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A Dangerous Delay: The Cost Of Late Response To Early Warnings In The 2011 Drought In The Horn Of Africa



A DANGEROUS DELAY

The cost of late response to early warnings in the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa



Synopsis

More than 13 million people were affected by the 2011 crisis in the Horn of Africa. There were clear early warning signs many months in advance, yet there was insufficient response until it was far too late. This briefing examines the factors that allowed a drought in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti to develop into a full-scale crisis of hunger and livelihoods, such that millions of people suffered and thousands died. It looks at the response of international aid system and stresses the ultimate importance of enhanced resilience for the communities themselves. It recommends a change in approach to chronic drought situations, managing the risks, not the crisis. This means that national governments, donors, NGOs, and the UN need to act decisively on information from early warning systems and not wait for certainty before responding; actively seek to reduce drought risk in all activities, ensuring that long-term development interventions increase resilience and adapt to the changing context; and change organisational structures, invest in people and provide flexible funding in order to break down the divisions between humanitarian and development work.

Book Information

File Size: 906 KB

Print Length: 58 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Oxfam (November 7, 2013)

Publication Date: November 7, 2013

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00ENF4TL4

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,186,745 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #416

in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy >

Non-Governmental Organizations #493 in Kindle Store > Kindle Short Reads > 90 minutes

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