



Office of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia

Somalia: Food security improving but recovery remains fragile**Press Release**

Mogadishu, 2 September 2018: The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) for Somalia, Peter de Clercq, today urged the international community to sustain assistance to people affected by conflict, 2017 drought as well as this year's devastating floods and cyclone. Despite above-average performance of the *Gu* rains, some 4.6 million people, including 2.5 million children, still require humanitarian assistance. Of these, 1.5 million are in crisis or emergency. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are the most vulnerable and in dire need of immediate and long-term assistance.

Speaking on behalf of the HC de Clercq at the release of the latest food security and nutrition assessment results by FAO's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), Mr. Justin Brady of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warned that although the overall food security has improved, a significant portion of the population remains food insecure. High malnutrition rates prevail across the country, especially among the highly vulnerable IDP population. The nutrition status of children under age 5 remains largely unchanged. An estimated 295,000 children are acutely malnourished, among them 55,000 severely malnourished and in need of urgent life-saving treatment. The situation is predicted to worsen between August and October due to the limited availability of public health and nutrition services.

"We are on a positive trajectory, but the number of people in need remains high particularly among the rural populations and the urban poor," said Brady. "The repeated humanitarian emergencies have resulted in many communities with little or no means to recover. Predictable multi-year humanitarian and development funding will be extremely critical. The improved food security presents a critical opportunity to invest more in social services such health, nutrition and WASH alongside long-term livelihood support and resilience-building."

Somalia has had the wettest season in recent years. The harvest of cereals will be the best since 2010. Most pastoralists have seen an improvement in pasture, water availability and increasing herd sizes. However, some communities, particularly in the north-east, will take longer to recover due to cattle losses and devastation caused by floods.

"We tend to let our guard down as soon as the rains come, and the drought can now be officially classified as over. But it takes much more than one good season for people to be able to get back on their feet," said Daniele Donati, the FAO Representative a.i. in Somalia. "Thanks to the generosity of donors the famine was averted in 2017. Now we have to have to set our sights on the longer-term goal of enabling Somalis, especially investing in Somali children survive, thrive and develop to their fullest potential. Then Somalia can endure the next drought with little incident."

Humanitarian operations in Somalia remain underfunded. To date, donors have contributed US\$575 million towards the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) while some \$746 million is still needed until the end of the year. Without sustained assistance Somalia risks sliding back. The current funding shortfall is not only hampering effective delivery of vital services and the restoration of health, nutrition, WASH and education facilities, but also efforts to assist Somalis getting on the path of recovery and building their resilience to withstand the impact of future shocks.

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