

# Horn of Africa Donations FAQ

*Updated August 11, 2011*

The United Church of Canada launched an emergency appeal July 20, 2011, in response to the famine and drought crisis in East Africa. The first section of this document answers some common questions received by the General Council Office since that launch. The second section provides guidelines for treasurers and congregations dealing with Horn of Africa donations.

## Questions and Answers

### How can I make a gift to the Emergency Appeal for the Horn of Africa?

Individuals are encouraged to give through their congregations. Those wishing to give directly to the General Council Office can do so in three ways:

**a. Online**

Individuals can donate through the United Church's website [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca) or link directly to the [donation page](#). Online gifts will be processed immediately and a tax receipt issued.

**b. Through the mail**

Cheques made payable to *The United Church of Canada* and designated for the "Emergency Appeal: Horn of Africa" should be mailed to The United Church of Canada, Horn of Africa Emergency Appeal, 3250 Bloor Street West, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario, M8X 2Y4.

**c. By telephone**

Individuals may make donations using a credit card by calling 416-231-5931 or 1-800-268-3781 Monday–Friday 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. ET.

### Where exactly will my gift to the Horn of Africa Appeal go?

***Your gift will go directly to the United Church's Emergency Response Fund and will be spent only on the emergency responses of the church.*** No deductions or costs are taken from this fund. Donations received and designated for Horn of Africa drought relief will be applied directly to support United Church partners responding to the needs of the people affected by this humanitarian crisis.

As background information, the Emergency Response Fund provides direct support to our Mission and Service and global partners such as ACT Alliance as they cope with disasters around the world. This support is over and above the ongoing core support that partners receive from generous donations to the Mission and Service Fund, and over and above the support provided to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank so that it may respond with us to these emergencies.

In order to act as quickly and effectively as possible to situations around the world, the Emergency Response Fund distributes 85% of its revenue responding to each appeal. The remaining 15% is available for new emergencies brought to our attention by our Mission and Service and other partners. The United Church's initial commitment of \$50,000 to the Horn of Africa crisis was possible thanks to this portion of the fund.

### **Does the United Church charge any administration fees?**

**No.** The United Church does not charge any administration fees when transferring donations from the Emergency Response Fund. 100% of these funds go to our partner organizations as they respond to people, families, and communities working to recover from a disaster. Costs are also minimal once funds are in the hands of our partner organizations. For example, all the work of ACT Alliance in 2010 supporting its member organizations on the ground was done with administrative costs of only 3%!

*Getting your donations to where they are needed, when they are needed, is the hallmark of the Emergency Response Fund.*

### **Will my donation be matched by the Canadian Government?**

**Yes.** If you donate to The United Church of Canada's Emergency Appeal for the Horn of Africa by September 16, 2011, your donation will be matched by the federal government.

- Donations must be made by individual Canadians between July 6 and September 16.
- Both receipted and un-receipted donations qualify.

Here is what the Government of Canada said in a press release announcing the matching funds:

For every dollar an individual Canadian donates over a 10-week period (retroactive to July 6, 2011, and ending September 16, 2011) to an eligible registered Canadian charity responding to the drought in East Africa, the Government will contribute an equivalent amount to the East Africa Drought Relief Fund. The Government of Canada will administer the relief fund separately, disbursing funds to organizations best suited to make an effective and real difference in the lives of people affected by the drought.

For more detail, read the government's [background information on matching funds](#).

## **Treasurer and Congregational Guidelines**

### **How can General Council Office help local congregations process Emergency Appeal gifts?**

As a service to treasurers in this summer season, congregations may forward individual donor cheques for the Horn of Africa Emergency Appeal directly to General Council Office. These donations will be deposited and receipted by the General Council Office. All gifts provided by local congregations will be recognized as being over and above their current Mission and Service giving.

### **How can you ensure that congregational gifts are matched by the federal government?**

- Individual donor cheques need to be given/postmarked no later than September 16, 2011.
- Congregational cheques that qualify to be matched should be received by the General Council Office no later than Monday, September 26, 2011. Please include a note confirming that the donations were made between July 6 and September 16.
- When forwarding your congregational cheque to the General Council Office, please include a list of names of all donors and the amount of their individual contributions to the Emergency Appeal for the Horn of Africa. (This information will remain confidential and will only be used if requested by the federal government to confirm the match.)
- Cheques made payable to The United Church of Canada and designated for the “Emergency Appeal: Horn of Africa” should be mailed to The United Church of Canada, Horn of Africa Emergency Appeal, 3250 Bloor Street West, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario, M8X 2Y4.

### **If our congregation sends one cheque for multiple donations received (and may have more at a later date) and includes the list of individual donors to prove they are eligible for matching funds, can we issue the tax receipts or are they issued by the General Council Office?**

The choice of who issues the tax receipt is up to congregations. You may receipt the donations, or ask General Council Office send out the receipts. Issuing tax receipts is time consuming, particularly in the summer when there are fewer people around, so the national church is offering this as a service to congregations. As long as intentions are clear, it doesn't matter whether a congregation sends one cheque or many. Here are the options:

- **The General Council Office issues the tax receipts.**  
The national church receives one cheque or many payable to The United Church of Canada, all at once or as they come in, as well as a list including the donor's name, mailing address, donation amount, and date received (for example, see spreadsheet template on the [Horn of Africa Appeal webpage](#)). The total of the list matches the total of the cheque(s) in each batch received. The national church sends a charitable receipt and thank-you letter within

48 hours to each person on the list. Later, donors receive another letter describing what their contributions accomplished.

When the General Council Office issues the tax receipts, the congregation does not account for the money as donations because total donations need to reconcile to the annual return sent to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). The money received and paid out could be treated as a suspense account item or just not booked.

- **Congregations issue the tax receipts.**

Congregations receive the financial gifts and issue the charitable receipts and thank-you letters, treating the monies as donations for accounting and CRA purposes. Congregations then send one cheque to General Council Office; a list including the donor's name, mailing address, donation amount, and date received (for example, see spreadsheet template on the [Horn of Africa Appeal webpage](#)); and a note saying that tax receipts have already been issued. The national church will return a statement confirming the amount received and keep the list of donors as the audit trail for the government donation matching program. A report will be sent later describing what the congregational gifts were able to accomplish.

### **Can our congregation report directly to the government matching program about our Horn of Africa donations?**

**Yes.** Congregations are free to report directly to the government matching program, and some have done so in the past for other appeals. If you do contact the government directly, please send a copy of your report to the General Council Office, so that your results can be included in the overall totals, and so that we can ensure that donations are not counted twice.

### **Will The United Church of Canada continue to accept individual and congregational donations after September 16?**

**YES!** The United Church will still direct donations for the Horn of Africa Appeal to the Emergency Response Fund after September 16 to continue to maintain the church's partners in that region. These funds will not be matched by the federal government, but they will support our important work.