



Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia

Humanitarian Appeal Launched For Somalia Addressing Urgent Needs Of The Country's Most Vulnerable Populations

Nairobi, 14 December - A Humanitarian Appeal was launched today in Nairobi by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Mr. Maxwell Gaylard, appealing for almost US\$ 174,000,000 to address the urgent and critical humanitarian needs of the country's most vulnerable populations, an estimated one million, including 345,000 people in a state of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis, 200,000 experiencing a Humanitarian Emergency and 370,000-400,000 internally displaced people.

Over the last fourteen years, protracted civil war and persistent fragmented conflicts have eroded Somali livelihoods. Displacement, prolonged drought, flooding, human rights abuses, unemployment, market disruptions and disease outbreaks have torn the socio-economic fabric of society apart too, all contributing to the current grave humanitarian crises.

The appeal comes at a critical time for Somalia. At the end of November, the UN's Food Security Analysis Unit Somalia issued an early warning alert for southern Somalia indicating that the failed Deyr rains and increasing insecurity - alongside decreased humanitarian access and disrupted humanitarian relief supply lines (a result of piracy off Somalia's southern coast) could drastically increase the number of people in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.

The Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Mr. Maxwell Gaylard highlighted that 'the humanitarian needs of the Somalis are not going to go away quickly and that strong support must continue independent of the political and development process.' He went on to say 'The works and efforts of humanitarian organizations continue to play a vital role, especially as they focus on meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of Somalia's people - but they also provide firm foundations upon which additional recovery and reconstruction activities can be built in the future. A generous response from the international donor community will ensure an integrated approach by humanitarian organizations in meeting the needs and building the capacity of Somalia's most vulnerable communities'.

Somalia's people live in extremely poor and underdeveloped conditions. Livelihoods are broadly based on subsistence farming and pastoralism with limited opportunity to earn wages. Infant, child and maternal mortality rates are amongst the highest in the world. One in four children die before reaching the age of five. 1,600 women die for every 100,000 live births. Average life expectancy is 48 years.

This humanitarian appeal focuses also on the Protection needs of Somalia's most vulnerable groups and especially the internally displaced (370,000-400,000) who own few assets and are subject to multiple human rights violations.

It also seeks to support sustainable reintegration and provide humanitarian assistance to over a million returnees who have returned to the country over the last fourteen years. This group suffers from a lack of access to basic services and lack of income-generating opportunities as well as being extremely vulnerable to food insecurity.

With 545,000 people in severe livelihood distress, the food security needs of the chronically food insecure are addressed to enable these vulnerable populations to resume their livelihoods and build up their productive assets, disrupted due to insecurity or natural disaster such as drought; as well as increasing food availability to groups who are chronically food insecure such as IDPs, returnees and people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Somalia has one of the lowest primary school enrolment rates in the world. The appeal is focused on improving access to education and especially for girls. It also seeks to rectify the underlying cause of child morbidity in the country by improving and increasing access to safe drinking water.

Humanitarian access in Somalia remains critical to reaching the country's most vulnerable populations - many of whom reside in the war ravaged south of the country. However, a series of serious security incidents during

October/November 2005 including a recent wave of assassinations in Mogadishu and Kismayo - and piracy - worsened humanitarian access and has implications for the delivery of humanitarian relief to Somalia's most vulnerable populations.

Lack of sustained humanitarian access and limited operating space are factors that have affected human survival in southern Somalia in recent years. To overcome access difficulties in the south, the humanitarian community will be looking to work closely with local Somali partners and empower them to carry out the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian activities.

For more information please contact

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