



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# SOMALIA 2017

## Preventing famine, building resilience, promoting recovery

FAO interventions to reinforce rural livelihoods are holding the line against worsening food insecurity, mitigating displacement pressures, reducing the overall humanitarian burden, laying the groundwork for a faster pivot to post-crisis recovery, and building greater resilience to future shocks.

Back-to-back failed harvests have left Somali farmers in debt, out of cash, and without seeds for planting. A dramatic drop in agricultural production has slashed employment opportunities and sent food prices soaring. With fodder and water scarce, pastoralists are enduring animal mortality rates as high as 60 percent.

Weakened, surviving livestock are not producing enough milk and their sale value has slid. The result in the shorter term: Rising food insecurity *in* rural areas and population displacement *from* rural areas. Consequences for the longer-term: A longer, steeper climb back to self-reliance and persistent system fragility.



FARAWEYNE,  
SOMALILAND

A healthy camel can produce up to 5 litres of nutrient-rich milk each day.  
© FAO/F. Nyakairu

### Highlights of FAO's response so far



**Cash transfers to at-risk rural families:** \$10.3 million to date, via initial payments.



**People reached with cash and seeds:** 450,000+.



**Seed for farmers ahead of main Gu season:** 1,000 tonnes.



**Animals given life-sustaining veterinary care:** 14+ million.



**Pastoral people benefiting from animal care:** 2+ million so far.



**204 agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation projects** completed in 2017. 149 additional projects underway.



