

KEY MESSAGES ON SOMALIA

19 July 2011

Two regions of southern Somalia are currently facing famine. Malnutrition rates are above 50 per cent in some of the districts and tens of thousands of people have already died for reasons related to malnutrition in the last few months. In the first half of 2011, the number of people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance increased by over a million to some 3.7 million people, almost half of the people living in Somalia. If humanitarian agencies do not intervene now, famine will spread to the whole of southern Somalia within two months.

- 1. All parties in Somalia should join efforts to respond to Somali people's needs.** Parts of southern Somalia are currently facing famine. Somalia has not experienced famine since 1993. The combination of drought, increasing food prices and conflict are the main factors responsible for the famine. Malnutrition rates are as high as 50 per cent in parts of southern Somalia and tens of thousands of people have already died of malnutrition in the last few months. If we are not able to intervene immediately, tens of thousands more Somalis may die.
- 2. The crisis in Somalia will have an increasingly devastating effect on other countries in the region.** In the Horn of Africa there are currently 11.5 million people in crisis, including the 3.7 million in Somalia. The number is increasing on a daily basis, with thousands of Somalis fleeing to Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti every day. Already over 78,000 Somalis have fled from southern Somalia in search of food and livelihoods in the last two months (61,000 in June alone). Somalia, the epicentre of the regional crisis, could further affect the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa region, if humanitarian relief aid does not reach people in southern Somalia immediately.
- 3. We need donor support to address current needs and prevent a further deterioration of the crisis.** Humanitarian agencies need urgent funding to save lives of Somalis affected by the famine in southern regions. Lack of funds for food, nutrition and livelihood interventions is particularly concerning. If funding is not made available for humanitarian interventions now, the famine is likely to continue and spread. Roughly US\$300 million is needed in the next two months to upscale response in famine affected areas.
- 4. We call on all parties, from the donor community to the local authorities in Somalia, to lift restrictions on humanitarian grounds.** The humanitarian community is doing its best to address the food crisis, but much more could be done if the current restrictions to the delivery of aid are lifted and unrestricted cross-border passage of relief aid is granted.

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