



**ACTION ALERT – JULY 2006**  
**GOOD SHEPHERD VOICES FOR JUSTICE**  
**Crisis in Africa – Drought and Hunger**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The first sentence of the revised Good Shepherd Destination Justice Focus Statement says much:

*“We believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is inseparable from a concern for and pursuit of justice.”*

Social justice is inherently part of who we are as Church, and pursuit of justice is at the innermost core of our collective being as the body of Christ. Therefore, we are suggesting this month that you consider learning about and acting on what has become catastrophic for the people of East Africa.

## **BACKGROUND**

The UN special envoy to the Horn of Africa, Kjell Bondevik, says a disaster can be avoided if funding comes "in a matter of weeks... not months".

Around 11 million people are in serious danger in Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti, the UN estimates.

The World Food Programme, leading the aid effort, says it has only a third of what it needs to close the shortfall.

Donors had committed just \$186m (£106m) of the \$574m (£327m) needed, the WFP says.



"I urge donor countries to pledge more and pay. Not only to pledge, but to pay," Mr Bondevik said on a tour to see first-hand the situation in Kenya.

It follows past food crises in Niger and other parts of Africa where, by the time images of dying children have prodded the international into action, it has been too late, says the BBC's Peter Greste in Nairobi.

Mr Bondevik said global climate change was the root cause for the failure of the past two rainy seasons, and it was incumbent on the global community to come to the aid of those at risk.

"I'm afraid that we will go from a crisis to a disaster to a catastrophe if help is not provided in time," he said.

His comments were echoed by UK charity Oxfam, which said the response so far from rich donor countries had been "dwarfed by the immediate need".

The crisis is so bad in some parts of northern Kenya that families are being forced to eat insects, wild berries and squirrels to stay alive, Oxfam has found.

"Donors need to frontload their efforts so that action can be taken now; money given in three months will be too late for many," Paul Smith-Lomas, head of Oxfam in East Africa, said.

Story from BBC NEWS:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4744812.stm>  
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## **ACTION**

Support East Africa by calling for US follow through on the U.N. Millennium Declaration.

President Bush called for “a new compact for global development, defined by new accountability for both rich and poor nations alike. Greater contributions from developed nations must be linked to greater responsibility from developing nations.” The President pledged that the United States would lead by example and increase its core development assistance by 50 percent over the next three years, resulting in an annual increase of \$5 billion by FY 2006.



This may sound like a lot, but currently the United States gives less than half of one percent of our federal budget to poverty-focused development assistance. Call, email or write the President and/or your legislators asking that we live up to the original pledge and consider an increase over future years.

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