**14+ million liters of water trucked** to watering sites in northern and south-central Somalia.

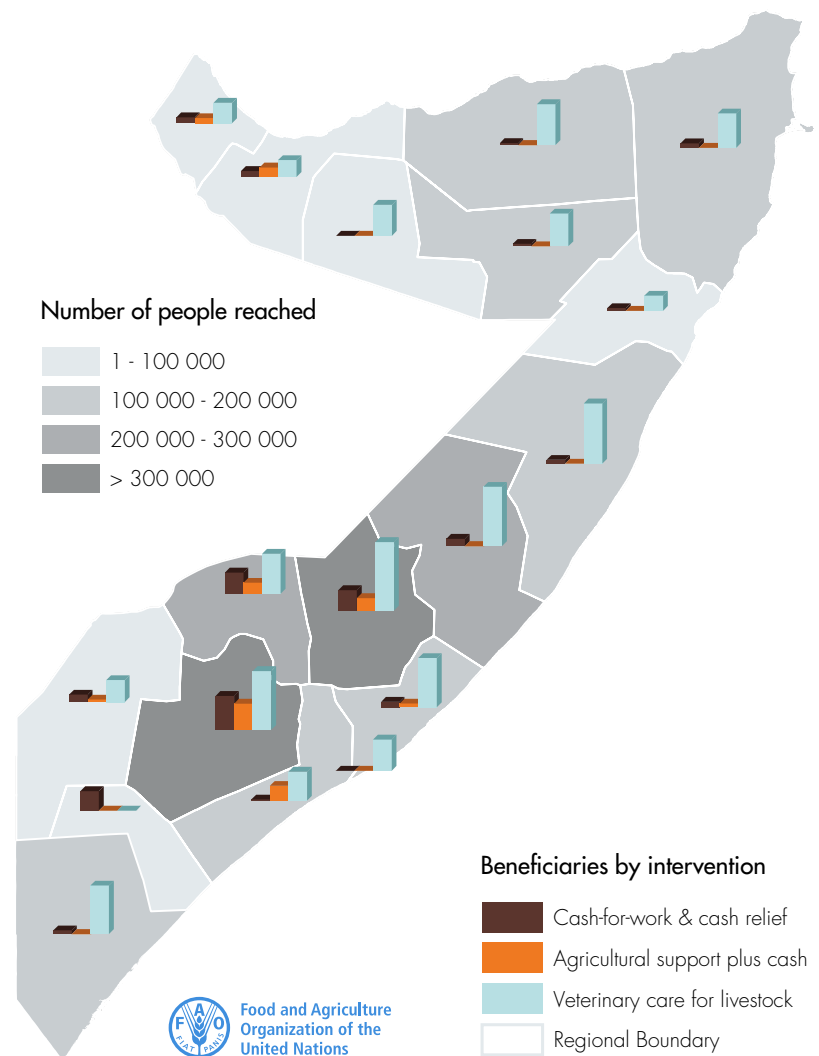


**1,800 hectares of land plowed for farmers** ahead of the Gu planting season.

## STRATEGY

1. Unconditional cash-relief and cash-for-work programs that put survival money in people's pockets, rehabilitate agricultural infrastructure, and sustain communities.
2. Cash to farmers for immediate food needs combined with vouchers for locally-sourced seeds and other inputs so they can remain home, resume farming, and start growing food.
3. Veterinary care and water for livestock to keep them alive, healthy and producing, enabling pastoralists to feed themselves and stay self-reliant.

## FAO DROUGHT RESPONSE & FAMINE PREVENTION PROGRAM: AS OF 2 JUNE 2017



### Why rural livelihoods?

The vast majority of Somalis depend on farming, pastoralism, or a mix of the two as their main source of income, sustenance, and survival – that’s why targeting support to sustain their livelihoods in times of crisis is critical.

Helping rural families avoid losing productive assets – while simultaneously providing them the means to continue farming and

animal-rearing – yields multiple benefits. It meets immediate food needs. It keeps people self-reliant (meaning life-saving assistance can be targeted to those in greatest need.) And it speeds post-crisis recovery.

We know that once a rural Somali family’s livelihood has been destroyed it can take years before they get back on their feet. Conversely, a recent field study by FAO, Unicef and WFP in Dollow found that the coping capacity of rural households who received consistent livelihoods

support improved by 23 percent, measured on a resilience index being developed by the three agencies.

Helping people stay self-reliant is more cost effective than giving them aid after they’ve been pushed over the brink. Replacing the average Somali pastoralists’ herd of 40 animals in a worst-case scenario of total die-off would cost around \$USD1,600 – utterly out of reach for that pastoralist without external help. Yet it only costs \$16 dollars for FAO to provide that same herd with basic veterinary care to keep those animals alive.

## Changing the storyline

When a crisis hits, we must with all urgency treat the symptoms of acute food insecurity in the immediate term, saving lives – but we cannot leave unaddressed the underlying factors that allow crises to unfold every time there is a system shock.

Resilience is not only about safeguarding livelihoods. It is also about giving farmers and pastoralists more options – ways to diversify their economic and productive activities, ways to reach new markets, ways to add value. It's about preventing the continued degradation of natural resources, and restoring the ecosystems that underpin agriculture, fisheries and pastoralism.

Ultimately, supporting rural communities and building up their resilience is about building a stronger, more sustainable future in Somalia. If we fail to keep people's livelihoods intact during this crisis – if we don't help them enhance their coping capacities – we will find ourselves here again the next time an extended drought hits.

## IMMEDIATE IMPACTS

- Seed packages delivered to families in rainfed agricultural areas should produce enough cereal to feed 4 families for 6 months via direct consumption by beneficiary households and sales on local markets.
- Each beneficiary family will earn around \$1,000 selling surplus cereal.
- Avoided post-harvest losses thanks to FAO-provided storage bags should add from 3 to 5 months' worth of cereals to their household stocks.
- Each of the 350,000 families whose animals have been strengthened thanks to veterinary are currently getting around 5 liters milk from their herds of 20 animals, on average.
- That amount of milk can keep 1 mother and 3-4 children nourished for one day.
- Number of people whose pastoral livelihoods have been supported so thanks to care: 2+ million.
- Value of avoided livestock losses: \$560 million.



