

Status Report, October 7, 2011: Direct Relief help for Somalia for Famine response:

Direct Relief has provided \$30,000 in cash and \$50,000 in kind medical supplies to respond to the Horn of Africa famine crisis that has affected nearly 1 million persons along the Turkana, Wajir and Somali Border of Kenya. The donations have been distributed through the Kenyan NGO Council as well as the Kenya Red Cross to support both food and medical needs as identified by the organizations working on the ground. Additional supplies of nutritionals and oral rehydration solutions to the region are also being sent, and Direct Relief will continue to work with partners in the region to assist those affected by this famine. Donors for the oral rehydration products include Child Health Foundation of Columbia, Maryland, and Cera Products, Inc. from Hilton Head, South Carolina.

The \$30,000 has largely been spent on buying essential food and medical supplies for weekly medical camps in the Turkana and Wajir areas where the NGO Council, Ministry of Medical Services, Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation, Kenya Red Cross and other agencies are responding. Each of these settlements has a Medical Outreach Station that is staffed by Kenya Ministry of Health personnel as well as Kenya Red Cross medical personnel where between 855-1,150 persons are seen every week. The majority of the patients are children. In the last week, for instance, a total of 2,867 people were seen in the three divisions of Kibish (976), Kaleng (1,023) and Kerio (868). There are also 15 established feeding centers where some of the food stuffs donated by Direct Relief have been distributed.

According to Dr. Hezron Mc'Obewa, Direct Relief's regional medical advisor in Kenya, the needs at each Medical Outreach station are currently not being met and many are still being turned away due to lack of medicines and supplies. Additionally, many areas are still difficult to access due to bad roads and heavy rainfall but more importantly are still lacking sufficient funds to cope with the numbers of patients they are seeing.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports that the total refugee population in Kenya stands at 568,298 people and food insecurity is affecting 3.75 million people around the country. Additionally, an estimated 300,000 children and pregnant/breastfeeding women are currently affected by acute malnutrition with the majority located in the northwestern and northeastern districts of Turkana and Wajir—the areas where Direct Relief is focusing the intervention. The onset of short rains and flooding is also increasing the threat of measles, malaria, dysentery, and cholera.

Donations to support these efforts can be made to Direct Relief International, as the need for supplies of nutritionals, including oral rehydration solutions such as CeraLyte, and medical supplies is an on-going need. Direct Relief will continue to work with partners in the region to assist those affected by this famine. *For more information, contact Direct Relief at www.directrelief.org, or call Desiree Lyons, Direct Relief Corporate Relations Manager at (805) 637-7269.*
