



Ending drought emergencies: Urgent action on sustainable solutions

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The Heads of States of Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) countries should be congratulated on the pledges to end drought emergencies made at the Nairobi Summit on the Horn of Africa Crisis in September 2011. However, limited progress has been made to implement those pledges, and dryland communities in the Horn of Africa are already faced with the prospect of possible below normal rainfall in the coming months. Thus urgent attention should be paid to speeding up the implementation of country plans and the Declaration particularly on the following issues:

1. **Encourage local preparedness and planning and transfer contingency funds** to local administrations in time for early action. Governments should encourage local administrations to prepare for possible low rainfall and transfer money in time for early preparedness activities that can ***prevent further undermining of coping strategies***.
2. **Support evidence-based policies for the drylands** that direct investment into sustainable economic growth. Governments should ensure dryland development policies and investment plans in the region are based on rigorous evidence and research that identifies the ***potential of these areas to contribute to economic growth, ecological integrity and social equity given current and future climatic variability***. Particular caution should be paid to promoting crop production where rainfall is too variable, water too limited or where land has other productive uses, in order to prevent negative social, environmental and economic damage.
3. **Integrate the African Union Policy Framework for Pastoralism** into national policy frameworks and investment plans. The majority of the population most dramatically affected by drought engage in pastoralist or agro-pastoralist livelihoods and economies. African Heads of State have approved a comprehensive Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa that sets out a way of improving the living and working conditions of these communities in order to build national economies and promote security and democracy. The Framework should be integrated into ***all national policy frameworks and all country plans and strategies with immediate effect***.
4. **Fast track provision of the building blocks for sustainable development** in order that other efforts at promoting resilience are successful. Resilience building efforts will have limited impact unless the foundations for development are in place. These include: ***high quality and appropriately delivered education at all levels; community control and management of key resources, particularly land***; basic infrastructure, especially roads, electricity and ICTs and ***strengthened government capacity*** to engage with communities and promote local co-ordination. The provision of these building blocks in the drylands is way below other parts of the country and needs to be addressed with the utmost urgency.

Donors, NGOs, CSOs and other organisations have a role to play in supporting these efforts, however governments must provide the leadership and vision to ensure energies and resources are harnessed. We trust that the meetings at the beginning of April 2012 will prioritize the actions outlined and set timelines for their implementation and institutionalisation. ***2012 must provide proof that pledges around ending drought emergencies have led to substantial action and that we have finally turned the corner on drought crisis in the drylands of the Horn of Africa.***

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<http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/east-central-africa/reglap>