resources to manage such large caseloads. The persisting constraints on global supply chains have further worsened the nutrition situation due to the disruption/suspension of routine health/nutrition programming, or supply availability, lower attendance to health facilities (due to restrictive measures, fear, negative coping strategies). Malnutrition in some countries (Ethiopia, Arid and Semi Arid Land - ASAL - in Kenya, Northeast Uganda, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan) is far above emergency levels. In the region, more than 10 million children are acutely malnourished, including about 1.7 million who are severely acutely malnourished.

Health

Health systems in the region are generally weak and under-resourced. The region is prone to recurrent epidemic outbreaks (cholera and diarrhoeal diseases, polio, malaria, yellow fever and other viral haemorrhagic fevers such as Ebola, measles, meningitis, kala azar, etc.). In many parts of the region, very low EPI (Expanded Program on Immunisation) coverages, high under-nutrition rates, mass population movements, overcrowded IDP/refugee camps/settlements, and poor water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions, sharply increase the risk of transmission of diseases, morbidity burden and mortality. Mortality of children under the age of five and maternal mortality remain very high, especially in conflict and disaster-affected areas. Quality assured medical supply chains are heavily disrupted and currently mainly rely on humanitarian actors with long lead times. While it is critical to ensure the continuity of the Primary Health Care service delivery (health promotion, community engagement, quality assured medical supplies, immunisation, detection and treatment of undernutrition, surveillance and control of local diseases, access to quality care for all), it is also critical to address gaps in the secondary health care as part of life-saving actions and ensure efficient referral systems.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and hygiene practices to the required minimum standards in humanitarian crises are the major challenges affecting the region. Below standard conditions cause high mortality among children/the elderly, under-nutrition (growth stagnation in children) and WASH related epidemics (waterborne, water washed, water based, water related insect vector). Inadequate quality of project surveys, design and implementation hamper the achievement of WASH objectives despite huge resources put in place. Protracted refugee situations often lack means to provide sustainable WASH services once humanitarian actors withdraw. Competition to access safe water can cause conflicts in areas where the daily minimum requirements are not met. Long-term development measures to ensure sustainability and build self-reliance of beneficiaries are insufficiently considered at the onset of WASH humanitarian interventions. Environmental degradation, danger of ground water depletion and water resources pollution are big threats to sustainable, safe water provision. Water quality

monitoring is still inadequate in some cases such as cholera hotspots, in areas with elevated levels of groundwater chemicals (e.g. fluoride or iron) and during water trucking. Preparedness and emergency rapid response to WASH-related epidemics outbreaks are still not timely, making outbreaks such as cholera constant in the region.

Shelter and Non-Food-Items (NFIs)

There are high shelter and NFIs needs due to number of displaced people in the region. The tendency to use the in-kind modality in the delivery of shelters and NFIs impacts negatively on the cost efficiency of the action and prevent to cover increased caseload of vulnerable populations. Cash transfers, if possible, would increase the costs efficiency.

Education in Emergencies (EiE)

Indicators related to education remain extremely poor across the Greater Horn of Africa. An increase in school drops-out, often representing a negative coping mechanism resulting from lack of livelihoods, has been observed in all countries, as well as increased child protection risks for the most vulnerable children and adolescents, particularly for girls, who face the additional risk of early pregnancy and forced marriage. Overall, the quality of education across the region is a concern with high percentage of teachers being non-qualified, scarcity of learning spaces and educational material, high pupil to teacher ratios, insecurity and unsafe schools. Adolescent (over-age) boys and girls are often excluded from education due to the absence of alternative and/or accelerated learning possibilities, especially in crisis contexts and are exposed to further protection risks. Gender-based discriminations significantly hamper girls' education access and retention, especially transition to the secondary level. In refugee settings, many children remain out of school (need of increased bridging programmes). Learners and trainees with disabilities generally lack appropriate educational interventions within regular institutions of learning. There is a need to increase the capacity of partners for rapid education responses, be it stand-alone or integrated into/alongside multi-sectoral rapid response mechanisms.

Disaster Preparedness

The Greater Horn of Africa region has been experiencing one of the worst drought situations in decades, affecting mainly Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya, as well as parts of Djibouti, South Sudan and Uganda. At the same time, in 2023 record rainfall has resulted in severe flooding for consecutive years in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan and parts of Uganda. In South Sudan, four consecutive years of unprecedented floods have impacted more than 1 million people.

The overall regional and national capacities to prepare, anticipate and respond to disasters, human-induced and caused by natural hazards, remain insufficient. This was also demonstrated by the lack of adequate early action measures activated to mitigate the impact of the multi seasonal consecutive droughts despite early warning signs of below average rains, and regional and national level measures to end drought emergencies.

