



PRESS RELEASE

The European Union contributes 86.8 million Ethiopian Birr (2 million Euros) to UNICEF to provide nutrition support for communities affected by desert locusts in Ethiopia

Addis Ababa, 15 Sept 2020 – The European Union (EU) has provided 86.8 million Ethiopian Birr (2 million Euros) to UNICEF to support vulnerable communities affected by desert locusts in the Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali and Tigray regions. The funding is being made available through the EU’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations directorate-general (ECHO).

The support is in addition to 2.4 million Euros the EU provided to UNICEF in May 2020 to address the nutrition impact of multiple hazards such as climate-induced recurrent droughts, disease outbreaks, and internal displacements in the Afar, Somali and Oromia regions.

Due to the combined effects of desert locusts, climate change and the secondary impacts of COVID-19, UNICEF and its nutrition partners anticipate the number of children needing treatment for severe acute malnutrition this year to rise by 24 percent. Therefore, the number of children UNICEF is targeting for treatment has increased from the 460,000 children initially planned (including 16,000 refugees) to 570,000 children (of whom 18,400 are refugees).

“Children are always the most affected when livelihoods are eroded and access to food and adequate nutrition becomes a challenge,” says UNICEF Representative Adele Khodr. “We are therefore immensely grateful to the European Union for providing this funding at this critical time. It will enable us to scale up our nutrition interventions and ensure that life-saving treatment reaches the dramatically increasing number of children in need across Ethiopia.”

With the first EU funding received in May 2020, UNICEF was able to procure and distribute 30,000 cartons of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food for treating 30,000 severely malnourished children in Afar, Somali and Oromia regions.

“As one of the largest humanitarian donors in the world, the EU is committed to support efforts to address urgent humanitarian needs in Ethiopia” says Yassine Gaba, the Head of the EU Humanitarian Aid’s office in Ethiopia. “Children are the most vulnerable during times of natural

and man-made disasters, and with European help and solidarity, I am confident UNICEF will help address some of the most pressing needs.”

This latest funding will enable UNICEF to procure therapeutic foods and associated essential medicines to treat an additional 60,000 severely malnourished children. The grant will also support the warehousing and transportation of malnutrition treatment supplies to ensure they reach the last mile, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

UNICEF will also provide meals to support 3,000 caregivers of children admitted to stabilization centers.

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Note to Editors

The current desert locust infestation is the worst in 25 years and is expected to have a significant impact on food security in Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Afar, Tigray and Somali regions. The COVID-19 pandemic also poses a grave risk to the nutritional status and survival of vulnerable children.

An increase in child malnutrition is expected due to a decline in household income, challenges in the availability and affordability of nutritious food, and disruptions in accessing routine health and nutrition services. A joint assessment of the impact of the desert locust infestation on food security and livelihoods in Ethiopia conducted in April 2020 indicates that about one million individuals, including an estimated 126,000 children under five, will require emergency food assistance.

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