

# HOPE PRAYER TEAM

MARCH 2013



ADEL SARKOZI/WORLD VISION

COVERING THE WORLD IN PRAYER:

## Pray for West Africa

Join with us throughout the month of March to pray for World Vision's work in countries in West Africa — Chad, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. Recent conflict in Mali has exacerbated the problems many families in the region face in the wake of severe and recurring drought.

---

*“The LORD is my strength ... and he helps me ... ”*

—Psalm 28:7 (NIV)

## PRAY for peace in Mali.

---

Mali enjoyed two decades of democratic rule until the growing rebel insurgency led to a military coup in March 2012, leaving the former French colony with a weakened government. Humanitarian organizations estimate the conflict is affecting 5 million Malians — about one-third of the population — through resulting food shortages and inadequate nutrition. Militant rebels have controlled the north of the country since April 2012, enforcing harsh punishments on people who resist their rule. Fighting increased as military forces from France and other African nations sought to restore peace and democratic governance. About 400,000 people are displaced, and aid groups say the number could reach 700,000 in the wake of escalated fighting. Children are especially at risk of injury, displacement, and forced recruitment in rebel-held areas.

*Lord, we know You are always with us, even in dark times. Help Malians affected by this conflict experience relief from hunger, loss, pain, and suffering. May they sense Your presence. Strengthen the troops fighting for peace, and empower Mali's leaders to bring stability to the nation.*

## PRAY for countries hosting Malian refugees.

---

The conflict has forced more than 166,000 Malians to flee to neighboring countries of Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger. The influx of refugees strains already-limited resources of host communities and families. Ask God to provide for the refugees and to grant patience and perseverance to their hosts.

*Lord, help community residents in Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger be gracious hosts. May they treat their Malian guests with love, compassion, and peace in this troubled time. Provide the essentials needed for everyone to survive.*

## PRAY for improved health for mothers and children in Sierra Leone.

---

In mid-2012, World Vision's Sierra Leone office was the first in the West Africa region to launch the Child Health Now campaign, an effort to reduce the mortality rate of children under 5 worldwide. In Sierra Leone, 174 of every 1,000 children die before they turn 5 — the fourth-highest rate in the world. About one in three children younger than 5 suffers from stunting — being short for their age due to inadequate nutrition. And lack of access to safe drinking water, failure to sleep under treated mosquito bed nets, and inadequate access to healthcare are other causes of preventable deaths.

*Dear Lord, with water You sustain life. Please help communities access clean water. Restore the health of children suffering from the effects of drinking contaminated water. Give strength to those who are working tirelessly to improve the health of pregnant and nursing mothers, and bring hope in the form of improved nutrition to families with little to eat.*

## PRAY for consistent harvests and stable food markets.

---

Nearly 19 million people in nine countries are affected by the West Africa food crisis, which was caused by poor harvests, high food prices, and declining food stocks throughout 2011 and 2012. One million people in World Vision sponsorship communities, including more than 130,000 children, received emergency food aid, food vouchers, cash, or nutritional training. The rains returned and led to bountiful harvests in late 2012 and regional production increased by 13 percent. However, as the lean season approaches this year, food prices remain high, pressing millions precariously close to recurring food insecurity and malnutrition.

*Lord, we praise You that some families no longer worry about where their next meal will come from. You are merciful, and You bring rain to parched land. As families across West Africa prepare for the lean season, help them to afford to buy enough food or to store enough of their crops to make it through to the next harvest. Bring stability to markets so children will not go hungry.*

## PRAY for resilience.

---

Even when the West Africa region is not in food crisis, an estimated 645,000 children die of largely preventable or treatable causes. More than one-third of deaths are linked to malnutrition. The problem for many families is one of resilience — lack of ability to adapt to shocks like grain prices doubling. The region has experienced severe shocks every couple of years since 2005. With little recovery time, millions of families are losing their ability to withstand rising food prices and insufficient rains. Safety-net programs help in the short-term, but governments and development organizations are focused on working with communities to help create systemic changes that will help the most vulnerable families become more resilient. Pray for effective collaboration among communities, governments, and development organizations to produce tangible outcomes.

*Lord, we acknowledge how difficult solving systemic problems can be. We pray for genuine, patient collaboration among leaders doing the work on the ground. Give them guidance and wisdom to influence decision makers in business, government, and community circles. Bless the most vulnerable families with opportunities to improve their livelihoods and feed their children.*