

# press release

## For immediate release

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## Aid to be flown in for children affected by Somali floods

Nairobi, 20 November, 2006

Save the Children will be flying desperately needed relief items into Somalia to help vulnerable children that have been affected by severe flooding. Three planes carrying a total of 42 metric tonnes of relief items will be flown to Belet Weyne in Somalia in the next two days. One plane will leave Nairobi airport and Dubai airport tomorrow morning and a further plane will leave Nairobi on Saturday. The cargo will include 10,000 blankets, 10,000 mosquito nets, 5,000 plastic sheets and 3,000 water containers.

More than 80,000 Somali people in the region surrounding the Shabelle River, which has reached dangerous levels of 8.3 metres, have been affected by severe flooding. Save the Children is aiming to reach 6,000 families.

Gareth Owen, Save the Children's Deputy Director of emergencies, said: "Our immediate priority is to provide shelter and access to clean water for these vulnerable children. We are flying these supplies into the country as it is the quickest way to reach the people who need us most."

Save the Children staff in Belet Weyne, one of the worst affected areas, have already started distributing relief items supplied by Unicef, including plastic sheets, mosquito nets and blankets. Staff have also been working to repair the airstrip in the town after it was damaged by flood waters. Access to the town is very difficult as many of the main roads into the town were swept away. Gareth Owen said: "Reports are indicating that this is the worst flood in the region for 50 years. Up to half a million children could be affected and they urgently need our help."

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Save the Children Sweden started working in Eastern and Central Africa in 1965. It has offices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Nairobi, Kenya; and Khartoum, Sudan. Save the Children Sweden has long-term child-rights based development programs in Ethiopia and Sudan, and it supports local partners in Kenya, Eritrea, Somaliland and Uganda.

The organisation focuses on building the capacity of local people, community-based structures and organisations. In Eastern and Central Africa, it works with more than forty different non-governmental organisations and government bodies. In addition, it has adopted a direct implementation approach in southern Sudan and the refugee camps of western Ethiopia. All of the work in the region focuses on children's rights, and tackles issues that affect marginalised children. The core of the work focuses on children affected by conflict, discrimination, abuse, exploitation, and HIV/AIDS. Save the Children Sweden's focus also includes education, child participation and good governance in the best interest of the child.

Save the Children Sweden is a non-governmental organisation. It is an active member of the International Save the Children Alliance – a global movement for children's rights. Through 18 offices around the world, the organisation contributes ideas, experience and funds to 500 projects in more than 60 countries.

Save the Children fights for children's rights. We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide. Save the Children works for a world:

- which respects and values each child.
- where all children participate and have influence.
- where all children have hope and opportunity.

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