Incapacitated and under-resourced disaster risk management systems, insufficient collaboration between stakeholders, countries, weak institutionalisation of disaster preparedness, lack of multi-hazard approaches and low levels of preparedness for conflict, weakening of the traditional coping capacities result in alerts by existing early warning systems, often failing to trigger early/anticipatory action and response at the necessary level. Early warning systems are fragmented, lack conflict sensitivity, and fail to release alerts with

the correct level of geographical precision and impact-based forecasting information. Anticipatory action efforts have been overly focused on natural hazards, are still in pilot stage and are often not yet part of national strategies with multi-sectoral/stakeholder response strategies attached to them.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

3.1. National / local response and involvement

In the Greater Horn of Africa, the capacities of some governments to respond to disasters and epidemics outbreaks continue to remain limited with clear gaps in the preparedness and response to disasters at country level. External humanitarian actors remain essential in the delivery of effective assistance to the people in need. Much remains to be done, namely in terms of coordination and support to multi-risk Early Warning Systems (EWS), advocacy for transboundary approach, and overall resilience strengthening, to ensure adequate anticipatory or early response based on effective preparedness measures.

At the **regional level**, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has been working on providing legal frameworks to movement and mobility in the region through the adoption of the Free Movement Protocol in February 2020 and the Kampala declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change of August 2022. IGAD is also active on forced displacement and durable solutions bringing governments and stakeholders together for regional consultative processes. Moreover, ICPAC¹⁶, the specialised agency of IGAD dealing with climate issues, is providing alerts and analysis related to climate shocks, pests and food insecurity in the GHoA and has set up an Emergency Operation Room in charge of monitoring major hazards and providing early warnings in near-real-time. IGAD through ICPAC is also progressing on the Disaster Preparedness front with a Regional Disaster Risk Management strategy 2019-2030 and a Regional Anticipatory Action Strategy in the making. However, the timely domestication and implementation of those regional frameworks and tools at national and local level remain a challenge. Enhanced coordination among humanitarian, development actors, IGAD and specialised agencies is urgently needed to ensure complementarity and bridging among those initiatives for a multiplied impact.

Safety net programmes are in place in some countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia) aiming at reducing the vulnerability to food insecurity and responding to shocks by increasing the support to already enlisted or new households. Response to shocks either through vertical expansion (additional support to enlisted members) or horizontal expansion (new households) is not systematic, often challenged by inadequate preparedness measures such as poorly designed triggers/thresholds and Standard Operating Procedures, financial resources including other interferences related to governance. These programmes are generally supported by development funding and are embedded in national institutions and systems.

In **Djibouti**, the overall local response is limited and relies on external support to address identified humanitarian needs. The *Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et aux Sinistrés* (ONARS) coordinates the provision of emergency assistance to people affected by displacement and natural disasters but has limited capacity. Most INGOs have left the country

¹⁶ ICPAC is the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre based in Nairobi and covering the eight countries of the IGAD region as well as Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania.

because of insufficient funding, and the few remaining agencies struggle to up-scale their response in line with the increased needs as a result of the drought, deteriorating food security and nutrition situation and increase in prices.

In **Ethiopia**, the humanitarian response is delivered through a complex and intertwined structure between the government and humanitarian partners. The Ethiopia Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) and the Refugee and Returnees Services (RRS), both under the Prime Minister's Office, are the main government institutions to deliver humanitarian assistance, with a lead role in coordinating the humanitarian response, as well as in implementation. However, the government's response capacity at regional and zonal level remains limited and external humanitarian actors remain essential in the delivery of effective assistance to the people in need.

In **Somalia**, the Somalia Disaster Management Agency (SODMA) is mandated by the Federal Government of Somalia to manage and mitigate the impact of natural and man-made disasters, coordinating with national and international partners.

In **South Sudan**, the various authorities (national, local, traditional) have so far failed to ensure protection of and safe access to civilian population and to provide basic services. In very rare occasions, the authorities have delivered aid to their population, generally at local level when authorities, more often communities, engage in an emergency response to the floods. Yet, following the significant arrivals of returnees from Sudan, the South Sudanese authorities have taken a proactive role and contributed to the response.

In **Sudan**, before the war erupted in April 2023, recurrent disruptions in the functioning of line ministries were affecting the humanitarian partners' response. The previous government's restrictive framework on humanitarian aid had improved under the transitional government. The application of the 2020 Joint Communiqué on Humanitarian Access, agreed upon between the EU and the transitional government was however constrained. Currently there is no more local response by the de facto authorities as they are warring party to the raging conflict and the humanitarian operating context has sharply deteriorated. Local responders are however at the forefront of the emergency response, especially as most international staff has left the areas most affected by the conflict.

In **Uganda**, the government's commitment and capacity to implement a progressive and generous policy towards refugees is increasingly undermined by a constant influx of new refugees every month, whilst humanitarian aid funding for the refugee response in the country is dwindling, resulting in significant cuts in assistance across sectors, including the most severe food ration cut in the region. The scale of the refugee crisis continues to overwhelm national and local capacities and still requires international support for reinforcing district and local government capacities, notably in view of operationalising the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. Involvement of sectorial line ministries to better integrate refugees in national policies and programmes has started, but concrete implementation relies on support from the international community.

