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More than 30,000 Famine Victims Reached with Food Vouchers inside Southern Somalia

November 3, 2011 (SEATTLE) – Seattle-based humanitarian aid organization World Concern has reached about 32,000 people with food aid in the war-ravaged Somali border town of Dhobley. Using an innovative voucher system, World Concern has been able to reach displaced families traveling through Dhobley on their way to refugee camps in Kenya, as well as the neediest residents. Dhobley is an area that is difficult to access due to conflict and insecurity.

Families are able to purchase specific food items (beans, rice, oil, salt and sugar) – enough to last them several weeks. The system supports the local economy and helps ensure aid ends up in the hands of those who need it most. The organization has also distributed vouchers to 28,000 people for emergency supplies such as blankets, water jugs, cooking pots and mosquito nets.

In drought-affected communities on the Kenya side of the border, World Concern is bringing short and long-term aid, such as clean water, sanitation and health care. More than 50,000 people in these towns have been reached with clean water through World Concern's help.

Amidst news coverage of the challenges and dangers aid organizations are facing gaining access to militant-controlled parts of Somalia, World Concern's use of vouchers is highlighted in the New York Times online column, "[Fixes](#)," which examines solutions to social problems.

World Concern President David Eller recently visited Dhobley. "My travels with World Concern have taken me too many difficult places. I have been to refugee camps in Chad, holding camps after Sri Lanka's civil war, and South Sudan before independence. Even with all of this experience with poverty and suffering, seeing the people in Dhobley was tragic," said Eller. "Yet in the midst of such darkness, there is hope. When we engaged with people on the street and talked, the spark of hope was still there. Today, as yesterday, the issue for the people of Southern Somalia is survival, and the World Concern staff is pouring themselves out to keep people alive."

To interview World Concern staff on the ground in the Horn of Africa about the use of innovative solutions in a complex crisis, please contact Derek Sciba at (206) 713-5564 or visit www.worldconcern.org/crisis.

World Concern, part of CRISTA Ministries, is a Christian humanitarian organization that helps lift people out of poverty through activities including microfinance, agriculture, disaster response and small business development. World Concern works with the poor in 18 countries, with the goal of transforming the lives of those we touch, leading them on a path to self-sustainability. Worldwide, World Concern offers life, opportunity and hope to nearly six million people.