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# PRESS RELEASE

## **Severe drought, lack of food threatens millions in Horn of Africa** *World Vision Canada program manager available for interviews from Somalia*

Unrelenting drought in the Horn of Africa has thrown the region into a humanitarian crisis that is threatening the lives of more than 7 million people in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. Children under five are particularly vulnerable, says international relief agency World Vision.

### **Situation in Somalia**

- Somalia's Puntland region is facing its seventh consecutive failed rainy season. Water sources have dried up, forcing people and animals to consume water from the same sources, which raises the risk of waterborne diseases.
- One in three children is already showing symptoms of severe malnutrition in some parts of the country.
- For several weeks, livestock, often the only means of survival for pastoral communities, have been dying.
- Food prices have shot up drastically – in some areas by 300 percent.

Somalia's civil unrest is compounding the crisis, as internally displaced people from the volatile south-central region continue to seek refuge in the Puntland region further north. Their need for employment, pasture land, water, and sanitation facilities is putting growing strain on the region's few existing resources.

### **World Vision responds**

- In Somalia, World Vision will focus on Puntland, implementing cash-for-work programs to improve water sources, repairing and constructing water boreholes, distributing goats to pastoral communities, and establishing disaster risk-reduction committees to help build community resilience.
- A key World Vision Canada project in Somalia, funded through CIDA, will provide emergency water, sanitation and health care, including the treatment of severe acute malnutrition in children.
- In Turkana, Kenya and other areas of Ethiopia, World Vision is distributing food rations and clean water to communities.

**World Vision Canada's program manager for Africa, Anne-Marie Connor, is in Somalia from March 1 – 3. For interviews please contact:**

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***"It's a fragile situation, especially in Somalia where families are fleeing violence in one region only to face a severe drought and food shortages in another. They're resorting to dangerous coping mechanisms, such as sending young girls longer distances to find water on their own."***

***-Anne-Marie Connor, Africa Program Manager, World Vision Canada (currently in Somalia)***