The response capacity of local actors and NGOs varies among countries in the region and crises. Since the AU Humanitarian Summit in Malabo in May 2022, there has been positive progress on the localisation agenda on the continent, notably through the creation of the Africa Humanitarian Organisations Network (AHON) which has enhanced the engagement of civil

society with AU and RECs and has initiated a mapping of Local Organisations in Africa. Other initiatives on localisation include support to local NGOs forums and the creation of National Reference Groups in different countries.

3.2. International Humanitarian Response

The humanitarian response in the region remains largely underfunded, with a negative trend over the years. Even in those countries where the overall response is well-funded, important sectoral gaps remain.

Regional humanitarian coordination for the GHoA exists through the RHPT (Regional Humanitarian Partner Team), which is the equivalent of a national HCT (Humanitarian Coordination Team) at the regional level. The RHPT is coordinated by OCHA Regional Office and composed of UN and NGOs but unfortunately donors are not invited. Crisis-specific regional coordination is organised on a need-basis (it was the case in the past year for the HoA drought and the Sudan crisis).

In 2023, the IAWG (Inter-Agency Working Group), which gathers INGOs at regional level, has been revitalised with the nomination of a director. IAWG’s role includes coordination at regional level, information sharing, joint advocacy and has several working groups looking at specific issues such as emergency response, security and advocacy. While the focus of the IAWG has been on the Sudan crisis since April 2023, the objective is to engage on a range of issues, from the coordination on specific crises to addressing commonalities across countries or cross-cutting issues. It is now an active working group providing relevant complementarity to other existing fora and active engagement with donors.

At sectoral level, ICPAC is co-chairing the regional coordination in Food Security and Nutrition through the FSNWG¹⁷. Other regional working groups exist in the core humanitarian sectors (protection, Wash, EiE, DP, etc) as well as social protection however, their formal nature and functionality vary.

| | Ethiopia | Kenya | Somalia | South Sudan | Sudan | Uganda |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Funding appeals 2023 | USD 3.995 billion | USD 452 million (drought) USD 153 million (refugees) | USD 2.6 billion | USD 1.7 billion | USD 2.6 billion | USD 846 million |
| % funded as of October 2023 | 30.2% | 71.2% (drought) 35% (refugees) | 39.5% | 53.4% | 33.5% | 22% |

Countries of the region affected by major humanitarian crises (Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan) have HNOs (Humanitarian Needs Overview) and HRPs (Humanitarian Response Plan) while other countries like Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda have thematic response plans or flash appeals, covering refugee and droughts responses. The HNOs/HRPs are meant to provide a strategic framework for the humanitarian response, comprehensive needs assessments and coordination of the response in each of these countries of the region.

¹⁷ Food Security and Nutrition Working Group

In **Djibouti**, the overall presence of international humanitarian organisations is limited. The lack of updated data available and their quality further impedes the accurate understanding of the humanitarian needs in the country.

The humanitarian aid architecture in **Ethiopia** is complex and struggles to deal with the large scale and multiple crises. The Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team leads the overall humanitarian coordination through clusters. Donors coordinate in the Humanitarian Resilience and the Refugees Donor Groups (HRDG and RDG). The INGOs coordinate in the HINGO Forum. Common humanitarian services include coordination, information gathering, analysis, civil-military coordination, air services, Displacement Tracking Matrix, and information management services. The humanitarian coordination needs to be strengthened and focus on the advocacy for the respect of IHL and protection of civilians by all parties.

In **Kenya**, UNHCR leads the coordination of humanitarian response in the refugee camps, while donors are coordinating through the Refugee Donor Group. The last drought appeal was launched in November 2022 in support of the Government-led response and a recently created Kenya Cash Consortium is further developing its coverage in most affected counties.

In **Somalia**, coordination is done in the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the cluster system. The HRP for 2024 seeks to prioritise emergency response to conflict, climatic and epidemic shocks, prioritising the most vulnerable populations in areas of highest need for emergency delivery of life-saving assistance. The 2024 HRP will embed lessons learned and operational adaptations emerging from the IASC Humanitarian system-wide scale-up called in August 2022, and will guide implementation based on the HCT-endorsed integrated response framework (IRF). Such integrated response, structured on a first line and second-line intervention, aims to enhance harmonised, timely, people-centred and more cost-effective multi-sectorial responses to pre-identified humanitarian triggers – while enabling transition towards second-line interventions.

In **South Sudan**, the cluster coordination architecture is mostly Juba-centred and started to decentralise to State level. Donors participate in HCT+ meetings and the Civil-military coordination (with UNMISS) is in place ensuring interaction between civilian and military actors in order to protect civilians and promote humanitarian principles.

