

INTERNATIONAL emergency response efforts are under extreme pressure as two simultaneous humanitarian crises devastate Pakistan and East Africa.

Floods in Pakistan have once again caused widespread distress and damage just over a year since the initial devastation. These floods have affected more than five million people and 200,000 families with many left homeless after monsoon rains led to the torrents of water.

At the same time, 13 million people in the East Africa are in danger as the ongoing food crisis worsens and the drought persists, with rains not expected until at least February next year.

Caritas Australia is engaged with partners in both emergencies, but the magnitude of each situation has placed a heavy burden on emergency programs which remain underfunded, leaving many without assistance.

“A humanitarian catastrophe at any time is extremely difficult to deal with, but right now we have two catastrophes and over 18 million people in dire need of help,” Mr de Groot said.

“In many ways the scale of these disasters is difficult to fathom but we need the Catholic community, and the Australian community broadly, to understand the magnitude of what we are dealing with.”

In August and September this year, monsoon rains triggered flooding in Pakistan’s lower region of Sindh and northern region of Punjab. More than five million people and 200,000 families remain affected.

To date, 226 people have lost their lives and more than 400 people have been injured. Over 1 million houses have been damaged or destroyed and over 4.2 million acres of land flooded with more than 1.59 million acres of crops destroyed.

The Caritas network has been in Pakistan since the onset of the floods in July last year and continues to be directly involved in the delivery of food, water, sanitation, hygiene and health.

In East Africa, local conflicts as well as a severe shortfall in funding has left millions in danger.

“Despite the large scale delivery of food, shelter, medical treatment, clean water and sanitation across Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Eritrea and South Sudan, there are a growing number of people at risk.

“The drought is not abating and the worst may yet be to come. The Australian public and the Catholic Community have been extremely supportive with both of these humanitarian crises, but it is our duty to do more,” Mr de Groot said.

You can donate to Caritas Australia’s East Africa Appeal at www.caritas.org.au/eastafricaappeal or you can donate to Caritas’ **Emergency Relief Fund** which allows us to respond to humanitarian crisis when and where they happen on **1800 024 413**.

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