



PRESS RELEASE

United Nations and World Bank Group call for sustained funding to relieve suffering in Somalia

On mission to Somalia, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and senior officials from the World Bank and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office say that early action and joined up approaches are key to ending the country's cyclical crises

Mogadishu, 12 September 2019 – With the latest analysis showing that Somalia's main harvest was the worst since the famine in 2011, Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock today called for sustained funding to protect recent gains made in beating back hunger and reiterated the importance of the Government's Resilience and Recovery Framework, which is at the centre of efforts to break the paradigm of recurring humanitarian crises in Somalia.

He was speaking at the end of a two-day mission to Somalia undertaken with the World Bank Group's Senior Vice President for the 2030 Development Agenda, United Nations Relations, and Partnerships, Mahmoud Mohieldin, and the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco.

"The latest food security analysis for Somalia shows that our response is working. One million fewer Somalis are hungry today than had been projected because we acted early when we saw the situation could deteriorate and because aid workers are able to deliver," Mr. Lowcock said.

"The analysis also showed that the harvest from the April-June cropping season is the worst since 2011 because of poor and erratic rains, followed by flooding at the end of the rainy season. As a result, up to six million people are now projected to be food insecure over the coming months. A third of them will be severely food insecure without sustained aid. And climate-related events will continue to have deleterious effects on the humanitarian situation in Somalia."

Over the past 30 years, droughts have become more intense and frequent in Somalia, which also faces recurring flooding during the rainy seasons. Much of Somalia's infrastructure is dilapidated as a result of the decades-long conflict and lack of investment, which further undermines the country's ability to cope.

Together with ongoing conflict, these shocks continue to drive people from their homes. The 2.6 million people already displaced are often marginalized on the fringes of society, facing evictions and other indignities.

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The delegation visited Baidoa where nearly 360,000 people who fled slow onset drought, terrorist attacks and armed conflict over the past three years live in 400 sites in and around the town.

“Conflict and marginalization perpetuate drivers of fragility and fuels displacement. A sustained humanitarian response must be combined with government-led developmental and peacebuilding approaches to promote reconciliation and to assist people to rebuild their country,” said Mr. Fernandez-Taranco. The Peacebuilding Fund that his office manages is supporting the Midnimo project that brings together humanitarian, development and peacebuilding elements to address the impact of displacement in Baidoa.

In a constructive meeting with Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khairi in Baidoa, the three officials commended the Government for its leadership on the Recovery and Resilience Framework and reiterated their commitment to supporting the Government to address the impacts of repeated cycles of disaster.

“The World Bank Group will continue to support Somalia’s efforts to boost investment in its productive sectors and infrastructure in line with the priorities of the Recovery and Resilience Framework and the new National Development Plan for 2020-2024,” said Mr. Mohieldin. “However, unlocking substantial additional investment requires Somalia to qualify for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. The coming months will be critical in this regard and we welcome the authorities’ efforts to sustain the positive track record established over the last few years on institutional and economic governance reforms.”

One innovative way the World Bank Group and partners are supporting the Government to change the paradigm of recurring crisis is by rolling out an anticipatory action model in Somalia which would release funding for pre-agreed projects to mitigate the impact of drought when it is forecast. The Famine Action Mechanism (FAM), developed by the World Bank Group, the United Nations and NGOs, is expected to be operational to provide anticipatory financing with funding from the World Bank Group next year. OCHA is also supporting work towards anticipatory action financing to recurrent drivers of humanitarian needs in Somalia.

The FAM builds on earlier help international partners have provided to mitigate the worst of climate shocks through early action. In 2017, the UN and partners averted famine in Somalia by sounding the alarm early, which spurred donors to contribute generously to the response.

“Following the failed harvest and the impact of flooding, I urge all donors to step up their generous support to enable the provision of life-saving assistance alongside long-term and durable solutions to help prevent a recurrence of humanitarian crises,” said USG Lowcock.