In **Sudan**, since the start of the conflict, the international humanitarian presence in the areas affected by the conflict is limited. Most partners are established in Port Sudan, including a civil-military coordination team and a UN core team, as well as in the East of the country. The international response is assisted by crisis teams operating from Nairobi (UN and US) and other capitals. Sudan's HRP was revised to update the response strategy in the initial HRP due to the resurgence of conflict in the country since April 2023. Cross-border assistance to Darfur is ensured from Chad, with an international coordination and international partners established in Eastern Chad.

In **Uganda**, the refugee response is led by the Office of Prime Minister (OPM)/UNHCR following the Refugee Coordination Mechanism, with sector coordination supported by line ministries and the relevant UN agencies playing a co-lead role. The multiplicity of coordination platforms covering refugee situations, natural disasters and epidemics, challenges, and at times undermines, effective coordination.

3.3. Operational constraints in terms of:

1. access/humanitarian space:

Humanitarian access to people affected in the GHoA requires a continuous negotiation, dialogue and networking with a wide range of stakeholders at different levels, including civil and military authorities, security forces, armed groups, youth, elderly, women's associations, other actors. Across the region, a highly volatile and aggravating security situation notably in Sudan is a major constraint for humanitarian operations. The conflict, the increase of attacks directly targeting aid workers and the increased pressure and obstruction from various parties are extremely worrying trends, as it severely constrains the independence and impartiality of humanitarian operations. A common denominator across the region are the bureaucratic impediments imposed by governments on humanitarian operations and partners by restricting visas for humanitarian workers, imposing heavy taxes and customs on humanitarian aid importation, requiring transportation permits for moving personnel and assets within the same country. All those have serious implications on humanitarian space and access and the capacity of partners to deliver the expected response.

Humanitarian access is also sometimes constrained by risk averse posture or static programming of some humanitarian partners. Logistical challenges hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The poor quality of infrastructure such as roads, river transport and airstrips, present a serious challenge for an effective and efficient humanitarian response. The closure of roads due to floods, insecurity/fighting is restricting the movement of humanitarian actors and affected populations in accessing humanitarian assistance and services. Linking the main logistical hubs to secondary locations requires heavy and expensive operations especially in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. This is limiting the capacity of the humanitarian community to provide common services to remote, hard-to-reach areas. The lack of funding for the logistics cluster is also an issue.

In order to provide assistance to the people most in need, especially in areas with difficult access, implementation of life-saving actions may take place in remote management modalities, in strict compliance with the guidelines laid out in the DG ECHO Remote Management Guidance note¹⁸. In Sudan, given the severely restricted access environment due to the ongoing conflict, cross-border operations may be considered, from wherever operationally necessary.

The complex operating environment in the region calls for sustained humanitarian advocacy and diplomacy to promote principled humanitarian action as well as safe and secure environment for humanitarian organisations.

Access challenges are particularly acute in Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan. In Sudan, insecurity and bureaucratic impediments, in particular major challenges to obtain visas, technical agreements and travel permits, remain the main access obstacles to scale up the humanitarian response. In Ethiopia, after the signature of the Cessation of Hostilities for the Northern conflict, access to Tigray has considerably improved while some areas remaining particularly hard to reach (notably Western Tigray and areas bordering Eritrea). In Oromia (Wellegas) and Beninshangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Amhara, continued or new hostilities

¹⁸ http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/actions_implementation/remote_management/start

imply temporary difficulties of access due to insecurity. In Somalia, conflicts on multiple frontlines and ongoing military operations, coupled with bureaucratic and administrative impediments, continue to hamper the delivery of principled humanitarian assistance and protection in areas deemed “hard to reach”. Humanitarian organisations faced continued and widespread access challenges in South Sudan, with numerous incidents continuously reported every year (active hostilities, sub-national violence, and violence against humanitarian workers and assets). With the conflict, humanitarian access is a key challenge in Sudan, which has become one of the most dangerous countries for humanitarian workers.

2. Partners (presence, capacity), including absorption capacity on the ground:

DG ECHO has an extensive partner network across the GHoA that are delivering the bulk of a multi sector humanitarian assistance. However, they are limited by several factors as exposed above and constraints in accessing some areas. In Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, administrative requirements put in place by the authorities, de-facto control of territories by non-state armed groups, increasingly limiting the possibilities for direct deployment of humanitarian actors to areas of field operations. These also affect DG ECHO’s and partners’ capacity to undertake proper assessments of needs and monitoring of operations, as well as partners’ capacity to reach final beneficiaries and to deliver aid in a timely, effective and accountable manner. Due to access limitation, temporary or limited restrictions may occur and constrain the deployment, presence and movement of humanitarian workers and goods, both within countries and across borders, requiring partners to adapt their ways of working by sharing increased responsibility and also risks to local implementing partners. The capacity of international and local implementing partners remains limited in some countries of the region.

