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Save the Children responds to the Ethiopia drought

Save the Children is appealing for US\$20 million to help around 900,000 people, including 325,000 children, who are bearing the brunt of the food crisis in Ethiopia.

The aid organisation's emergency response includes providing nearly 50,000 children with life-saving high-energy foods through emergency feeding centres.

Children in some of the poorest areas of the country are already struggling to survive. Around 75,000 children are severely malnourished and could die if they do not receive emergency treatment.

A combination of drought and escalating food prices has left 4.6 million people urgently in need of food in Ethiopia. Around 759,000 of these are children under the age of five, a group which is particularly vulnerable to effects of malnutrition such as weight loss and disease.

With more than 800 people on the ground, Save the Children is launching a major emergency response in six of the worst-affected areas in Ethiopia to deliver life-saving health, nutrition, agricultural, sanitation and child protection assistance to suffering communities.

Margaret Douglas, Chief Executive of Save the Children Australia said: "Hunger hits children first and hits them hardest. Ethiopian children, who are going hungry because their parents can't afford to feed them, will be among the first victims of the global food price rises. We know some of the poorest families have no food left and are struggling to survive on wild nettles. Livestock are dying and families are having to split up in search of food.

We urgently need to stop this situation getting worse. This emergency appeal will help Save the Children save lives now and provide long-term support to vulnerable families."

Our response includes:

- running emergency feeding centres, to provide around 48,000 children with high-energy foods as part of an intensive feeding programme
- helping around 250,000 children and their families to keep their animals alive by providing veterinary drugs and animal feed
- setting up work schemes which will provide parents with a way to earn food and money
- providing emergency health care, clean water, and sanitation items such as soap to nearly 160,000 children
- providing school materials and safe play spaces for at least 25,000 children, so they can lead as normal a life as possible.

“Long-term investment by international donors is also needed to ensure that more people do not become vulnerable before the next harvest,” adds Ms Douglas.

Ends.

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Save the Children has been fighting for children’s rights since 1919. Working in over 100 countries, we are the world’s largest independent child rights organisation. We create real and lasting change for children in need in Australia and around the world.

More information

For more information or interviews, please contact Abdi Noor, General Manager, Communications (03) 9938 2010 or +61 (0) 0408 508 875.

To donate to Save the Children's Ethiopia Food Crisis Emergency Appeal you can visit www.savethechildren.org.au or call us on 1800 76 00 11.