



STATEMENT ON WORSENING DROUGHT

Mogadishu, 20 November 2021 - The Federal Government of Somalia and the humanitarian community are alarmed at the rapidly worsening drought in the country. Climate projections show that Somalia is on the verge of a fourth consecutive failed rainfall season and is at the risk of a potentially extreme situation by April 2022.

About 2.3 million people in 57 out of 74 districts (nearly 20 per cent of the population in the affected districts) are ravaged by serious water, food and pasture shortages as water pans and boreholes have dried up. The lack of access to safe, portable water and hygiene and sanitation facilities has heightened the prospect of water-borne diseases. Nearly 100,000 people have abandoned their homes, especially in central and southern areas, in search of food, water and pasture for their livestock, exposing their families to the danger of resource-based conflict over the diminishing resources.

“The situation is grave,” said Ms. Khadija Diriye, Federal Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management. “Families are losing their livestock, a key source of livelihood in Somalia, and may starve to death in the coming months. I am particularly worried about children, women, the elderly and disabled people who continue to bear the brunt of Somalia’s humanitarian crisis.”

The deteriorating situation has compounded vulnerabilities at a time when the number of people who need assistance and protection in Somalia is forecast to rise by 30 per cent from 5.9 million to about 7.7 million in 2022. Moreover, 71 per cent of all Somalis currently live below the poverty line, especially in areas where humanitarian access is a challenge.

“A perfect storm is brewing in Somalia,” said Mr. Adam Abdelmoula, UN’s Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia. “We must act now to prevent a slide into the crippling kind of drought and even famine conditions experienced in previous years. Those affected have already endured decades of conflict, climatic shocks and disease outbreaks.”

Somalia is on the frontline of climate change and has experienced more than 30 climate-related hazards since 1990, including 12 droughts and 19 floods. The frequency and severity of climate-related hazards is increasing.

Despite the emergency, funding for humanitarian operations in Somalia remains low. With one month remaining in the year, the 2021 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan is 66 per cent funded. Critical sectors like water, sanitation and hygiene are only 20 per cent funded at a time when access to water is a major challenge across the Horn of Africa region.

Authorities, local communities and humanitarian partners are ramping up responses and reprogramming their activities to address critical emerging needs. The UN Central Emergency Response Fund is allocating US\$8 million for the drought response and the Somalia Humanitarian Fund is making a reserve allocation of \$6 million.

We thank our donors for their generous contributions to date, but a critical scale-up in humanitarian operations is urgently required to support early action in order to mitigate the impact of the worsening drought.

For further information, please contact:

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