In Uganda, important efforts are being made to roll-out the localisation agenda to consolidate the transition of the provision of basic services. These efforts include reinforcement of local capacity as well as constant dialogue with development actors.

3. Other:

The risk of politicisation and instrumentalisation of humanitarian aid is high across the GHoA, limiting in some cases the ability of humanitarian organisations to conduct independent needs assessments and targeting, and reducing access to those populations who rely most on humanitarian assistance for their survival. It also puts humanitarian workers' lives at risk and can lead to misperception regarding the independence and neutrality of humanitarian action. Somalia is also a complex operating environment where the risk of diversion and fraudulent practices is high. In Sudan, operational interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities continues. These included attempts to impose armed escorts, denial of movement permits, attempted politicisation of assistance, attempts at diverting assistance to armed groups and multiple instances of additional requirements to conduct operations.

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service has been providing essential access by air to the humanitarian community in all of the countries in the region (except Uganda) very often under difficult prevailing conditions. In Sudan domestic flights were discontinued in 2023 and replaced by flights from international destinations into Port Sudan. UNHAS managed to mitigate the grounding of Russian registered helicopters at the end of 2022 although this came at a much higher cost.

Support to the Logistics Cluster (LC) in Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia is important to cover some of the last mile delivery also if air transport means are not sufficient. In Sudan the LC is playing a very important role to reorganise the humanitarian supply chain in the country.

4. HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus (HDP) situation varies across the countries in the Greater Horn of Africa depending on existing opportunities, development funding and programmes available, commitment, availability and vision of concerned actors including humanitarians, development, governmental and civil society actors.

In **Djibouti**, EU development funding is supporting vulnerable communities on WASH, education and youth. These development interventions have allowed the EU to address some of the underlying structural factors that exacerbate humanitarian needs. The limited humanitarian funding for the country is thus being used to cover complementary gaps creating a nexus process mostly by providing protection and covering emergency needs to host population and migrants crossing the country.

In **Ethiopia**, while there was no EU multi-annual indicative programme (MIP) over the last years because of the Northern conflict, there is ample scope to step up nexus efforts in several areas as (a) the recovery work and durable solutions building in the aftermath of the northern conflict; (b) disaster preparedness for recurrent natural hazards and food insecurity; (c) sustainable solutions for the protracted refugee caseloads; (d) coordination between humanitarian cash transfers and social protection safety nets shock response component. Work has already been done on nexus opportunities but there is a clear momentum to strengthen the Humanitarian-Development-Peace dynamic. A UN-led process to advance a HDP Nexus to reduce the significant level of humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities and reinforcing national capacities has also been recently launched.

In **Kenya**, the Government is significantly changing its policy approach on refugees, moving from encampment towards an integrated settlement scheme, where refugees and host communities have equal access to services, in line with the commitments taken under the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The new policy will open new opportunities for humanitarian and development complementarity on integration of refugees, building on previous initiatives. In addition, further coordination and integration of humanitarian cash transfer within the shock responsive component of social safety nets is needed.

In **Somalia** nexus opportunities are on the articulation and integration between humanitarian cash transfer programmes and Social Protection systems funded by development actors (including by NDICI/DG INTPA and the World Bank). The opportunities are also on education by linking emergency non formal education to the formal education system. Nexus opportunities are also existing on disaster preparedness where previous investments by both DG ECHO and development donors on water management and flood prevention, could further evolve to include a multi-hazard approach and conflict sensitive programming.

In **South Sudan** there are opportunities for HDP Nexus approach notably in stabilised post conflict areas seeking to decrease the existing humanitarian aid dependency. Nexus

opportunities could also be explored on support for disaster risk management structures and initiatives.

As one of the EU pilot countries for the nexus, an EU Nexus Action Plan for **Sudan** was established in 2017, identifying strategic areas (nutrition and protracted forced displacement) for a more complementary engagement from the EU and its Member States. Concrete implementation was already difficult given limited development funding during the previous regime, while the coup of October 2021 further delayed the process. With the conflict that started in April 2023, new opportunities for a nexus approach in Sudan should initially focus on ensuring a coordinated response to address the needs of forcibly displaced persons and for pursuing better linkages with peace and stability funding instruments.

In **Uganda**, the nexus engagement under the September 2018 Action Plan is expected to continue, aiming at strengthening self-reliance/resilience, access to basic services, including education employment and livelihood opportunities of refugees and host communities while tackling the drivers of displacement. Securing a rapid integration of basic services in development programmes in Uganda is crucial to support the government's efforts, reduce the dependency on humanitarian assistance and to contribute to localise the Refugee Response. Across sectors, opportunities for nexus implementation could be identified in order to support the ongoing transitions in the health and education sectors, to promote self-reliance of refugee to graduate out of humanitarian assistance as well as in the environment sector in promoting innovation and sustainable livelihood or in the Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction.

