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Good afternoon, Chairmen Smith and Royce, Ranking Members Payne and Sherman, and distinguished members of the Subcommittees. Thank you for including me on this panel to review the situation of Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa – one of the consequences of what many have called a failed state in Somalia.

Today we are facing a critical emergency within what is a protracted Somali refugee situation dating back to 1988 when people in northern Somalia fled to Ethiopia and Djibouti to escape attacks by their own government. Somalis represent the largest refugee population in Africa – over 750,000 just in the greater Horn of Africa region. Over 120,000 of those have arrived just since January of this year. A few weeks ago, Ethiopia opened its sixth camp for Somali refugees and it is already almost full. A seventh is in the works. Djibouti has announced a second camp. And the international community continues to press Kenya to permit expansion of the three-camp Dadaab complex which is home to over 370,000 refugees, almost all Somalis. You already may be aware that the Dadaab camps were opened some twenty years ago to house about 90,000 Somali refugees and now house over four times as many – making it the fourth largest population center in Kenya, and the largest refugee camp in the world. Even in this overcrowded state, more than 1,000 refugees have arrived per day over the past few weeks in search of life-saving assistance

Indeed, the refugee situation has worsened dramatically in the last month with reported new arrivals in June almost double in Ethiopia and triple in Kenya those in May. Ironically, this may be partly a result of the successes in pushing back al-Shabaab that Ambassador Yamamoto has highlighted, freeing some who could still move to do so, though the main contributing factor remains the difficult conditions within Somalia.

From a humanitarian perspective, what is most critical now is addressing the desperate and deplorable state of malnutrition, which threatens the lives of many newly arriving refugee children. They have endured the ravages of ongoing conflict and struggled to survive the consequences of al-Shabaab's obstruction of international food aid in wide swaths of south-central Somalia. These new arrivals have faced the latest devastating drought – a drought affecting the entire Horn and rivaling those on record going back to the 1960s. Having sold all that they owned to survive, they have made the arduous journey, mostly on foot for days or even weeks, to reach safety and humanitarian assistance in camps in Kenya and Ethiopia.

To illustrate the severity of this situation, the international humanitarian community considers it an emergency when the rate of global acute malnutrition – the rate of children under five who are moderately and severely malnourished taken together – within a population exceeds fifteen percent. In Ethiopia, global acute malnutrition rates close to 50% have been reported among newly arriving refugee children. In Kenya, global acute malnutrition rates of up to 40%

have been reported among newly arriving refugee children. This situation is substantially worse than when I last visited the Dolo Odo refugee camps in Ethiopia in February of this year. Newly arriving children are now dying in the refugee camp at the rate of two to three per day.

During my most recent visit to the region last week, a senior advisor of the Ethiopian government's refugee agency and a veteran of UNHCR told me of the condition of near death of many of the children arriving in the camps, some so emaciated and with skin lesions so deep that you could see their bones showing in their skulls and arms. In his words, people are coming from Somalia to die in Ethiopia. We must ensure that as many as possible of these children are saved through urgent and timely interventions such as emergency therapeutic feeding programs and rapid registration to ensure prompt access of refugees to regular food distribution. Though some of these activities are already underway, the level is not yet adequate to meet the considerable needs of the population.

Given the urgent nature of the situation, I will be traveling to the Horn again next week and plan to visit the camps in the southeast of Ethiopia which are receiving the vast majority of new arrivals, accompanied by our ambassador to Ethiopia, Ambassador Donald Booth. Speed is of the essence as we seek to prevent additional deaths. And yet, we cannot forget that this too is a regional crisis that will require the combined efforts of the international community – all the more so in that, as my colleague USAID Assistant Administrator Nancy Lindborg is testifying, this drought disaster is putting some 10 million people at risk throughout the Horn. The appalling state of Somali refugees is a stark example of what the drought is doing to the people of the Horn and emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive response to address the needs of all those suffering from this crisis.

Regrettably, famine experts tell us that the worst of this regional drought crisis is still to come in the months before the next possible rains this fall. My bureau – State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration – supports all refugee protection and assistance efforts except for food aid for refugees which comes from USAID's Food for Peace Office, is in the process of programming over \$63 million for the Horn and will be providing additional funds next week when we expect a new appeal from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to which we will be responding.

There are clearly many challenges ahead. Countries in the Horn are understandably weary of hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees. Some, such as Kenya in the early 1990s have seen refugee inflows reach 1,000 per day and would very much want to avoid repeat experiences. Some, such as Yemen, are in great turmoil themselves. Events in Sudan could well generate more Sudanese refugees in coming months. Security inside much of south-central Somalia is not conducive to mounting easily successful humanitarian operations that might reach those in need where they are. For example, I understand that the efforts of the UN humanitarian team this week to assess conditions and humanitarian access in areas along the border of Kenya and Ethiopia were derailed by the presence of roadside bombs and landmines. As a consequence, we must ensure that safe places of asylum in the countries neighboring Somalia continue to exist and that refugees can find security as well as life-saving assistance. We will continue to work with our colleagues in the U.S. government and with our counterparts in other countries to achieve these goals.

We welcome your support. And I would welcome questions you may have. Thank you.