

Obama Approves \$105 Million More for Horn of Africa

President Obama has approved an additional \$105 million for urgent humanitarian relief efforts across the Horn of Africa, where the United Nations estimates that more than 12.4 million people are in urgent need as a result of the region's worst drought in more than 60 years.

The additional funding was announced by the White House August 8. It said the money will go toward funding "the urgently needed food, health, shelter, water and sanitation assistance to those who desperately need help" across the region. U.S. officials say the Horn of Africa faces widespread crop failure, livestock mortality and increased food prices.

The announcement of increased aid came as Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, and Dr. Rajiv Shah, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), landed in Kenya for a trip to underscore the continued U.S. commitment to assisting "the people of the Horn of Africa during this urgent time of need and to investing in long-term solutions to hunger and food insecurity in the region."

The White House said August 8 that Biden will meet with Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga "to discuss how the United States can work with international partners on the best response to this crisis."

The United Nations says Somalia has been hardest hit by the crisis, with famine now affecting five regions across the country and threatening to spread. USAID estimates that more than 600,000 Somalis have fled to neighboring countries, many walking for weeks to refugee camps in search of food and water in a migration that has put additional strain on drought-affected areas of Kenya and Ethiopia.

The U.N. Refugee Agency said August 8 that it had landed an aircraft in Somalia's capital containing emergency aid to help thousands of people. The operation was the agency's first in five years to conflict-ridden Mogadishu.

USAID said the United States is the world's largest donor of emergency assistance to the Horn of Africa, helping more than 4.6 million people in need. The White House said in 2011, the United States has provided \$565 million in humanitarian assistance to the region, and will continue helping people in need as they seek assistance.