

New \$10m UK support to tackle impact of drought in Somalia

The UK's Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford MP, today (17 January 2022) announced a \$10.7 million package of UK support for Somalis affected by extreme drought, during a visit to Kenya as part of a three-country East Africa visit.

The funding will provide vital assistance such as cash to buy urgent food supplies and water to help vulnerable families across Somalia that are desperately suffering from relentless drought. The support is part of the £16.5 million package of UK support to countries in East Africa affected by extreme drought and flooding.

The drought severity in Somalia continues to worsen, with over 90% of the country experiencing drought conditions. There are close to 5 million Somalis who are hungry, and a further 3.5 million in need of urgent humanitarian assistance this year due to successive poor rains and failed harvests. A further 2.6 million people have fled their homes due to conflict.

The funding is expected to support almost 500,000 people in Somalia to access clean water and afford food supplies. This kind of early preventative action is crucial, as was learned from the 2016/17 drought in Somalia when early action and funding led by the UK helped to narrowly avoid a famine.

Climate change is driving extreme weather events across the region, worsening pre-existing drought, while poor governance and ongoing conflicts in Somalia are displacing vulnerable communities and destroying livelihoods.

On a visit to East Africa, UK Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford MP, said:

For countries in East Africa, climate change is not a future problem – it is driving a humanitarian emergency right now. Catastrophic droughts and floods, paired with ongoing conflicts and poor governance in Somalia, South Sudan and Ethiopia, are creating a perfect storm in East Africa which risks pushing hundreds of thousands of people into famine.

The UK's commitment to supporting our partners in East Africa is unwavering and we know that early action now can prevent mass loss of life. This funding package will provide vital assistance to almost a million people across the region, helping those affected to access clean water and healthy food.

British Ambassador to Somalia, Kate Foster, said:

The situation is extremely worrying, with millions of people in desperate need of lifesaving food and clean water. The UK is moving quickly to provide support as experience has shown that early, preventative action is vital to avoiding mass loss of life.

So far, the UK has provided £32 million in humanitarian funding this year, reaching over 1 million people with a combination of emergency and longer-term assistance.

The UK is moving quickly to provide support with an additional \$10 million of funding as experience has shown that early, preventative action is vital to avoiding mass loss of life.

The UK prioritised supporting communities affected by extreme weather events such as droughts as host of COP26 in Glasgow. As part of the historic agreement reached at the summit, wealthy nations committed to double the overall climate finance available for adaptation programmes.

The UK is a long-standing supporter of Africa's adaptation to climate change, with around half of the UK's £2.7 billion adaptation budget between 2016 and 2020 spent in Africa.