

**UN EMERGENCY FUND RELEASES \$17 MILLION TO HELP COMMUNITIES
AFFECTED BY WORST DROUGHT TO HIT ETHIOPIA IN DECADES**

(New York, 12 November 2015) – United Nations humanitarian chief Stephen O’Brien today released US\$17 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support people affected by the worst drought in Ethiopia in decades. UN and partners are supporting the ongoing response led by the Government of Ethiopia.

The El Niño global climactic event has wreaked havoc on Ethiopia’s summer rains. This comes on the heels of failed spring rains, and has driven food insecurity, malnutrition and water shortages in affected areas of the country.

“A timely response to the emergency is critical. If we don’t act today, we face an even graver situation tomorrow, with more immense needs in 2016,” warned the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. “CERF funds will immediately provide crucial food supplies for people affected by the drought, now, when they need it most.”

The emergency funding will be provided to the World Food Programme so it can support some 1.37 million Ethiopians with food, and provide specialized nutritional supplements to 164,000 malnourished women and children.

The Government reports that 8.2 million people now require emergency food assistance, up from 2.9 million in early 2015. The number of people who need food assistance in East Africa is forecast to increase to over 22 million at the start of next year, including 15 million in Ethiopia.

By the end of the year, the UN’s global emergency fund will have provided over US\$80 million in response to humanitarian needs because of climate-related events linked to El Niño. Since July alone some \$76 million has been disbursed to agencies to carry out essential aid activities in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Malawi, Myanmar, Somalia and Zimbabwe.

CERF pools donor contributions in a single fund so that money is available to start or continue urgent relief work anywhere in the world. Since its inception in 2006, 125 UN Member States and dozens of private-sector donors and regional Governments have contributed to the Fund. CERF has allocated more than \$4 billion in support of humanitarian operations in 95 countries and territories.

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