

Pembrokeshire Please Give Generously To Help Ethiopia Food Shortages, Urges Tearfund

1. The people of Pembrokeshire are being urged to give generously to help some 17 million people in urgent need of food in Ethiopia, Northern Kenya and Somalia.

Says Sharron Hardwick, Tearfund's local Media Officer, "With food and fuel prices increasing almost daily here in the UK, it's easy to lose sight of how families in some of the world's poorest countries are coping. But we mustn't, as the global food crisis is hitting them the hardest. Even a small contribution can make a life saving difference."

Tearfund suggest that just £19 could provide a month's supply of food supplements for three malnourished children.

Ababach Umuro, a mother of six-month-old twins (photographed) from Angatcha District, Ethiopia, is typical of many who are already suffering. The drought destroyed her crops and now there's little to eat. She's driven to live on coffee leaves which are boiled with salt and ginger. Her children are desperately thin and Ababach has no milk to breastfeed them.

Ababach said, 'The drought has made life very, very difficult. We have nothing to feed ourselves. Everything appears dark at this moment.'

Father of eight Ayele Africho, used to work at a sugar plant near Addis Ababa but now hunger has left him not physically strong enough to go there.

'You can see our condition and that of our children (photographed),' he said 'We are praying to God a great deal. I'd like people in the UK to come and see our problems and understand our difficulties. I would ask them to pray for my family and community here.'

Soaring food prices and successive droughts in East Africa have exacerbated a situation that was already dire, pushing families already struggling to afford basic foods, deeper into poverty. To make matters worse, in many areas there is a shortage of seeds to plant the next harvest, food on sale at markets is unaffordable and livestock lacks grazing land. Despite Tearfund's gifts of almost £200,000 for seed distribution to the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church, further donations are needed to fund more partners and reach more people.

There are fears that if the next rains fail, leading to another poor harvest and diminished pasture for livestock, the current disaster could become catastrophic.

Says Sharron, "There is an urgent need to help those faced with severe hunger now. But it is equally important to act fast to help people to secure their next harvest and to maintain healthy livestock to prevent the crisis from deteriorating further. More funds are urgently needed to help avert a major catastrophe unfolding in the coming months."

With funds raised so far, Tearfund's partners are already distributing food and seed in Ethiopia and continuing ongoing work to strengthen people's resilience to drought in Kenya.

The UN estimates almost 13 million Ethiopians need food aid. In Somalia, 2.6 million require food and in Kenya it's 800,000. Another 700,000 people in Uganda are similarly affected.

To donate to Tearfund's East Africa appeal log onto www.tearfund.org or call 0845 355 8355