### DOLOW, GEDO REGION

Getting river water into farmers' fields can give a major boost to maize production.  
© FAO/E. Nyakairu



# WHERE A GOAT IS LIFE

**AT ANY GIVEN TIME,  
ONE IN THREE GOATS  
IS LACTATING AND  
PRODUCING MILK –  
LIKE THE ONE BESIDE  
3-YEAR OLD FATUMA  
IN PUNTLAND IN  
NORTHERN SOMALIA.**

**AS LONG AS  
THIS GOAT STAYS  
HEALTHY, FATUMA  
WILL HAVE A DAILY  
MILK SUPPLY –  
AROUND 2 CUPS  
PER DAY.**

**MANY RURAL  
SOMALIS ARE LIVING  
ON THE EDGE OF  
FAMINE, DEPENDING  
ON THEIR LIVESTOCK  
TO SURVIVE.  
ANIMALS ARE THEIR  
SOURCE OF FOOD,  
INCOME AND TRADE  
– THEIR LIFELINE.**

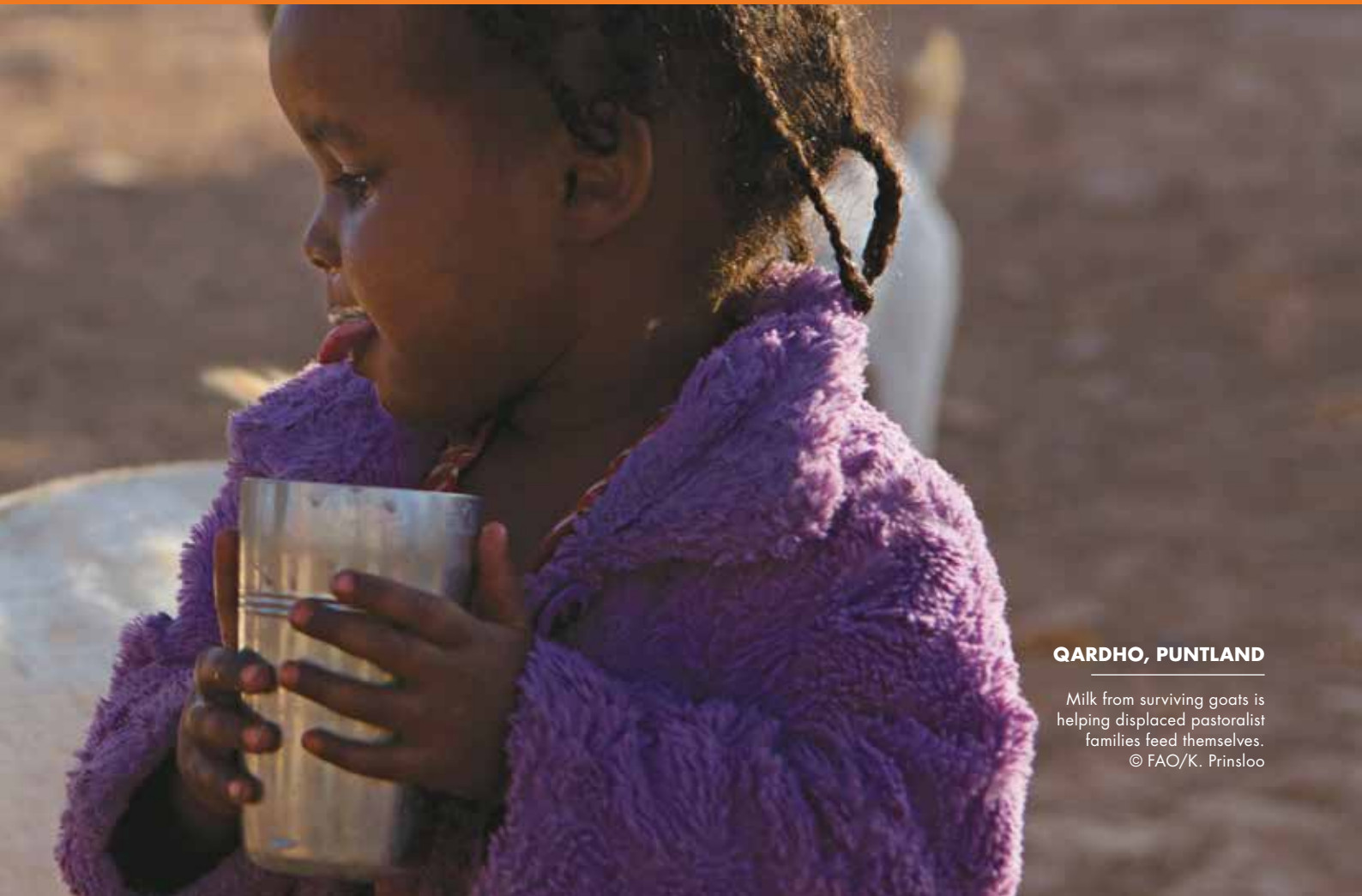






**SOMALIA**

Drought-induced water scarcity has brought extreme pressures to bear on pastoralist communities and the herds they depend on.  
©FAO/F. Nyakairu



