

Somalia Initial Rapid Needs Assessment (SIRNA)

Somaliland and Puntland | May 2016

Executive Summary



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Cover photo: SIRNA assessment team

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Executive Summary

In February 2016, following successive low precipitation rainy seasons, the Government of Somaliland issued a declaration of drought as a result of the El Nino weather system. The declaration followed a similar appeal for humanitarian assistance by the Somaliland and Puntland administrations in January 2016. The drought was reported to have a high impact on the primarily pastoralist communities and their livestock in the affected regions of Awdal, Bari, Muduug, Nugaal, Sool, Sanaag, Togdheer and Woqooyi Galbeed.

Following the request of the ICCG and OCHA, the Somalia Rapid Needs Assessment (SIRNA) tool was rolled out in affected states of Puntland and Somaliland in March and April 2016. In order to provide a broad multi-cluster needs overview, the assessment includes a household survey, representative at the state level, and purposive key informant and facility mapping tools. The assessment was implemented with the support of NGOs, UN agencies and Government departments. Funding for the assessment was provided by USAID/OFDA, ECHO and OCHA.

The SIRNA assessment was conducted in order to identify needs arising within drought-affected areas. As a result, the assessment primarily targeted rural communities where there predictions by FAO SWALIM showed a moderate or severe drought effect at the time of assessment. In all assessed areas, food and water were highlighted as priority needs, although healthcare was also reported as a priority need in many regions. Given the slow onset nature of drought, the severity of vulnerabilities within the assessed areas, and the likely knock-on effect on livelihoods, the recovery from the impacts of the drought is likely to require support beyond immediate life-saving needs. Key sector findings were as follows:

Food security and livelihoods

- There is an immediate need to support drought-affected communities by **improving access to adequate and sufficiently diverse food sources**. Assessed communities in Somaliland had a higher proportion of households in the *poor* food consumption category at 85%, compared to 49% of those assessed in Puntland. This was linked to a dramatic reduction in the variety of food consumed as a result of the drought and to a lower average expenditure on food in Somaliland.
- The impact of livestock lost on primarily pastoralist communities mean that these communities will have limited self-recovery capacities in the medium term. **79% of households in Puntland and 73% of households in Somaliland reported the loss of livestock since the drought.**
- It should be noted that while 43% of households in Puntland and 48% in Somaliland reported either livestock produce or subsistence from livestock as their primary livelihood, **pastoralism is not the sole income or support source within the affected communities**, and there is a reliance on informal work. Reported livelihoods also indicate a heavy dependence on daily labour as a source of income, which was listed as the primary source of support by 26% of households in Puntland and 35% in Somaliland.

WASH

- Access to safe water is an immediate need in drought affected communities, as a significant proportion of households do not have access to sufficient water to meet emergency standards. **18% of households in targeted communities in Puntland and 30% in Somaliland do not have access to at least 7.5 litres of water per**

person per day, 32% and 46% respectively do not have access to the ideal Sphere emergency standard of 15 litres per person per day.

- Even in areas where recent rains will have alleviated quantity issues in water supply, **the reliance on uncovered sources for drinking, and the limited use of water treatment either at source or at the household level means that water quality is of concern.** The knock-on effect of low-quality drinking water is likely to affect nutrition and health in the medium to long term. 74% of households in both states primarily rely on unimproved water sources, primarily *burkads*¹ and/or unprotected wells. This leads to concerns over the standard of water quality for drinking, especially as only 10% of households in targeted communities in Puntland and 8% in Somaliland reported treating drinking water.
- Should drought persist following the current rainy season, the cost borne by households in order to access water is likely to continue increasing, and support to households to meet this rising cost may be required. 78% of households in Puntland's communities targeted by the assessment and 54% of households in Somaliland's communities reported they were currently paying to access water. Facility mapping indicated an average increase of 73% in water price from a month prior to assessment.
- Regardless of drought conditions, many households practice open defecation, a reflection of the limited coverage of latrines. In the long term, change in this practice will require both provision of facilities in key areas, and information campaigns to support the sustainability of latrine usage. 31% of households in Puntland's communities and 64% of households in Somaliland's ones reported they do not currently have access to a latrine, the state difference being largely attributable to a higher prevalence of communal latrines in Puntland.

