

**Somalia: Urgent scale-up of humanitarian assistance needed amid severe drought**

**Nairobi, 2 December 2016** — The Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Peter de Clercq, today made an urgent appeal for humanitarian assistance amid worsening drought conditions that have left hundreds of thousands of Somalis facing severe food and water shortages. He made the call during a briefing with the international community in Nairobi, highlighting the urgency of responding to the drought situation in Somalia.

“Drought in Puntland and Somaliland has deepened and spread to southern and central regions of the country as well. The situation has become increasingly desperate for vulnerable families in need. The drought situation is extremely worrying and could deteriorate rapidly if we don’t act now,” said de Clercq. “We are running against time. Humanitarian organisations are stretched and require additional resources to tackle the growing needs from the drought situation and other crises. The 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan seeking US\$885 million is only 47 per cent funded, four weeks before end of the year.”

Some of the communities in the north had already endured four successive seasons of below average rainfall. Families are struggling, many already adopting desperate measures to survive. The current *Deyr* rainy season, which usually spans from October to December, could have provided a window of opportunity for affected families to recover, but it has so far been poor across most parts of Somalia. Significant crop and pasture losses are highly likely, with a total crop failure expected in several areas.

Overall, five million Somalis – more than 40 per cent of the country’s population – do not have sufficient food. More than one million of these are in ‘crisis’ and ‘emergency’. This figure is now projected to increase to over 1.3 million by May 2017, according to a recent Food Security Outlook. In addition, Over 320,000 children under age five are acutely malnourished, including more than 50,000 children who are severely malnourished. These children are the most vulnerable during the current drought. Surveys in rural and IDP settlements indicate an alarming Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) prevalence in a number of areas.

The President of the Federal Government of Somalia appealed for humanitarian assistance on 12 November for people affected by the drought. State authorities in Jubbaland, Puntland, Somaliland and Galmudug also issued appeals on 2 October, 5 October, 17 November and 30 November, respectively, highlighting the urgency of the situation. In addition to drought, an increase in displacement related to conflict and the withdrawal of international troops have presented additional humanitarian challenges. Almost 5,000 people have been displaced in Hiraan and Bakool regions, while another 29,000 people have been uprooted from their homes in Lower Shabelle.

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