



Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia

The Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia Calls for Better Access to Drought Affected Populations

Nairobi (14 February 2006) - The Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Mr Maxwell Gaylard, is appealing to local communities, political and business leaders for a general mobilization to fight the unprecedented humanitarian crisis aggravated by the worst drought in a decade. Community leaders are urged to ensure unhindered access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in need, as well as to ensure the protection of all humanitarian workers in Somalia.

“It is imperative that community elders, religious and political leaders, businessmen and militia create an environment conducive to impartial and independent humanitarian operations. We want to work closely with the Transitional Federal Government, regional authorities and community leaders to quickly reach people in need of assistance and protection, and save the lives that we can,” says Mr Maxwell Gaylard. “We are already seriously challenged by the logistics in central and southern Somalia, and with predicted poor next rains, the situation could quickly deteriorate further. We need across the board support and commitment of everyone to ensure access and protection so that we can alleviate the suffering of Somalis. We cannot do so if the food convoys, medical supplies and other critically-needed assistance are targeted by opportunists and so called uncontrolled militiamen.”

Approximately 1.7 million people are in need of urgent assistance and protection in Somalia, due to the drought that has been caused by the failure of a third consecutive rain season, generalised land degradation and on-going conflict. The situation is further aggravated by an additional 400,000 internally displaced who are at high risk and vulnerability.

The United Nations and other humanitarian organizations are providing assistance in various sectors (food, livestock and agriculture, health, nutrition, water and sanitation) in the regions they have been able to access thanks to already existing cooperation with some local communities.

For more information, kindly contact:

Amanda Di Lorenzo
OCHA Somalia
Tel: +254 20 3754150-5