Press Release

Drought Appeal

Kenya Red Cross Society urgently appeals to Kenyans to support ongoing drought response

Friday, 27 January 2017, Nairobi: The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) is urgently appealing to all Kenyans, partners and stakeholders to help tackle the ongoing drought crisis in Kenya, which has left 12 counties in an alarm stage and 11 counties in an alert stage.

According to FEWSNET, the situation is likely to deteriorate, rendering 2.4million people food insecure by April 2017 if no urgent and appropriate action is taken.

"The effects of the drought are escalating. In December 2016, we had eight counties at the alarm stage and in less than a month since then, the number of counties has risen to 12. This should worry us all," said Dr. Abbas Gullet, Secretary General, Kenya Red Cross Society.

The 12 counties in an alarm stage are; Marsabit, Garissa, Mandera, Isiolo, Kwale, Turkana, West Pokot, Samburu, Tana River, Kilifi, Wajir and Lamu. It is expected that some of these counties will slide into the emergency phase of the drought in the coming weeks. The 11 counties at the alert stage are; Baringo, Embu (Mbeere), Kajiado, Kitui, Meru (North), Tharaka Nithi, Laikipia, Makueni, Narok, Nyeri (Kieni) and Taita Taveta.

The late onset and inadequate short rains - between October and December 2016 - has led to poor pasture and inadequate water resources in pastoral areas, which has further resulted in unseasonal migration in areas like Narok, Kwale and Taita Taveta and Tana River counties. Coastal counties that have in the past served as pasture reserve areas have been severely affected, straining the situation further.

Livestock body conditions and milk productivity have continued to deteriorate in parts of Marsabit, Garissa, Isiolo, Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu, Taita Taveta and Tana River counties. Drought-related livestock deaths are on the rise, negatively impacting on livestock farmers' income and access to animal products.

"We have been working with the Red Cross Movement partners, national and county governments, the corporate sector and local partners to mitigate the situation. However, more support is needed, hence, our decision to appeal to Kenyans for support," added Dr. Gullet.

The funds raised will be distributed to the worst-affected families and communities, through a Cash Transfers Programme (CTP) that empowers them financially to meet their immediate food, non-food, and income needs.

KRCS has been transferring cash on a monthly basis to families in Marsabit, Kilifi and Tana River counties. So far, 4,200 families (2,300 families in Kilifi County, 1,000 families in Tana River County and 900 families Marsabit County) have received cash transfers. Cash transfers offer families with the flexibility and choice to purchase their preferred foodstuff from local traders and therefore supports local markets and recovery of livelihoods.

KRCS is also carrying out a livestock destocking programme in pastoralist areas in order to cushion livestock farmers from massive livestock losses. So far, 882 goats and sheep and 651