



Kenyan ASAL counties continue to face the brunt of the Drought

Joint statement by the ASAL Humanitarian Network

Garissa, 10th November 2021

The ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) mobilised its members and the wider Kenyan community in an online campaign to raise awareness and demand accountability on the ongoing drought facing ASAL Counties. With over 2.5 million people¹ in 23 ASAL Counties affected and numbers are expected to continue rising, the AHN is concerned by the little or no response from the authorities concerned. As the world is watching COP26 in Glasgow, these commitments to address the impact of climate change come too late for millions of Kenyans. Under the #DroughtKE21, AHN in collaboration with Kenyan social media activists reached a total of 651,870 online users who expressed solidarity with the plight of Kenyans in ASAL counties. **Kenyans online expressed concern over the lackadaisical approach taken by both the County and National Government through the departments concerned.**

The underperformance of the long rains means that pasture and browse conditions are below average for this time of year and with forecasts of yet another below-average short rains upcoming, the situation in the ASALs will only continue to deteriorate. The below-average conditions of pasture and browse affect the condition of livestock – and their condition is worsening due to increased distances to water and pasture and an anticipated increase in livestock diseases and livestock deaths. **Tensions and conflict over limited access to resources are increasing as pastoralist communities are moving in search of water and pasture, both within the traditionally negotiated areas or outside of these locations².**

@Qamar Queen a twitter user posting from Daadab shared this post with disturbing images of dead livestock spanning the expansive arid landscape of Akakaile Ward:

“There’s no much intervention on the ground. Communities lost hope and are crying for help. This is Alikune, Abakaile ward, Dadab subcounty. #DroughtKE21”

Another user Ahmed Malim Adow shared:

#DroughtKE21 its just another phenomenon that shows governance is not working for the people in Kenya! ...This is not due to lack of resources but politicians do not prioritise the needs of the community but their wellbeing!We don't lack water or land but plans & intentions

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the situation by restricting access to health and nutrition services, a slowdown in trade and losses of income and livelihoods due to measures put in place to control the spread of the virus. The locust, COVID-19 and drought crises come at a time when Kenya is grappling with a growing debt and fiscal crisis.

While we take note and appreciate that national media reports of government action immediately after our online #DroughtKE21 campaign where the government committed to disburse cash stipends to households targeting 369,000 vulnerable households and 734,119 individuals every two months, the entitlements people are receiving are not sufficient to cover immediate household needs.

¹ Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, Food Security and Nutrition May 2021 Update: https://mcusercontent.com/9206ea93bb8c6f35f98cc8ccf/files/b5229e0d-1a4f-7020-8bdb-a67dfc693ad4/FSNWG_Statement_May_2021.05.pdf

² Increased tensions and conflict are witnessed along the border areas between Garissa – Isiolo, Wajir – Isiolo and Wajir – Marsabit.



The ASAL Humanitarian Network:

- **Calls upon the national and county governments to release available funding** to scale up the response with both a top-up to most vulnerable households to minimum household needs as well as widening the safety net program to include a larger population and to create social accountability mechanisms that will involve community humanitarian partners and stakeholders in planning, monitoring and implementation of the action.
- **Urges the Government of Kenya and the wider humanitarian community to scale up the response beyond December 2021**, in light of anticipated below-average performance of short rains from October to December.
- **Appeals for special focus on the needs of women and young girls** who are disproportionately affected by the adverse effects of the drought and put at greater risk, for example risk of sexual and gender based violence and early marriage.
- **Interrogates existing opportunities for the development of more responsive Disaster Management Policies and Legislation** that look into the socio-economic impact of the drought and its effect on women, youth, household incomes, pastoralists and persons living with disabilities.
- **Recommends the adoption of Forecast Based Action** that combines water and food security indicators, urges the Water and Sanitation Coordination Group (WESCORD) to prioritize the incorporation of a water severity index, which sets in prior to food insecurity in ASAL context
- **Calls for locally led responses** that are timely, and that sustain and reinforce existing community efforts and linking these to the global Climate Justice agenda in line with recent commitments made by President Uhuru Kenyatta during the COP26 Summit.

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