

Somalia: US\$1.6 billion urgently needed to save and protect 5.4 million lives from unprecedented drought

Mogadishu, 17 January 2018 — The 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia, which calls for \$1.6 billion to protect the lives of 5.4 million Somalis, was launched today by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Peter de Clercq.

In his remarks, de Clercq said “Working together with the Somali authorities and with historical levels of support from the international community, I am proud that we averted a possible famine last year. Lasting solutions to drought, conflict and displacement remain, however, out of our reach, and much more must be done to eliminate the looming threat of famine in this country. We must tackle the humanitarian needs while simultaneously looking at longer-term solutions. If we do not continue to save lives and in parallel build resilience, then we have only delayed a famine, not prevented one,” warned de Clercq.

The 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is an extension of the 2017 famine prevention efforts. It prioritises immediate relief operations in areas with significant numbers of people living in Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4). The HRP now also includes a strategy to address protection gaps, particularly during humanitarian crises and for those most vulnerable, such as the internally displaced, women and children.

2017 was one of the most challenging years for Somalia, with the country precariously close to famine after several failed rainy seasons. Hundreds of thousands of people were driven from their homes as a result of the drought and persistent conflict, resulting in unprecedented levels of displacement. Food security needs have nearly doubled the five-year average, with an estimated 2,444,000 people in crisis and 866,000 in emergency — that is, one step away from famine — throughout Somalia. The number of Somalis on the brink of famine has grown tenfold since this time last year. An estimated 1.2 million children are projected to be malnourished in 2018, 232,000 of whom will face life-threatening severe acute malnutrition.

To mitigate future crises, humanitarians are working with development partners and Somali authorities to address the underlying causes of recurring crises, including food insecurity and mass displacement, through the development of a Recovery and Resilience Framework informed by a Drought Impact Needs Assessment. “With important progress made on the political and governance fronts, Somalia is on a positive trajectory, despite ongoing crises. The country has more effective institutions than it has for decades. However, these gains are reversible and must be protected. With continued international support, we can break the cycle of recurrent crises that undermine the peacebuilding and State-building process in Somalia,” de Clercq concluded.

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