

## CALL FOR ACTION: MAKING LEADERSHIP WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD INSECURITY

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in”

Matthew 25:35 NIV

### Introduction

We faith leaders and representatives of Christian Organisations (AACC, ACK, CAPA, WCC-EHAIA, FECCLAHA, LWF, OAIC, WSCF, EAA, ACT Alliance, Anglican Alliance and World Vision)<sup>1</sup> meeting in Nairobi on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, 2011 hosted by the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA) to reflect on the current and persistent food insecurity and humanitarian crisis that has affected a number of African countries, especially those in the Eastern and Horn of Africa. Our current predicament is a wake up call to the global community and its various organs including the African Union, Arab League, United Nations, and National Governments to appreciate that the foundation for a stable and productive global community is food security. It is therefore urgent that we review existing policies and priorities in light of the pressing global challenges of sustainable living and food security.

We recognize that in addition to drought factors like conflict, climate change, weak governance, and lack of effective farming technologies for communities, gender dynamics and insecure livelihoods are part of the drivers that are fuelling the humanitarian crisis. These realities have awakened us to our responsibilities towards planet Earth in a manner that is expected of us as stewards. The time for complacency is over; the time to reorganize ourselves as faith leaders and representatives to act is now in an *integrative* and *collaborative* manner.

As Christian leaders representing different African Countries and faith institutions in Africa, we are moved by the wide spread and protracted suffering of our brothers, sisters and children, especially in Eastern and Horn of Africa. We deeply reflected on the root causes of this crisis in an attempt to find sustainable ways of responding to the immediate and long term needs of our people. As a result, we hereby call upon all people to respond to this urgent **Call to Action**, recognising that:

- We are accountable for the manner in which we have handled planet earth and for our differences resulting in the incredible suffering of over 12.4 million<sup>2</sup> of our brothers, sisters and children through drought and continuing conflict in the region;
- We are also accountable for the fact that in this age of advanced scientific knowledge we are still unable to bring this knowledge to bear on the challenges of food security;
- We are responsible/recognise for the lack/(inadequate peace and reconciliation) of political leadership motivated by care and policy choices have not been guided by the crucial needs

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<sup>1</sup> AACC – All Africa Conference of Churches, ACK – Anglican Church of Kenya, CAPA – Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa, EHAIA – Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa, FECCLAHA – Fellowship of Christian Councils in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa, LWF – Lutheran World Federation, OAIC – Organisation of African Instituted Churches, WSCF – World Students Christian Federation, EAA – Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, ACT Alliance – Action by Churches Together

<sup>2</sup> UNOCHA Horn of Africa Drought Crisis Update & Developments, 2 August 2011

facing the people and sustainable livelihoods including food security for communities, thus placing over 12.4 million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance;

- We also feel responsible that while some parts of our region have experienced a bumper harvest, we have been unable to create effective mechanisms of reaching out to our starving brothers, sisters and children with food in time.

**We call upon the International Community to:**

1. Meet the US\$ 1.4 billion humanitarian funding gap<sup>3</sup> and provide the necessary technical support to meet the needs of the affected population, especially women and children. Particular attention must be paid to funding for emergency health and nutrition interventions, as well as child protection programmes;
2. Urgently seek to work with relevant state and non-state actors on cessation of hostilities to ensure immediate, safe, unimpeded access to the affected population in South Central Somalia for all humanitarian organizations. Scale up efforts to address the dire nutritional and health situation among under five year olds and pregnant and lactating mothers by strengthening emergency nutrition and health support programs;
3. Ensure that resources remain steady until communities can recover while working towards long-term interventions to mitigate loss of community resilience and provide long term support to vulnerable families;
4. Prioritize Disaster Risk Reduction and community resilience with a focus on the most vulnerable groups such as pastoralist communities, women and children. Equal attention must be given to early warning and early response, especially in view of the lack of early response to the current Horn of Africa food and drought crisis. Donors must use their influence to urge national governments to implement key national disaster management strategies and monitor implementation progress;
5. Ensure that global food security is given high priority at the G20 meeting in Cannes on 3-4 November, 2011. Engage the UN High Level Task Force on Global Food Security (HLTF) to review progress of the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security (GPAFS) agreed in 2009 in light of the current food and drought crisis in the Horn of Africa. Special attention must be given to address volatility of global agricultural prices, spending on agriculture with a view to increasing agricultural productivity in line with the calls made by civil society, including faith-based communities;
6. The United Nations should champion the search for fresh mechanisms that ensure compassionate and accountable leadership that will address the root causes of the emerging culture of conflict and protest which inevitably interrupts the food production cycle and capacities of communities.

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<sup>3</sup> UN Media Advisory: UN calls for more funds to save lives across Horn of Africa, 29 July 2011  
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39189&Cr=horn+of+africa&Cr1=>

**We appreciate and recognize those who have responded to the current humanitarian and food crisis in various ways:**

- The local leaders and fellow community members reaching out to each other in love, care and comfort;
- Professionals working in deplorable conditions to relieve suffering in the camps and drought stricken communities;
- Faith groups for providing accompaniment as people struggle to find meaning, hope in the face of harsh realities and a dehumanising environment;
- The business community for creating synergy in their response;
- The international community for galvanising financial and technical support to assist the affected communities;
- The humanitarian organisations and local leaders for internationally advocating the plight of the afflicted presence;
- The media for keeping us abreast of the plight of our brothers and sisters and challenging us to respond;
- Governments for reaching out and opening their borders to those afflicted by famine.

Signed