

Letter from the Director of Disaster Response & Rehabilitation

July 25, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Drought. Hunger. Famine. Starvation. Words that fill us with dread, and conjure up memories of 1972 and 1984, images which revive in us a sense of incredulity – how can this be happening again?

A famine has been officially been declared in two districts of Somalia, and is likely to spread. 3.7 million Somalians are at risk. 760,000 have fled to eastern Kenya and southern Ethiopia – to areas that are also in a state of crisis.

CRWRC is not physically present in Somalia, but 2.4 million Kenyans and 4.6 million Ethiopians are also in urgent need of assistance, especially pastoralists (livestock herders) and agro-pastoralists (farmer-herders). Many of these experienced one of the driest rainy seasons ever last October-December 2010, and then the failure of the “short rains” in March to May 2011. There is now a severe lack of food and water, and grazing for their livestock.

This has not come as a surprise. CRWRC has been responding almost continuously to droughts in Kenya since early 2009. Since April 2011 we have already been providing food aid for 3,500 families. Now we will increase that number to 14,000 families – well over 100,000 people – from August to December 2011.

We thank God that we are in a position to respond quickly and effectively. CRWRC has been working in community development in Kenya since 1983 and has many strong partners, including the Anglican Church of Kenya, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries and the Reformed Church of East Africa. Our disaster response staff and volunteers work with and through these organizations, who have long-term relationships with a large number of vulnerable communities who have been severely affected by drought - and are now threatened by famine.

In Canada, we are very grateful for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), where we have set aside donated funds in preparation for such major, urgent needs, and where we can draw down a 4:1 match from CIDA without delay. We are thankful that we can use these funds to purchase much needed food locally, and no longer have to ship it all the way from Canada.

We praise God for the global connections we have. The ACT Alliance ties us to 111 churches and church-related organisations who work together in humanitarian assistance and development in 140 countries. We have appealed to them for \$2.5 million in support. The Integral Alliance binds us to a different group of 16 Christian relief and development organizations and, because of their



photo by Jacqueline Koster, CRWRC East Africa

strong confidence in CRWRC's capacity, funds are already being raised for CRWRC's Kenya drought response in the UK, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong. We are all working and coordinating together for a common, urgent cause, inspired by these words from Matthew 25: "**For I was hungry, and you fed me, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink.**"

But we need your support most of all, because that is the source of CRWRC's strength, the foundation of our efforts, and the basis of our ability to attract matching funds from other organizations and governments. Time and time again you have "come through" with your donations, prayers, and advocacy, enabling CRWRC to make a huge difference to millions of people. Now is the time to do so again, so that CRWRC can help to stave off famine in Kenya and Ethiopia, restore thousands of needy families to a firm footing, and resume the long-term community development work that is needed to prevent such catastrophes from happening again.

For the millions who are facing starvation, who are ill or malnourished, and have lost all hope - God of love and justice, **hear our prayers.**

In His Service,



Wayne de Jong

Director

CRWRC Disaster Response & Rehabilitation

www.crwrc.org/idr