



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, MARK LOWCOCK**

**Opening remarks at the launch of the 2018 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan and the
Resilience and Recovery Framework**

Mogadishu, 30 January 2018

As prepared for delivery

I was last here in Somalia in January and May last year - just before taking the position as Emergency Relief Coordinator - when this country was one of the four countries in the world threatened by famine. There has only been one famine in the world in the last twenty years, here in Somalia, which took the lives of a quarter of a million people in 2011.

Today I am relieved that famine was successfully averted in Somalia in 2017 and that the number of people in need of assistance has declined. The US\$1.3 billion provided for the relief effort was the largest amount contributed towards humanitarian response in the history of Somalia.

Preventing the famine last year was a collaborative effort by the Government, civil society organizations, local people and the international community.

I applaud the collaborative efforts of the Somali authorities, aid agencies and the historic levels of support from the international community that helped to avert catastrophe.

Famine is preventable. It should be eradicated from the human experience. And it can be. The history of the last 50 years across the world, during which many vulnerable countries have escaped the scourge, teaches us that.

Your massive operation last year showed that collective humanitarian response is effective and saves lives.

But the humanitarian situation here remains critical. The number of people in need has declined, but recent gains are fragile. There are still nearly half a million people in IPC4 [Integrated Phase Classification 4 – Emergency], just a step from starvation. They need our help.

The humanitarian community in Somalia, in its Humanitarian Response Plan, is seeking \$1.5 billion this year to sustain famine prevention.

Acute humanitarian needs are expected to persist in this country as the impact of prolonged drought, conflict and displacement continues. These factors will continue to drive people from their homes, expose them to risk of diseases, deny them access to adequate food, and rob them of their means of making a living. Robust, collective efforts will be required this year to facilitate access to food and nutrition, health, shelter, education, protection and water and sanitation assistance.

I am certain that with everyone's support, we can again avert the worst this year. Aid agencies have improved their presence, coordination and aid delivery. The Government is playing a stronger role than before to lead the response with affected communities and local NGOs, and coupled with the massive cash-based intervention, aid agencies are now quicker to respond and more efficient than they have ever been before.

But even with these achievements, the humanitarian situation in Somalia cannot be solved by humanitarian interventions alone. And that's why Achim Steiner, Mahmoud Mohieldin and I are here together.

Ending need in Somalia can only be achieved if we respond to immediate humanitarian needs while implementing longer-term solutions to build resilience. Humanitarian and development partners are working with the Government of Somalia to agree the measurable results to achieve between now and 2022. Connecting the strategies of the Humanitarian Response Plan and the Resilience and Recovery Framework will help ensure Somalis are less vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition, to natural hazards and displacement, and that they have better access to basic social services.

I also want to say that I am encouraged that Somalia has continued to make progress on the political and governance front. Somalia now has stronger and more effective institutions than since the collapse of the state in 1991 and my first visit here in 1992. It is led by stronger Federal and Member State Governments, which, with continued international support, can break the cycle of recurrent crisis. It is making good progress in normalizing its relations with the IFIs [International Financial Institutions].

I applaud the leadership that you have demonstrated in 2017 towards famine prevention. I hope the Government can also find a lasting solution to mitigate against forced eviction of displaced people. Evictions undermine efforts for people to accelerate their path to recovery and attain durable solutions.

We cannot wait until the humanitarian crisis has subsided to embark on planning and implementing activities to promote long term solutions. Thank you for the work you are doing. We will do our best to advocate for you internationally and to support your efforts, every step of the way, as we implement the Humanitarian Response Plan and the Resilience and Recovery Framework and support the normalization with the International Financial Institutions.
