

## **Somalia: USD 105 million urgently needed to save lives in drought-affected areas**

**Nairobi, 31 March 2016** — Aid agencies in Somalia today launched a Call for Aid seeking USD 105 million to scale-up critical, life-saving assistance and build resilience for more than one million people in the drought-affected northern regions of the country.

The severe drought, exacerbated by El Niño conditions, which is ravaging parts of Puntland and Somaliland, has compounded an already challenging humanitarian situation. An estimated 1.7 million people, or nearly 40 per cent of the 4.6 million people living in these areas, are in need of humanitarian assistance and livelihood support. Of these, 1.3 million people are at risk of slipping into acute food insecurity if they do not receive assistance. Nearly 385,000 people already face acute food insecurity.

The severe drought conditions have taken a toll on lives and livelihoods. If funding is not secured now, the consequences will be grave, especially in light of a less than favourable forecast for the coming *Gu* rainy season. Malnutrition-related deaths have been reported in Awdal region. Loss of livestock due to poor pasture and water availability is negatively impacting family income and causing a sharp rise in indebtedness. Without access to emergency health services, water and sanitation, thousands of people could face death due to preventable causes.

“We have reached a critical point in Puntland and Somaliland. Urgent action is required right now. If not, we risk a rapid and deep deterioration of the situation, as drought conditions may worsen in the coming months. Communities are already losing their means of survival. The time to fund is now to come back from the tipping point, avoid a greater crisis and avert loss of lives and save livelihoods,” said Peter de Clercq, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia. “Today, a total of 95 national and international humanitarian organizations are working in Puntland and Somaliland, but the lack of funding is hampering progress.”

Funding levels are particularly low for critical, life-saving clusters such as food security, nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene. Of the USD 885 million requested in the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), only USD 97 million or 11 per cent has been received so far. The UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) will release USD 11 million to provide urgent humanitarian assistance for 224,000 drought-affected people in the northern parts of Somalia. The Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF) has also allocated USD 6.5 million to compliment the CERF allocation.

While these funding streams have enabled partners to kick-start their drought response, they are inadequate when compared to current needs. The Call for Aid covers the six-month period from April to September and builds on the 2016 HRP and the 2015 Contingency Plan for El Niño in Somalia.

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