

**UN's global emergency fund provides US\$18.5 million for early response to new drought in Ethiopia**

(Geneva, 21 February 2017):

With the Horn of Africa facing one of the worst droughts in decades, more than 5.6 million people in Ethiopia alone are in desperate need of life's basic necessities. To provide time-critical aid to more than 785,000 people suffering from hunger, malnutrition and severe water shortages in Ethiopia's worst-hit Somali region, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien has released US\$18.5 million from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

"I was recently in Ethiopia's Somali Region, where I saw the devastating impact this drought is having on people's lives, livestock and livelihoods. We must act today," said O'Brien. "Time lost means lives lost so I am releasing CERF funding to provide urgent aid to people in need – now – when they need it most."

The CERF funds will immediately provide affected people with access to water, and health, nutritional and agricultural services. The funds will help pastoralist communities in the Somali region who are most in need, thousands of whom have been forced to move in search of water and pasture.

The current drought has hit Ethiopia before it could recover from the effects of a devastating El Niño-induced drought in 2015 and 2016 which left more than 10 million people in urgent need of aid in 2016. While the Government and humanitarian partners implemented a remarkably effective response with generous donor support last year, millions of vulnerable Ethiopians are still facing prolonged drought.

"The CERF grant covers only a small portion of what is required in 2017 to address the rising hunger and malnutrition levels," said Mr. O'Brien. "Humanitarians will use these funds to save lives, but it is a bridge that must be matched and surpassed urgently. Millions of people's lives, livelihoods and wellbeing depend on continued donor support."

Over the past two years, CERF allocated a total of US\$47 million to aid operations in Ethiopia.

Around the globe, the ever increasing scale and intensity of emergencies points to the need for a larger CERF to keep pace with the growing needs. To this end, the UN General Assembly in December 2016 endorsed former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's recommendation to double CERF's annual target to US\$1 billion by 2018. Member States and partners are urged to contribute to the fund so that more lives can be saved together.

For further information, please contact:

Claudia Hargarten, UN CERF: hargarten@un.org, Tel. +1-917-207-3925

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