

**ETHIOPIA SHOWCASES BEST PRACTICES IN DROUGHT RESPONSE AT WHS SIDE EVENT**

(Addis Ababa and Istanbul 23 May 2016): Mr. Demeke Mekonnen Ethiopia's Deputy Prime Minister today chairs a side event at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) showcasing the country's best practices in the drought response.

Participating key note speakers at the WHS side event "Bridging the divide: humanitarian and development collaboration in Ethiopia", include Deputy Emergency Response Coordinator and Assistant Secretary General of OCHA Ms. Kyung-Wha Kang, WFP Executive Director, Ms. Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr. Anthony Lake, and Senior Adviser for Resilience, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), Mr. Claus Sorensen.

Failed spring short rains and erratic long summer rains caused by El-Niño in 2015 led to serious spikes in food insecurity, malnutrition, water and fodder shortages, and health outbreaks across the country. Relief food recipients climbed from 2.9 million in January 2015 to 10.2 million in 2016. The WHS side event takes stock of the response so far, including the leadership of the Government of Ethiopia and the role the country's development gains in the last decade, which humanitarian partners celebrate as best practices that have prevented a large scale famine.

"In the past, droughts of this magnitude killed many, and caused profound suffering. The impact of this drought in 2016 has been different. Our preparation and priorities over the past decade has meant that our collective response prevented famine," says Deputy Prime Minister Mekonnen. "We have been focusing on pro-poor policies, introducing disaster response management into all aspects of governance, strengthening government ministries, introducing satellite imagery and evidence-based analysis, and intensifying support to the agriculture sector."

As a result of the 2002-2003 drought, the Government of Ethiopia and its partners began a process of addressing recurrent challenges posed, including the Disaster Risk Management Policy, the Productive Safety Nets Program (PSNP), efforts to improve watershed management, agriculture programs aimed to help farmers and pastoralists mitigate climate change impacts, and 'pro-poor' policies across multiple ministries to address recurrent need. The second generation of the Government's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) focuses on quantity and quality of basic services provision, aimed at the lowest quintile of the population. This is seminal towards ensuring development solutions and resilience is Government-owned and delivers upon residual development needs, which continue to bear humanitarian characteristics to date.

"The Ethiopian response model is evidence that resilient development saves lives and protects development gains," says Ms. Ahunna Eziankonwa-Onuchie, Humanitarian Coordinator for Ethiopia. "Ethiopia's strong health system, with over 38,000 Health Extension Workers on Government pay-roll and a 'Health Development Army' of over 3 million volunteer women from rural Ethiopia, provides the backbone of the current drought response."

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