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**HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS LAUNCH CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS FUNDING GAPS IN ETHIOPIA DROUGHT RESPONSE**

(Addis Ababa, 23 March 2016): Humanitarian partners today launched a 90-day campaign to raise awareness on the urgent need for an additional funding for the drought crisis in Ethiopia to address the humanitarian resource gap.

“Ethiopia is currently contending with one of the most serious climatic shocks in recorded history with ten million people facing lost harvests and livestock as well as severe water shortages and health risks,” said Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onuchie, UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Ethiopia. “We are launching this campaign to advocate for increased funding commensurate with the scale and severity of this crisis.”

While Ethiopia’s 2016 US\$1.4 billion appeal has received over US\$758 million from the Ethiopian government and the international community, significant life-saving gaps remain across all sectors. The four months lead time to get relief commodities to people in need means that action is required now.

Commending the Ethiopian government, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator noted that the government is one of the largest financial contributors to the crisis so far and also leads in the coordination of a complex inter-sector response, which uses government systems and relies on national capacity.

“We are indeed thankful and encouraged by the donors who have stepped up to support Ethiopia in this drought crisis,” said the Commissioner Mitiku Kassa, National Disaster Risk Management Commission. “Some of these donors joined the Government to respond at the onset of the crisis in October last year. They did so knowing that it costs three times more to treat severe malnutrition than to provide the food and other associated support that might have prevented that child’s descent into severe acute malnutrition.”

Noting that the international community stands to gain much from supporting Ethiopia in the drought response, the Humanitarian Coordinator observed that drought response is not just about saving lives it is about protecting development gains - gains which the Government and its development partners have worked tirelessly to build up over decades.

“The Government’s vision for development, enshrined in the second Growth and Transformation Plan, promises to steer Ethiopia further down its already remarkable path of progress,” said Ms. Eziakonwa-Onuchie. “We need to rally urgently to protect the development gains of Ethiopia over the past decade and ensure the country remains on its remarkable development trajectory. Urgent and substantial investment in the humanitarian crisis response this year is the only way to ensure this and we must act now.”

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