

MEDIA RELEASE – Caritas Australia launches appeal to address hunger

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Over 18 million people are facing hunger in the Horn of Africa after the worst drought in decades has devastated crops and livestock across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia’s CEO, has just returned from a visit to Ethiopia: “In Ethiopia I met communities already on the brink of starvation, with almost no options left to feed themselves and their families. I met women who walk over 18 hours to get water, knowing that they have very little or even nothing to feed their children once they return.”

“These horrifying conditions are some of the worst I have seen in over 20 years in this sector. And there are thousands upon thousands of communities facing these same problems or even worse. This impending hunger crisis is shaping up to be the worst we have seen in our lifetime, which is why we’re urging our supporters and the Catholic community to support our Africa food crisis appeal and make hunger history.”

The war in Ukraine has only made the situation worse for countries already experiencing hunger. Food and fuel prices are skyrocketing, and countries that rely heavily on wheat, fuel and vegetable oil imports from Ukraine and Russia can no longer afford these basics.

Child hunger and malnutrition have increased globally as communities run out of options for food.

“Food prices were already on the rise, and now they’re reaching impossible levels. The Horn of Africa is heavily reliant on imported grains and fertilizers from Ukraine and Russia, which are largely no longer available. This is truly a crisis.”

According to a recently released Global Report on Food Crises, nearly 193 million people need urgent assistance for food across the world, an increase of nearly 40 million since 2020.

Caritas Australia is taking its Make Hunger History campaign to parishes and schools across Australia to raise funds for its Africa Food Crisis Appeal. Schools and parishes can download PowerPoints, videos, a Grace Prayer and much more to spread the word in their communities.

The funds raised will provide urgently needed humanitarian aid to countries in the Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. Through partners on the ground, donations to the appeal will go towards food distributions, support for children impacted by malnutrition, clean drinking water, cash transfers to households at risk of poverty, hygiene supplies as well as seeds and household items for families that have been displaced by conflict in Africa.

Donations can be made at: caritas.org.au/food-crisis/

Download school resources: caritasaust.caritas.org.au/makehungerhistory

Download parish resources: caritasaust.caritas.org.au/makehungerhistoryparishes

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Note: Kirsty Robertson, Caritas Australia’s CEO is available for interview.