5. ENVISAGED DG ECHO RESPONSE STRATEGY AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF HUMANITARIAN AID INTERVENTIONS

5.1. Envisaged DG ECHO response

5.1.1 Priorities

The humanitarian response shall be compliant with the EU's thematic policies and guidelines that are described in detail in the HIP policy annex. Partners operating in conflict areas are requested to adhere strictly to the humanitarian principles and have strong capacity in security management (experienced and adequate human resources, as well as means). Technical and administrative details are available in the HIP Technical Annex section 3.2.2.

As communities continue to be affected by conflict, violence, food insecurity and climate change, DG ECHO will prioritise the response to most acute needs and most vulnerable communities / households / individuals, support common services and deepen its engagement with development and political/diplomatic actors towards enhancing compliance with IHL and International Refugee Law, and seeking long-term solutions to protracted situations, according to the respective mandates.

DG ECHO will adopt an integrated multi-sectoral approach to programming that aims at meeting basic needs¹⁹ of affected populations. DG ECHO prioritises multipurpose cash (MPC)

¹⁹ Basic needs are the essential goods, utilities, services or resources required on a regular or seasonal basis by households for ensuring long-term survival and minimum living standards, without resorting to negative coping mechanisms or compromising their health, dignity and essential livelihood assets

to meet basic needs, complemented by other modalities, as appropriate, and timely referrals, to meet specific sectoral outcomes. Designing an integrated programme requires enhanced coordination and coherence across sectors, starting with joint assessments and continuing through the cycle with joint protection-sensitive and needs-based vulnerability targeting, joint response/delivery mechanisms, leading to greater transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance.

As the entire Greater Horn of Africa region is increasingly impacted by recurrent disasters and harsh climatic-induced hazards, such as regular floods and droughts, large and small-scale in nature, the humanitarian response in the region should take current and future climate risks into account. Disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness should thus feature in the humanitarian aid programmes financed through this HIP, in order to strengthen early response capacity and coping capacities hereby increasing the resilience of people and institutions and reducing the impact of climate related disasters on the most vulnerable people. In this respect, DG ECHO will systematically address Emergency Preparedness and Early Response through (a) emergency / rapid response mechanisms (E/RRM) as standalone actions, (b) flexibility measures (including “crisis modifiers”) embedded in other actions and (c) targeted (DP) actions in specific countries or at regional level as well as mainstreaming of disaster preparedness measures in emergency/response oriented actions. In this HIP 2024, DG ECHO will prioritise targeted disaster preparedness actions in Ethiopia, Somalia and Uganda.

DG ECHO programmes will systematically address:

- Centrality of Protection: Protection of all persons affected and at-risk must inform humanitarian decision-making and response, including engagement with States and non-State parties to conflict. It must be central to humanitarian preparedness efforts, as part of immediate and life-saving activities, and throughout the duration of humanitarian response and beyond.
- Accountability towards Affected Populations (AAP): Active commitment to engage responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people humanitarian organisations seek to assist.
- Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in line with the Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel. All interventions must adhere to a strict zero tolerance policy in regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, and all partners must ensure prevention mechanisms are in place and accessible to all community members.

The compliance with minimum environmental requirements and the mainstreaming of environmental considerations will be taken into consideration for the selection of proposals and will have to be applied to the projects selected. With regards to procurement, preference must be given to purchases, distribution, and use of environmentally sustainable products, reducing international procurement, and optimising secondary and tertiary packaging as much as possible, avoiding procuring single-use disposable items, and favouring products with greater durability and high recycled content.

Considering the existing conflict dynamics and inter-communal tensions in the Greater Horn of Africa, DG ECHO will require that all proposed interventions build on a thorough conflict

and protection risk analyses – that are gender-informed and aimed at developing a conflict-sensitive response (i.e. when the main outcome of the intervention is not protection); and directly tackling threats, vulnerabilities and capacities of affected populations, hence reducing their exposure to protection risks (i.e. interventions with a protection outcome).

DG ECHO will support humanitarian advocacy on principled actions as well as strengthen cross-border and regional coordination. These efforts seek to enhance systematic and timely needs assessments, as well as data collection, analysis, presentation and dissemination. Advocacy and coordination help increase the level of understanding about the issues at stake in the region and bridge the gap between emergency relief and rehabilitation, while encouraging more donors to address the crises through a nexus-oriented approach.

5.1.2 Programmatic Partnerships

In the logic of strategic humanitarian projects, DG ECHO also supports programmatic partnerships and would consider such an approach within the Greater Horn of Africa HIP if partner organisations – INGOs with a DG ECHO programmatic partnership certificate, UN agencies and the Red Cross/Crescent family and Member States’ Specialised Agencies – demonstrate the strategic and/or innovative character of the action and the gains being achieved through such a longer-term partnership. A programmatic partnership can be implemented through multi-year funding (initial funding allocation for 24 months or more) or through a staged approach where funding is allocated annually.

