

Testimony
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Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State
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Subcommittee on African Affairs
“Responding to Drought and Famine in the Horn of Africa”
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Good morning, Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Isakson, and members of the Committee. Thank you for holding this hearing on the drought and famine in the Horn of Africa. We share your grave concern about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa. The eastern Horn of Africa is currently experiencing one of the worst droughts since the 1950s. More than 12 million people—mainly in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia—are severely affected and in need of humanitarian assistance. In Somalia, drought conditions have exacerbated a complex emergency that has continued since 1991. The information coming out of the Horn of Africa, especially the dire situation of refugees from Somalia, is devastating. In cooperation with our international and regional partners, we will continue to work to address this humanitarian crisis while continuing to support long-term political and food security in the region.

Somalia is at the center of the crisis, but the crisis is affecting the entire Horn of Africa. Ethiopia has issued an appeal indicating 4.5 million Ethiopians need food assistance. In Kenya, the government and a consortium of NGOs have placed 10 districts in the north and east under alert for increased food insecurity and malnutrition. The crisis has hit hardest in Somalia, where failed or poor rains combined with conflict have left 3.7 million people in need of immediate, life-saving assistance. Two areas of southern Somalia, the Lower Shabelle Region and areas of the Bakool region, are currently facing famine conditions, and the

remaining regions of southern Somalia are projected to meet the threshold for famine unless humanitarian assistance is significantly increased.

The number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the region has increased the challenges of drought response. There are approximately 620,000 Somali refugees in the eastern Horn region, according the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with 200,000 of these fleeing in the past year alone. Reports from inside Somalia indicate the combined arrival rate of 2,000 new refugees per day in Ethiopia and Kenya could rise dramatically as the situation in Somalia grows increasingly desperate. The current flows threaten to overwhelm the existing refugee assistance structure in Kenya and Ethiopia. Moreover, there are reports of over 400,000 IDPs in Mogadishu alone.

A large-scale multi-donor intervention—my colleagues will go into greater depth on this—is underway to prevent the further decline of an already dire situation, but there will be no quick fix. The United States is one of the largest donors of emergency assistance to the region, helping more than 4.5 million of those in need in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Djibouti and providing nearly \$459 million in humanitarian assistance to date. Our assistance includes food, treatment for severely malnourished people, health care, clean water, proper sanitation, and hygiene education and supplies. Our assistance also includes \$69 million for refugee assistance in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. The U.S. government has previously supported the expansion of the Dadaab camps, and we understand that the Government of Kenya has agreed to allow new refugees to begin occupying the new areas. Our Embassy in Nairobi is actively engaged with the Kenyans to ensure the best possible emergency response. I know my colleagues Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Reuben Brigety and Assistant Administrator Nancy

Lindborg will go into greater detail about these conditions in their testimony; I would like to turn now to the political complications of the drought in Somalia.

The response to the drought has been complicated by the continuing instability in Somalia—especially due to the actions of al-Shabaab. Those most seriously affected by the current drought are the more than two million Somalis trapped in al-Shabaab-controlled areas in south central Somalia. Since January 2010, al-Shabaab has largely prohibited international humanitarian workers and organizations from operating in the areas it controls. Al-Shabaab's continued refusal to grant humanitarian access has prevented the international community from responding to the drought in south central Somalia, which precipitated the famine we are seeing now. The United States is pressing all parties to immediately restore unimpeded humanitarian access to all parts of Somalia.

During the last week of July, major fighting began again in Mogadishu between the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces against al-Shabaab and its affiliates. With more than 400,000 IDPs now residing in and around Mogadishu, this renewed fighting is an area of concern. We are confident that AMISOM and the TFG understand the threat this fighting places on the civilian population and call on all parties to do everything in their power to protect civilians, particularly those displaced due to recent famine and drought conditions. We continue to support AMISOM and the TFG in their efforts to bring stability to Mogadishu in the face of continuing threats from al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab is a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization and has also been sanctioned by the United Nations for its role in threatening the peace, security, and stability of Somalia including disrupting the Djibouti Peace Process;

and for obstructing humanitarian assistance into Somalia. As we seek to take advantage of any current openings to expand aid distribution, we are also working with our partners in the international community to counter al-Shabaab's ability to threaten our interests or continue to hold the Somali people hostage. At the same time, we are taking the necessary steps to support the flow of urgently needed humanitarian aid to those who need it in south central Somalia while working to minimize any risk of diversion to al-Shabaab. We have worked closely with the Department of Treasury to ensure that aid workers—who are partnering with the U.S. Government to help save lives under difficult and dangerous conditions—are not in conflict with U.S. laws and regulations. To be clear, however, the U.S. sanctions against al-Shabaab do not and never have prohibited the delivery of assistance to Somalia, including to those areas under the de facto control of al-Shabaab. The presence of Al-Shabaab means that U.S. persons must adhere to U.S. legal requirements in the course of providing assistance in Somalia.

In the long term, regional security in the Horn of Africa requires political stability in Somalia. The United States already has in place a long-term process to stabilize Somalia. Last year we announced the Dual Track approach to broaden our efforts by taking into account the complex nature of Somali society and politics, as well as to be more flexible and adaptable in our engagement. On Track One, we continue support for the Djibouti Peace Process, the TFG, and AMISOM as a first line of effort to stabilize Somalia and expel al-Shabaab from Mogadishu. Since 2007, the United States has supported stabilization efforts by obligating approximately \$258 million to support AMISOM's training and logistical needs, as well as approximately \$85 million to support and build the capacity of TFG forces. Recent security advances by AMISOM and the TFG in Mogadishu have taken back significant portions of the city from al-Shabaab control.

On Track Two, we are deepening our engagement with the regional governments of Somaliland and Puntland, as well as with local and regional administrations throughout South Central Somalia who are opposed to al-Shabaab, but who are not affiliated with the TFG. In FY 11, the United States plans to provide approximately \$21 million to support development efforts in support of the Dual Track policy. We are reviewing how best to adapt our travel policy for Somalia to execute our Dual Track approach most effectively without compromising on our obligation to protect the security of U.S. personnel when they travel inside Somalia. Our long-term efforts will continue to focus on security, governance, and humanitarian and development assistance.

In addition to working towards political stability in Somalia, the U.S. government is also focusing its efforts to help provide long-term food security in the eastern Horn of Africa region. We recognize that emergency assistance alone cannot solve the underlying long-term problems in the region. That is why President Obama's innovative and forward-looking Feed the Future initiative is so critical. Feed the Future is already at work in the region with local, regional, and multilateral partners improving agricultural production, improving markets, building infrastructure, bringing innovation, and addressing the entire value chain—from seed to market.

As I noted when I began, we are extremely concerned about the drought and famine in the Horn of Africa. We are working hard with our interagency and international partners to deliver quickly the life-saving short-term relief critical to those suffering its effects. U.S. government and U.S.-funded assistance has prevented the loss of millions of lives. We recognize that both the food security problem in the region and the political instability problem in Somalia are linked, and that both demand long-term solutions. Our Dual Track approach to Somalia

provides an effective mechanism for us to grapple with the challenges of political stability in Somalia. Our Feed the Future initiative will help create food security in the eastern Horn of Africa region. The United States will continue to monitor and respond to the humanitarian crisis and work with host governments on long-term solutions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome your questions.