



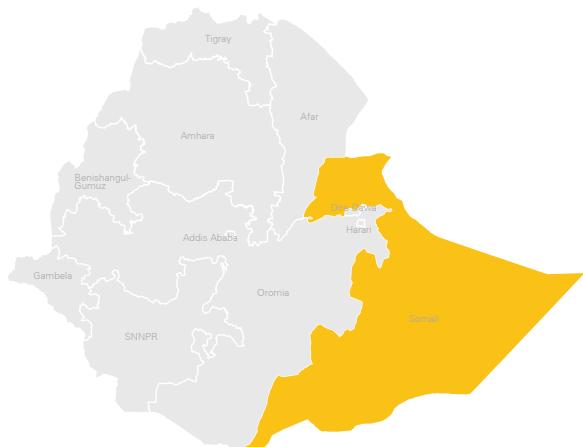
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# Somali Regional Brief

## General Overview

The Somali Region is located in the eastern part of Ethiopia with an estimated population of six million. The main sources of income for households are livestock, crop, firewood and charcoal sales, petty trade and remittances from the diaspora. It is predominantly inhabited by Muslim pastoralists (85 per cent). Somali region is one of the government's four Developing Regional States (DRS) having social indicators significantly below the national averages.

The region is prone to frequent emergencies drought, flash floods, locust infestations, disease outbreaks and intercommunal conflict. Most families still struggle to find water for themselves and their livestock.



Population data based  
on a projection from  
the 2007 census



**Total Population**  
6,000,000



**Capital: Jigjiga**  
There are 11 administrative  
zones, 93 woredas and 6  
administrative towns

# Programme Overview



## WASH

Access to drinking water varies across districts but overall, the percentage of households using improved drinking water sources at 42 per cent is the lowest in Ethiopia, and well below the national average of 65 per cent. The region has less rainfall and more complex hydrogeology than other regions, and the situation can become extremely serious during times of drought.

Although still extremely low, the region has one of the highest rates of access to improved sanitation facilities in the country at 12 per cent. About 17 per cent of households have an improved but shared toilet facility which is relatively high compared to other regions. Open defecation in Somali is 32 per cent which is high but below the national average of 41 per cent.



**42%**

of the population use improved water sources.



**12%**

have access to improved sanitation facilities

Somali region has the second lowest rate of children who have been given all the basic vaccinations (22 per cent). There are also frequent outbreaks of diseases, such as measles, cholera, dengue, polio, chikungunya (a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes) and acute watery diarrhoea. Challenges include the distance to health facilities in pastoralist areas and lack of transport, high costs of medicines and cultural sensitivities.



The neonatal mortality rate is 41 per 1,000 live births.



The under-five mortality rate is 94 per 1,000 live births.



The infant mortality rate is 67 per 1,000 live births.



## Health

There have been some improvements in maternal and child health, including in remote areas where mobile health and nutrition teams have been providing critical services. Yet, despite the progress in health services, child mortality rates have not decreased significantly and, in some cases, have even increased.

Even if the infants survive the first 28 days, children remain highly vulnerable to disease particularly in the first five years of life and many die from preventable diseases, including malaria, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infection, and vaccine-preventable diseases.



## Nutrition

In Somali region, undernutrition in young children is a huge challenge. There has not been any improvement over the past 20 years, and, in some cases, it has gotten worse. Climate change, dire water shortages, and poor sanitation and hygiene practices are largely responsible for child undernutrition. Frequent droughts have drastically reduced food diversity with many families just consuming rice and milk.

The region has the highest rate of children under 5 years who are wasted at 23 per cent compared to the national average of 9.9 per cent. Infants between 6 to 8 months are the most vulnerable to wasting. Unexpectedly, boys are more likely to be wasted than girls (26 per cent versus 19 per cent).



**27%**

of children under 5 years of age are stunted.



**23%**

of children under 5 years of age are wasted.



**28.7%** of children under 5 years of age are underweight



**60%** reproductive age of women are anemic



## Education

The region has some of the lowest education indicators in the country, many of the children who attend school do not learn the basics due to unskilled teachers and inadequate learning materials. Moreover, many children drop out due to long distances to school from their homes, drought, and intercommunal conflicts.

Another huge challenge is providing education to pastoralist communities. Although the regional government runs a flexible Alternative Basic Education (ABE) system for hard-to-reach children in pastoralist areas who have not accessed the formal school system, the infrastructures of the schools tend to be poor and the facilitators inexperienced. Moreover, the ABE system fails to reach the highly mobile section of the pastoral community.



Net enrollment rate for children for kindergarten (ages 4-6) is **1.7%**



Net enrollment rate for primary school grades (1-4) is **84%**



Net enrolment rate for (Grades 5-8) is **29.6%**



Net enrolment rate for grades 11 to 12 is **4%**



The Gender Parity Index for Grades 1-8 is **0.75%**



## Child Protection

Somali region has the highest prevalence rate of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in the country with 99 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 subjected to this harmful practice. There has been minimal progress in reducing FGM/C with an annual decrease of only 0.4 per cent.

However, FGM/C in the younger age group (15-19 years) has a slightly lower prevalence rate at 95 per cent than the older age groups, although 95 per cent is still extremely high.



**99%**

of women interviewed aged 15-49 years had undergone FGM/C



**62%**

FGM/C prevalence among girls and women aged 15-19



**0.9%**

have birth certificates



## Social Policy

Somali region has the second highest incidence of Multidimensional Child Deprivation (MCD) in Ethiopia with an estimated 90 per cent of children under 18 deprived of an average of 4.7 basic needs, services, and rights.

The biggest contributors to MCD among children under 5 in Somali are deprivation in housing, nutrition, and health and among 5-17-year-olds deprivation is health-related knowledge, information and participation and housing.



**22%**

of the population live in monetary poverty



**90%**

are deprived of an average 4.7 basic needs, services and rights

# Humanitarian Situation

Drought continues to wreak havoc in the region particularly in nine zones due to late and non-uniform distribution of rains that starts between October – December.

According to the Emergency Coordination Centre meeting (ECC) held on 14th December 2021, an estimated 2.2 million people living in 657 sites of 86 woredas are at risk and require emergency short-term water interventions. Internal migration of both humans and livestock have been reported in Shabele, Afdher, Liban, Dawa, Dollo and Korahay zones. Several ponds and birkas have dried up and strategic boreholes remain non-functional.

## Key results achieved in 2021

UNICEF reached an estimated:



900,000 children with nutritional services



10,000 children with educational support



200,000 children with basic health services



600,000 children with basic WASH services



31,000 children and women with child protection



1,700,000 people with life-saving emergency assistance in response to conflict/drought/floods

## Key targets in 2022

UNICEF plans to reach an estimated:



920,000 children with nutritional services



20,000 children with educational support



200,000 children with basic health services



1,000,000 children with basic WASH services



116,000 children and women with child protection services



25,000 children and women with social protection services



2,000,000 people with life-saving emergency assistance in response to conflict/drought/floods