Technical and administrative details on the PPs are provided in the HIP Technical Annex (HIPTA).

Programmes contributing specifically to the implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus or to the localisation agenda as well as programmes proposing data analysis and monitoring in the Greater Horn of Africa constitute relevant opportunities for programmatic partnerships.

Programmatic partnerships at regional level (covering several but not necessarily all countries of the GHoA) would also be considered for humanitarian actions that approach environmental sustainability in an innovative and more strategic way, particularly in the field of logistics, as well as for actions related to strategic engagement on IHL and protection.

5.1.3 Multi-Year Funding

While DG ECHO receives an annual budget and most of the projects it funds are within that timeframe, the DG could continue to support multi-year funding when the partner organisation demonstrates the efficiency gains and the operational logic of a longer-lasting project, as it is for example already the case with EiE and disaster preparedness projects that usually run for (at least) 24 months in the region.

Multi-year funding can be envisaged for other sectors if the added value of a longer-term approach can be demonstrated by the partner organisations.

Country-specific priorities:

In **Djibouti**, DG ECHO will continue to support the provision of protection services and other types of life-saving assistance to vulnerable migrants, in coordination with the EU Delegation

and in complementarity with EU development funding. It is estimated that the number of migrants from neighbouring countries will increase, notably due to the ongoing conflicts, deteriorating economic conditions, and climate shocks in the Horn of Africa.

In **Ethiopia**, DG ECHO will focus on life saving needs and protection assistance via emergency response and preparedness to address the most acute needs among conflict and natural-shock-affected populations with an important focus on recently displaced, both IDPs and refugees. Host communities presenting similar or higher levels of vulnerability will also be included. DG ECHO will promote actions reinforcing the ability to respond rapidly to new emergencies (through rapid response mechanism(s), crisis modifiers and specific Disaster Preparedness responses). DP actions ensuring effective operational linkages between existing rapid response mechanisms (RRMs) and the Government-led Disaster Risk Management System will be considered in priority, such as the definition of commonly harmonised triggers and thresholds for emergency response. Relevant Anticipatory Action approaches should be informed by reliable Early Warning Systems and be part of multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder response plans. In addition to supporting direct emergency life-saving interventions, DG ECHO will finance actions supporting the humanitarian community (such as coordination, logistics, information management and advocacy) and the procurement of emergency supplies (nutritional and medical supplies, etc.). DG ECHO will favour actions guided by a holistic people-centred approach built around basic needs of the targeted population, aiming to address multisectoral needs through integrated approaches or through referral pathways. In view of the recent aid diversion issues, particular attention will be given to the existence of independent needs assessments and beneficiary selection mechanisms and strong accountability measures (including monitoring and complaints/feedback mechanisms).

In **Kenya**, support will focus on provision of basic services, (including health-nutrition, protection and education) and multi-purpose cash assistance to address the basic needs of the most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers (with a specific focus on the newly arrived and undocumented), as well as if needed host and pastoralist communities in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). In line with Kenyan government's commitment to transition from camps to settlements, the humanitarian support must be well articulated with and complement the longer-term actions geared towards lasting solutions for refugees in particular the protracted caseload. The long-term outlook should also rebalance the sources of humanitarian/development funding for the protracted caseloads at least. Recognising the long-lasting effects of the recent drought and the risk of prolonged acute food security and nutrition crisis, potential floods and epidemics outbreaks in the ASAL region, DG ECHO will continue to monitor and respond to acute needs, in close dialogue and coordination with other humanitarian and development donors, to ensure that the basic needs of the most vulnerable populations are met.

In **Somalia**, DG ECHO will prioritise actions based on a comprehensive context analysis, focusing on emergency response through life-saving activities for populations recently displaced by acute crises (conflict, drought, floods), in hard-to-reach areas or exposed to catastrophic or very high levels of food insecurity and epidemic outbreaks. DG ECHO will prioritise integrated, people-centred emergency interventions aimed at reducing excess mortality and morbidity, as well as addressing aggravated protection risks and threats among most vulnerable population groups. Education in Emergency (EiE) programming, particularly for displacement affected communities and out-of-school children, will continue to be

supported. Finally, disaster preparedness actions will aim at increasing multi-hazard preparedness efforts and anticipatory action in order to respond swiftly to most acute conflict and climate related risks. Actions that will be prioritised must have i) triggering mechanisms and protocols able to incorporate the linkages between and cumulative impact of key hazards, risks and events; ii) anticipatory/early actions to ensure multi-sectorial and integrated humanitarian interventions with clear role for protection services in areas of conflict; iii) ensure better knowledge management, coordination between key actors working in the field and involvement of state and local actors, as well as development interventions for policy and practice consolidation. All DG ECHO supported actions in Somalia are to demonstrate high lifesaving impact capacity, ensuring effective targeting of most at risk population groups. Moreover, given the high-risk of aid diversion, DG ECHO partners must put in place strong mitigation measures and mechanisms to address the issue.

