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Together for Justice: Our Collective Action for Strengthening Humanitarian Response, Resilience and Partnership in the Africa Region

COVER NOTE

The ACT structure responsible for the statement is the Community of Practice for Humanitarian Response. We have consulted the Advocacy and Policy Group during the preparation of the document and the Forums across Africa implementing ACT appeals.

TOPIC

The humanitarian situation in several African countries remains dire, with millions affected by conflict, food insecurity and displacement. The ongoing crises including armed conflict coupled with the devastating impacts of climate change continue to exacerbate vulnerabilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has further strained the health systems and deepened economic hardships. Over 400 million people are displaced across the continent, with women and children disproportionately affected, facing increased risks and exploitation, violence, and lack of basic services. ACT Alliance calls for increased humanitarian funding for Africa to ensure aid reaches the vulnerable in the affected communities, enhanced coordination among African governments, the international community, and humanitarian agencies. Furthermore, there is urgent need for strengthening local capacity to empower local organizations to take lead and build resilience, investment in climate adaptation and long-term solutions for displaced people.

STATEMENT

Together for Justice: Our Collective Action for Strengthening Humanitarian Response and Resilience in the Africa Region

We are witnessing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis unfolding across Africa, with humanity enduring unimaginable hardships resulting from ongoing conflicts, the impact of climate catastrophes, and widespread poverty. Countless families have been uprooted or displaced from their homes and forced to seek refuge in makeshift camps with limited access to necessities. Lives are lost daily, communities are devastated, and children are growing up without the promise of a stable and secure future.

We further note our concern about the internal displacement, acute hunger and sexual and gender-based violence due to conflicts. Sub-Saharan Africa, which hosts 46 percent of the world's internally displaced persons (IDPs), was again the region most affected by internal displacement in 2023. Ethiopia recorded 794,000 displacements due to conflict and violence, while in Somalia, around 3.9 million people were internally displaced by the end of 2023, keeping Somalia among the ten countries with the highest number of IDPs globally (Global Report on Internal Displacement GRID 2024).

We are deeply concerned to see that conflict and violence triggered millions of movements across the Greater Horn of Africa, East and Central Africa. Figures related to ongoing conflicts are only worsening with Sudan recording the highest displacement in 2023 and with those numbers rising in 2024. The crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo has resulted in approximately 6.7 million IDPs. South Sudan has been deeply affected by internal displacement and cross-border migration, exacerbated by decades of conflict and environmental pressures.

We further note that Uganda is currently providing a home to over 1.6 million refugees and asylum seekers, making it the largest host of refugees in Africa as of 2023, with refugees from DRC, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Burundi. Sudan follows, providing asylum to over 1.1 million individuals, while Tanzania hosts 241,885 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from Burundi and DRC. Ethiopia is hosting around 880,000 refugees. The East and Horn of Africa are home to the majority of the continent's refugees (UNHCR). We are deeply concerned that the Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP) remains severely constrained financially.

We note that African countries continue to experience the intense effects and devastating impacts of climate and weather-related disasters. Notably, in 2024, for the first time, a cyclone threatened the tropics. Cyclone Hidaya hit the coastal regions of the Indian Ocean in Tanzania and affected approximately 10,000 people. Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, and Kenya also suffered severe floods in 2023, which continued into 2024, fueled by the onset of El Niño. These floods triggered 2.9 million movements, nearly a third of all flood-related displacements globally. In a statement to the Tanzanian Parliament on 25 April, the Prime Minister reported

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that rains and floods had left 155 dead, 236 injured, and affected 200,000 people and 51,000 households since January. In Southern Africa, Mozambique and Malawi were hit by Cyclone Freddy, affecting around 655,000 households.

We are deeply concerned that the ripple effects of these crises are far-reaching, impacting economic stability, education, livelihoods, health, and the overall well-being of Africa and the world. These humanitarian crises are a stark reminder of the collective responsibility of all key stakeholders, donor communities, the UN, and African leaders to uphold human dignity, peace, and justice to alleviate the suffering of the affected communities.

Recognizing the urgent need to address these challenges across Africa, ACT Alliance has made efforts to respond to the humanitarian situation across the continent in alignment with SDG 16, promoting just, peaceful, and inclusive societies.

We are concerned by the low global commitment to support funding for humanitarian efforts across the region. Africa remains vulnerable, and without sufficient funding, essential services such as food, water, healthcare, and education will become scarce, exacerbating hunger, disease, conflict between host communities and people of concern. Vulnerable groups, including women and children, will face heightened risks of exploitation and violence.

We are mindful that host countries will bear the additional burden of increased strain on their resources and infrastructure, potentially leading to social unrest and economic instability.

We recognize the contributions from funding members, individuals, and churches towards the different responses for humanitarian crises in Africa through appeals, and the role played by the ACT Africa Regional office and Secretariat in mitigating the humanitarian crises on the continent. As a faith-based alliance, we have a spiritual and moral responsibility to keep hope alive.

Commitments s Recommendations

Aware that we stand at a critical juncture in history where the plight of millions in Africa demands immediate and unwavering attention, we recognize that the crises not only undermine regional stability but also erode the fundamental human rights of those affected. Without adequate support, the long-term prospects for development and peace will be jeopardized.

Our Commitments as ACT Alliance:

- *We as ACT Alliance reaffirm* our commitment to making a significant impact by **utilizing our platforms and collective voices to advocate and raise awareness of the plight of people affected by crisis in Africa and around the world.** We shall continue using our prophetic voice to advocate for peace and social justice, reconciliation, and conflict resolution.
- *We further reaffirm* our commitment to **facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building among our member organizations,** foster collaboration and coordination with governments, civil society organizations, and the UN to improve humanitarian responses and advocate for supportive policies respective to displacement and migration.

We call upon:

- **The international community to strengthen partnership and increase humanitarian response for Africa by scaling up funding and aid for Africa. Specifically, supporting the protracted and forgotten crises in countries like Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Sudan.**
- **The African Union to review its approach to mediation and conflict resolution, putting in place mechanisms to better deal with the overlapping peace, security, and governance challenges. Furthermore, African leaders to take responsibility in the decolonization process and be inward looking in resource mobilization, strengthen capacity and collaboration with faith leaders in peace and security agenda.**
- **World leaders to embrace dialogue among conflicting parties across the region and strengthen cross-border peace and security.**
- **African states to implement robust strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change and invest in sustainable development projects that promote resilience and for the doubling of adaptation finance for Africa.**
- **African leaders to strengthen the implementation of global frameworks that enhance protection for displaced communities as a result of climate change and conflict.**
- **African states to create opportunities for sustainable development to reduce poverty and improve living conditions, thereby reducing the factors that drive conflict and displacement.**
- **World Leaders to ensure that all displaced individuals are treated with dignity and respect, and that their rights are protected in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law.**

A majority of the assembly has declared itself in agreement with the opinions expressed in this statement. While many ACT members agree with the public statement, there are members who have expressed differing perspectives on the content or tone. Their decision reflects the diverse viewpoints within our alliance, and we respect their choice to abstain or vote against. As always, we value the collective dialogue and encourage continued discussions on the matter at hand, recognizing the strength of our unity in diversity.