

High Level Humanitarian Event on Somalia, London, 6 March 2018

DONORS AGREE MEASURES TO PREVENT FAMINE IN SOMALIA IN 2018

Preamble

In support of The Federal Government of Somalia, the United Kingdom and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) convened an event in London on 6 March 2018 to draw urgent attention to the humanitarian crisis in Somalia and the need for a swift and substantial response.

The event was co-chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock, and the Permanent Secretary for International Development (DFID), Mr. Matthew Rycroft. The event was attended by 31 Member States, UN Agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations committed to ensuring support for the humanitarian situation in Somalia for 2018.

The UK Secretary of State for International Development, the Rt. Hon. Penny Mordaunt MP and the Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, H.E. Gamal Hassan of Somalia opened the event. They each highlighted the importance of early and sustained funding to enable the provision of humanitarian assistance, as well as to commit to widen the resource base and ensure greater predictability, coherence and effectiveness of the aid by translating the Grand Bargain commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit into the necessary actions to continue efforts to deliver concrete dividends for the Somali people. The importance of further strengthening links between relief, recovery and development efforts was highlighted as vital to building Somalia's resilience to extreme shocks and breaking the link between drought and humanitarian crisis in Somalia.

Humanitarian Needs and Challenges in 2018

Participants applauded the collective Somali and international efforts to massively scale up humanitarian assistance in 2017 in response to the severe drought. As a result, we were successful in averting famine and saving many thousands of lives.

However, the job is not yet done. We remain deeply concerned by the serious and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Somalia. Somalia continues to suffer from one of the worst droughts on record, leading to successive failed harvests, mass loss of livestock, appalling and rising rates of malnutrition.

An estimated 5.4 million people, including 2.8 million children are in need of humanitarian assistance and almost 500,000 people are projected to face the food insecurity emergency phase (IPC 4). Famine remains a risk in many areas with 1.8 million children projected to be malnourished in 2018. We also remain concerned that over 1 million people have been newly displaced internally, in addition to the 1.1 million already in a state of protracted displacement. The recent forced evictions have further exacerbated the situation of the IDPs in some of the main cities. If the rains later this spring are also below average, as currently forecast, the situation is likely to deteriorate further.

It was underlined that the situation is further exacerbated by ongoing insecurity and conflict. Humanitarian access remains a major issue with constraints in particular in Al Shabaab held areas and targeted attacks restricting humanitarian operations. Protection of civilians, including high levels of sexual and gender based violence, forced recruitment of children by

armed groups and violations of International Humanitarian Law continue to occur. The Somali government is taking steps to confront this and are in the process of establishing the Human Rights Commission. The Somali government is committed to protecting its civilians, in particular the most vulnerable including returnees and those displaced through legal frameworks and policies. The adoption of the National Disaster Management Policy by the Council of Ministers was a significant step forward. Nonetheless, there is an urgent need to make progress on security, and for all security actors to play their part in facilitating the humanitarian response.

Participants acknowledged Somalia's leadership on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and welcomed progress on drafting the National Action Plan in line with the IGAD Declaration and Nairobi Plan of Action, to be implemented mainly through the nationally-led Durable Solutions Initiative. With the large number of Somali refugees in the region and the important contribution they can make to the reconstruction of Somalia, sustainable voluntary returns remain a longer-term goal in the context of comprehensive and durable solutions for the displaced.

Together we remain fully committed to respond to the humanitarian situation in Somalia, and to ensure an effective and coordinated response. Senior decision makers and partners assembled at the meeting welcomed the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan requesting US\$ 1.5 billion and discussed how to fund the 2018 response, and address priority gaps, based on a review of lessons from the successful famine prevention response in 2017.

Participants agreed that deeper collaboration and coordination, in conjunction with the Somali authorities at the Federal and regional level, in delivering assistance was key to continuing an effective response and that this should be matched with early and sustained funding. Early funding was critical in making the 2017 response a success and is required again in 2018. With additional commitments made at this meeting, Somalia's partners have now committed some \$350 million USD to the Humanitarian Response for 2018. A number of key donors made clear their intention to confirm substantial new pledges in the next few weeks. The meeting called for the pledges made to be disbursed quickly, and urged those who have not yet been able to make a pledge to do so as soon as possible.

Member States were encouraged where possible to support the Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF) which supports the highest priority components of the HRP through the best-placed frontline responders (including local NGOs). Support for the Central Emergency Response Fund will remain critical so that it can continue to kick-start, scale up and sustain the Somalia HRP while also addressing urgent needs in neighbouring countries.

Developing Somali institutions, local action and Delivering on the Grand Bargain

Participants agreed that creating stronger partnerships between international organizations and national NGOs is crucial to developing better aid delivery. Overcoming the barriers to greater aid localization requires inclusive and constructive dialogue between the Somali government, donors, UN agencies, INGOs, and local NGOs to build mutual trust and respect. Somalia held its first aid localization event in September 2017 and commitments were made for greater involvement from local NGOs and the private sector, providing funding and assistance to vulnerable groups, in order to foster a culture of resilience and safety in communities.

It was also agreed that the international response in Somalia must continue to deliver against the Grand Bargain commitments agreed in Istanbul. Efficiency and effective delivery, reinforced by the collective commitment of aid agencies and donors to share information, data and analysis in a timely manner, will save lives. In order to maximize our collective effort, continued coordination and improved transparency is essential. Participants

welcomed the introduction of the Drought Operation Coordination Centre(s) in early 2017 and suggest they continue to play a role in better data management and information sharing in 2018, working with the National Humanitarian Coordination Centre at the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, which was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Somalia in April 2017.

Cash based interventions are essential to stimulate markets, boost beneficiaries' dignity and speed up responses. We must collectively increase the use of coordinated, unconditional, unrestricted cash transfers in Somalia and work with the full range of partners on the ground – including the private sector - to deliver this as efficiently as possible.

We agreed to sustain collaboration beyond this conversation. We should seek to use the operational platforms in country as an enabler. We must be committed to framing discussions based on an honest assessment of where the populations in the highest need are, and which organisation is best placed to respond based on assessments of sectoral comparative advantage and ability to access affected populations.

Resilience and recovery effort

As noted at last May's London Conference on Somalia, substantial progress has been achieved in recent years. However, these gains remain fragile and should be protected and enhanced. A famine could derail the real political and security progress Somalia has made.

We endorse the approach of building long term recovery and resilience solutions that address the root causes of drought and famine and the structural causes of vulnerability and build resilience. However, this should not come at the expense of continued humanitarian programming which needs to be fully resourced to meet its objectives.

Somalia has stronger, more effective and more accountable institutions which should increasingly play a role in breaking the cycle of recurrent crisis. We welcome the role that the Federal Government of Somalia played in preparing the Drought Impact Needs Assessment and Recovery and Resilience Framework which will be a useful tool – aligned to the National Development Plan - for guiding investments over the medium term. We urge the Federal Government of Somalia, the wider international community and all partners to make further progressive and incremental investments, in support of this.

Commenting on the discussion, Mark Lowcock said "I am grateful to donors for the support provided and promised to humanitarian organisations to finance essential life-saving programmes to prevent a famine this year. The situation is alarming, but still salvageable. The relief operation has proved its efficiency and effectiveness, and there is very good collaboration between the Government and its international partners. We made some progress today, with important pledges from a number of donors. I urge those who have pledged to disburse the money as soon as possible. But unless substantial new resources are provided over the next few weeks, we face a real crisis in Somalia by the middle of the year. We will be working hard with all concerned to avoid that".