Protection

- Despite low levels of displacement, concerns were raised around family separation in drought-affected communities. **A high proportion of households reported the separation of family members, 37% in Puntland and 24% in Somaliland.** This included particularly high reporting of minors separated from the household. In addition 13% of assessed households in Puntland and 7% in Somaliland reported that they were caring for unaccompanied or separated minors.
- **In assessed communities in Puntland, support is required to address significant protection concerns related to the safety and security of drought-affected communities.** Communities in Puntland reported particularly high instances of most security concerns, with 50% of separations reported to be forced, 25% reporting they had experienced violence since the drought began (primarily beating), and 15% reporting the presence of unsafe areas for men and boys and 19% reporting unsafe areas for women and girls.

Nutrition

- The assessed communities will require greater support to access nutrition services, both through stronger community outreach and mobile delivery. **Households in both states indicated a low availability or awareness of nutrition services.** In Puntland's assessed communities, only 36% of households had attempted to access any nutrition services, and an even lower proportion, 30%, in Somaliland indicated attempting to access.
- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of households in Puntland and 72% in Somaliland targeted communities who did attempt to access nutrition services were not able to access any

¹ Burkads are semi mobile hut like dwellings, typically consisting of a wooden frame with cloth or plastic covering.

of the key nutrition programmes, and 26% and 14% respectively did not know if any of those services were accessible.

- **Support to households with young children appears to be particularly pertinent, especially with access to nutrition support.** 38% of households in Puntland and 55% in Somaliland with children under 2 indicated there had been a serious problem because the practice of feeding children had changed since the drought, primarily as a result of shortage of food or water, or a reduction in frequency of feeding.

Health

- Dry conditions resulting from the drought, combined with limited access to healthcare are leaving a high number of people in need of health support. In Somaliland the most commonly reported health issues were respiratory infection (20%), eye infection (19%) and diarrheal AWD (17%). Respiratory infections were also more commonly reported in severely drought affected areas (20%) than in moderate drought areas (10%).
- There is a clear need to improve access to health services in the long term, especially in rural communities where access to urban health centres is difficult. High reporting of health concerns in Puntland appears to be related to the poor access to health services, leading to self-diagnosis. **In total, 63% of households in Puntland reported that their ability to access healthcare had decreased since the beginning of the drought, compared to 51% in Somaliland.**
- For those living in more remote communities, access to healthcare is severely affected by the cost of travelling to access centralised services. Of those who had attempted to access healthcare, the cost per month was far higher in Puntland (an average 63 USD) than in Somaliland (34 USD). The high cost was reported by key informants and in further questioning by enumerators to be attributed to high transport costs to access centralised health facilities, an issue particularly felt in Puntland. In the short term multi-purpose cash transfer to enable people in need to access centralised health services may be beneficial.

Shelter

- While there is little direct impact of drought on shelter conditions, many households have substandard access to adequate shelter. The most common shelter type in both states was buuls, reported by 54% of households in Puntland and 82% in Somaliland targeted communities. Poor shelter condition was more highly reported in Somaliland (47%) than Puntland (18%). This reflects the higher reporting of buuls in poor condition (40%) than permanent shelters (13%).
- **For all drought-affected communities, a low availability of key NFIs is increasing vulnerability to environmental pressures.** Only 4% of households in Puntland and 1% in Somaliland reported access to all key NFIs, in either good or poor but useable condition. The limited use of plastic sheeting as a floor cover in both states, 6% in Puntland and 10% in Somaliland, reflects the limited accessibility of plastic sheeting and other NFIs across the assessment area.
- In total 68% of households in Puntland and 77% in Somaliland were considered NFI insecure. 30% in Puntland are considered borderline and 2% NFI secure. In Somaliland 21% are borderline and 1% secure.

Education

- Attendance rates at any form of education (formal and informal) are low, although marginally higher in most age and gender groups in assessed communities in Puntland than in Somaliland. **44% of males aged 5-12 were reported to attend some form of education in Puntland, compared to 33% in Somaliland. Girls in the same age**

group were less likely to attend education, 35% in Puntland and 29% in Somaliland.

- Primary school attendance rates for assessed communities in Puntland were at 14% for boys and 12% for girls. In communities in Somaliland, primary school attendance rate was 13% for boys and 12% for girls. The dropout rate since the drought identified through facility mapping (which is indicative only) was 15% for males and 13% for females across all education types.
- There is some evidence that response and recovery programmes implemented through integrated support delivered at schools could have an auxiliary impact on attendance rates. Schools with a water point within 500 metres of the school had a dropout rate of 14% for male students and 11% for female students, compared to 21% of male and 19% of female students in schools without water points within 500 metres. Schools with feeding programmes had even lower dropout rates – 11% for male students and 10% for female students, compared to 22% of male students and 17% of female students in schools where no feeding programme was present.