



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

Vicky Ford MP

Minister for Africa, Latin America and
the Caribbean

King Charles Street
London
SW1A 2AH

Tel: 020 7008 5000

Email:

FCDO.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/fcdo

Baroness Anelay of St Johns
Chair, International Relations and Defence
Committee

6th July 2022

Dear Baroness Anelay,

Thank you for your letter, to the Foreign Secretary, of 9 June regarding the humanitarian situation in East Africa. I am replying as Minister for Africa.

As you point out, many communities are facing huge pressures across East Africa. The ongoing drought is causing water scarcity, alarming rates of malnutrition and has led to the deaths of nearly 4 million livestock causing the collapse of markets. The presence of famine conditions in Somalia and Ethiopia and the likelihood that the October – December rains might also fail are extremely concerning. Severe humanitarian needs will persist throughout 2022 and into 2023.

Across the region, UK-funded humanitarian activities are making a difference and saving lives. For example, in Kenya 26,000 children will receive life-saving nutritional assistance thanks to the UK's support. In southern and eastern regions of Ethiopia a further 200,000 people will receive similar urgent aid.

We are also pressing organisations such as the World Bank and the UN to do more to scale up efforts at speed. The UK is using its position as a major shareholder in the World Bank to encourage urgent action in East Africa. As part of this I recently wrote to David Malpass, the World Bank's president, to highlight the gravity of needs in the region and requested the organisation to step up its engagement.

The UK remains a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region. In 2022 the UK has provided more than £72 million to support people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan affected by drought, conflict and flooding. This support includes £25 million for Somalia which I announced at a UN event in Geneva in April. This event helped to mobilise roughly US\$400 million in new funding, with the UK playing a vital role in bringing stakeholders to the table.

In Berlin, on 24 June, at the recent ministerial conference on global food security I highlighted the need for greater focus on East Africa. In addition, on 22 June I met with the Disasters Emergency Committee, comprising UK non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to discuss the humanitarian context in East Africa and how the UK and NGOs might engage further.

This drought, along with many other food insecurity contexts around the globe, is compounded by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The consequences of Russia's aggression are hitting the poorest the hardest. The WFP assess that the price of a food

basket in Ethiopia has risen 66 percent, and in Somalia 36 percent.

The UK is working with Ukraine and international partners to help Ukraine export its food and play its role as the breadbasket of the world - the UN estimates that up to 25 million tonnes of grain destined for export remains in storage in Ukraine with its Black Sea ports blocked and road/rail capacity severely limited. It is President Putin's responsibility to lift this blockade so that Ukraine's food can feed the starving.

The UK is targeting humanitarian support to those countries most affected, including those in East Africa. Over the next three years, the UK will direct £3 billion to prevent famine and alleviate suffering. We will boost sustainable productivity in developing countries, with the UK playing its part through our British Investment Partnerships. And we will work to ensure that multilateral institutions deliver on their pledged scale up in economic support

Our response to the region's pressing humanitarian challenges builds on long-established resilience building programmes. In Kenya this includes support to the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP). HSNP was among the first programmes in Africa to build a response system that can respond and scale up in response to drought, and the Government of Kenya is now expanding it to an additional four counties (Samburu, Isiolo, Tana River, Garissa). These form a majority of the counties worst affected by drought - the programme can now reach up to 375,000 households (approximately 2.2 million people), helping them meet urgent needs such as food and water.

In Somalia, the UK has been supporting over 220 rural communities through its multi-year resilience programme (BRCiS) and in three large urban cities with durable solutions initiatives for internally displaced persons. These programmes flexed early to respond to the worsening drought. The UK has now allocated a further £40m for the drought response in 2022. These programmes, coupled with additional investments, have enabled the UK to reach nearly 8 million individuals as a part of its resilience and emergency humanitarian response.

In Ethiopia, the UK is a long-term supporter of the Productive Safety Net Programme, which has benefitted some 8 million extremely poor people in drought-prone regions, via financial welfare provision and community public works projects to build climate resilience. Through the Building Resilience in Ethiopia programme, the UK has strengthened Ethiopia's capacity to respond to climatic shocks and provided rapid humanitarian support to people affected by conflict in Ethiopia.

Officials from my department, in the region and in the UK, will continue to follow developments closely. The crisis in East Africa and the risk of famine remains a priority for the UK.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vicky Ford', written in a cursive style.

Vicky Ford MP
Minister for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean