



The 'Horn of Africa' region has been hit by what the United Nations describe as the worst drought in 60 years. This region includes the following countries: Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. The UN organization fears that tens of thousands of people have died of starvation in Somalia, while others are fleeing to neighboring countries, especially to Kenya. More distressing reports reveal how children are dying or being abandoned by their mothers along the roads since they do not have the energy to make it to refugee camps, and some have died in the hands of their mothers hence left behind. An estimated number of 400,000 people face starvation in Wajir Kenya, where thousands of malnourished men, women and children have moved to camps to get relief food.

There is said to be a shortfall of 31.6 billion shillings and worse still, WFP is accessing only 40 per cent of the hunger-stricken in Somalia, with 2.2 million at the risk of dying in the southern part of the country as "local authorities" (al Shabaab militants) have denied access to humanitarian workers. They are said to have rejected UN declaration of famine in the regions they control, claiming it is just drought and not famine as such.

They also claim that the declaration is political. WFP Somalia country director Stelano Gozetti said they were considering flying over the worst-hit areas and dropping food supplies, to help save lives of those trapped there.

The French government has also donated \$10 million to purchase food in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia. Here in Kenya, Special Programmes Minister Esther Murugi says the government has set aside Sh4.4 billion to provide food to children in drought areas.

At an emergency meeting in Rome to discuss the drought-stricken Horn of Africa region, the officials said the UN had received about \$1 billion (696 million Euros) since first launching an

appeal for the region in November 2010, but needs a billion more by the end of the year to cope with the emergency.

The World Bank has also pledged more than \$500 million, with the bulk of the money set to go towards long-term projects to aid livestock farmers, while \$12 million would be for immediate assistance to those worst hit by the crisis. However, charities have voiced disappointment at the international response since it's only a few of the richest and powerful economies that are willing to demonstrate today their commitment to saving the lives of many of the poorest and most vulnerable people.