**QARDHO, PUNTLAND**

Milk from surviving goats is helping displaced pastoralist families feed themselves.  
© FAO/K. Prinsloo



# FAO'S APPROACH IN SOMALIA



## Advance information and early detection

Early warning regarding the risk of famine made by the FAO-based Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit – Somalia (FSNAU) in February was catalytic; it sparked a swift and large-scale response by the international community that so far has managed to help stave off the worst, despite poor rains that continue to undermine food production, ongoing displacement, and a growing disease burden.

FSNAU's early detection, data gathering and analytic capacity is amplified by the FAO-managed SWALIM project, which uses a country-spanning network of automated and manned weather stations in combination with satellite-based remote sensing technologies to capture and share real-time data on weather conditions, water levels and quality, flood risks, vegetation cover, and more.

## Evidence based interventions

FAO has a 40-year track record supporting rural livelihoods in Somalia – in times of crises and in times of stability. We understand how rural Somalia works; with FSNAU embedded in our office we benefit from their additional expertise as well as the best-available data on agricultural, market, and food security trends. Our interventions are driven by evidence-based analysis and targeted to specific needs.

## Access, innovation

Our track record on the ground has earned FAO trust. We maintain effective working relationships with a range of actors required to operate in rural Somalia and have established systems of delivery that allow us to get support to rural people almost anywhere – even where access is an issue. In

many areas of rural Somalia, we are the only humanitarian actor in operation and able to reach at-need communities.

We enjoy collaborative ties with multiple ministries in all regions. At the heart of our delivery effort is our corps of Somali-national staff operating out of offices located in various locations across the country, as well as our broad network of Somali non-governmental partners, who are plugged into local communities and social structures. Backing them is a team of national and international veterinary, agronomic, operations, logistics and security professionals.

Somalia is a challenging operational environment; creative problem-solving and a capacity to adapt quickly are required. That is how, for instance, FAO has gotten \$10.3 million for food purchases into the pockets of rural Somalis so far, partnering with regional *hawala* financial institutions and local money lenders to get it done. Or how we are sourcing seed and veterinary medicine procurement locally, generating knock-on benefits to the Somali economy.





**BULO BURTE, HIRAAN**

Families receive FAO vouchers for cereal and vegetable seeds.  
© FAO

## Robust risk reduction and monitoring

Via a series of monitoring and compliance mechanisms, FAO tracks aid to ensure that it is reaching targeted beneficiaries – and that they are satisfied with what they're getting. This

includes pre- and post-intervention outreach efforts that engage communities and activate traditional information-sharing and decision-making networks, an advanced mobile biometrics and GPS-marking system, and a call centre that daily checks with partners and beneficiaries to track progress. Using satellites and remote sensing technology, we can see irrigation canals being dug through our

cash-for-work programs, and detect greening vegetation where we have delivered seeds.

This activity is people-oriented – improvements to efficiency ultimately mean more lives saved or put on a path to greater prosperity. It also allows us to reassure donors supporting our work that they are getting strong value-for-money on their humanitarian investments.



**BANDAR BEYLA, BARI**

A pastoralist carries one of his family's most important assets, a goat, to an FAO veterinary team for treatment.  
© FAO/Karel Prinsloo





**BANDAR BEYLA,  
PUNTLAND**

Villagers come together  
to build a communal  
water catchment.  
© FAO/K. Prinsloo



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# SOMALIA

Preventing famine, building resilience,  
promoting recovery

#famine2017  
#fightingfamine  
#avertfamineinsomalia

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