In **South Sudan**, the EU humanitarian priorities will focus on lifesaving interventions, notably in case of new shocks (new conflict-related displacement, epidemic outbreaks, and/or natural disasters / climate shocks) targeting the most vulnerable in the most severely affected areas. The aim is to reduce excess mortality and morbidity notably addressing acute malnutrition, severe food insecurity, gaps in maternal and child health, and epidemics. DG ECHO will also support the provision of humanitarian protection assistance to communities newly exposed to protection risks, including GBV and children affected by armed conflicts. Continued support will be provided for education in emergencies, integrating child protection activities. Emergency response (and preparedness), including rapid response mechanisms, will be supported. Integrated multi-sectorial approaches and mobile outreach teams are encouraged. Context and conditions allowing, opportunities to complement unconditional emergency food assistance with additional light print livelihood support could be considered, in close cooperation with development actors called upon to scale up. Pooled efforts and/or consortia intervention strategies will be promoted, supporting improved synergies, efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of interventions. Opportunities to deliver cash assistance, supported by robust market and protection analyses, will be prioritised. DG ECHO will support coordination, logistics, safety and security, context analysis, data collection, monitoring and conflict sensitivity activities benefiting the humanitarian community. Effective joint advocacy and humanitarian diplomacy will be reinforced, fostering synergies between humanitarian, development, and peace actors. Localisation and developing local actors' capacity should be operationalised.

In **Sudan**, DG ECHO will focus on addressing critical humanitarian needs through the delivery of emergency lifesaving basic services and protection assistance to populations displaced or otherwise affected by conflict, disasters or climate shocks, or epidemics outbreaks with a focus on hard-to-reach areas due to the ongoing conflict. DG ECHO will provide a comprehensive health, nutrition, WASH, shelter/NFI and food response for people recently displaced by the conflict and their host communities to prevent and/or reduce excess mortality and morbidity. DG ECHO will also support activities aimed to scale up core pipelines of humanitarian supplies. A continued response will be provided in Education in Emergencies, with a focus on innovative teaching and education opportunities for schools and learners affected by the ongoing conflict and strong integration of child protection and psychosocial support. Support for principled coordination, logistics, safety and security, context analysis and conflict sensitivity will also be

provided. Given the current context, cross-border operations may be considered to achieve these priorities.

Priorities for DG ECHO in **Uganda** will focus on life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable among refugees and their host communities, with continuous efforts to meet their basic and protection needs. Access to quality basic services in the health and education sectors will remain a priority, while promoting a transition strategy with national authorities and development partners, in a nexus approach. Cash as a modality of intervention will be privileged. Innovative action designed to protect the environment in supporting sustainable livelihood activities will be considered. DG ECHO will continue to strengthen disaster preparedness in high-risk areas to address the multiplicity of crises including epidemics, new refugee influxes and natural hazards by ensuring effective linkages between early warning and early action. DG ECHO will prioritise areas and settlements receiving new refugees and asylum seekers. The most exposed areas to recurrent, multiple and high-risk hazards and epidemics will also be prioritised for disaster preparedness, including through effective early warning systems linked with corresponding life-saving and/or mitigative activities, anticipatory action, targeted capacity building activities and continued support in terms of environmental resilience.

Regional actions:

DG ECHO would consider actions presenting a strategic value added by being elevated at **multi-country or regional level** such as supporting regional coordination, promoting regional thematic coherence or addressing challenges or commonalities faced across the countries.

5.2. Other DG ECHO interventions

The Emergency Toolbox HIP may be drawn upon for the prevention of, and response to, outbreaks of Epidemics. Under the Emergency Toolbox HIP, the Small-Scale Response, Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT). Epidemic tool and Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) instruments may also provide funding options.

Activities under this HIP might be complemented by the activation of the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC). The EHRC is a DG ECHO led global initiative, aiming at supporting humanitarian partners for the delivery of humanitarian assistance with a gap-filling approach. Under the EHRC the Commission has at its disposal several tools that can be activated in case of sudden onset disasters, e.g., a series of Common Logistics Services (including air operations, warehousing services, last-mile ground transportation, etc.), a stockpile of emergency items, and deployment of humanitarian expertise.

EU Humanitarian Aid Flight services in Kenya were discontinued in 2023 to avoid duplication with UNHAS services and maintain the gap-filling character of the initiative.

European Humanitarian Air Bridge flights were conducted in late 2022 between Somalia's capital Mogadishu and secondary destinations in the country to support other common air services. Equally several EU HAB flights were sent in 2023 from Europe and the Middle East to Port Sudan.