

Five million Somalis now food insecure

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Mogadishu, 20 September 2016 — Five million Somalis – more than 40 per cent of the country’s population – do not have sufficient food, according to a new assessment report released today in Mogadishu. This includes over 300,000 children under five who are acutely malnourished, including more than 50,000 children who are severely malnourished and more vulnerable than any other group.

The latest numbers represent an increase of 300,000 people who are food insecure since the last review in February 2016. “Humanitarian partners are ready to scale up response to help families struggling to find food to make it through the day,” said Peter de Clercq, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia. “The Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan for 2016 is 32 per cent funded and additional resources are urgently required to boost response and on-going efforts to sustainably address malnutrition and access to food, including support to comprehensive durable solutions.”

According to the FAO-managed Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), more than 1.1 million people cannot meet their daily food requirements today, while another 3.9 million Somalis require livelihood support to reduce the risk of sliding into crisis.

The food and nutrition situation particularly affects the estimated 1.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are highly vulnerable to natural hazards, disease outbreaks, exploitation and abuse, some displaced multiple times during the past two decades. An estimated 58 per cent of people who are acutely food insecure are internally displaced, many living in appalling conditions in settlements spread throughout the country, facing the continuous risk of forced evictions, discrimination, violation of children’s rights and pervasive gender-based violence.

Efforts to reduce levels of vulnerabilities continue to be undermined by irregular weather patterns which have influenced the food and nutrition situation. Cereal production has been good in parts of Somaliland and has brought relief in crop growing areas that were affected by drought. However, drought conditions continue in pastoral areas of Somaliland and Puntland. Poor rainfall in southern and central Somalia, the breadbasket of the country, has led to a reduction in cereal production by nearly half, compared to the long-term average. This situation is of serious concern and comes at a time when we are already facing multiple drivers of needs, including drought and risk of flooding, conflict and access constraints as well as increased refugee returns.

Humanitarian partners are committed to continuing delivery of humanitarian assistance to save lives and strengthen resilience of Somalis. This complements longer-term solutions and development programmes with increased involvement of Somali authorities that are beginning to address underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition through an agricultural system that can feed Somalia’s people and enable them to respond to shocks and crises.

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For further information, please contact:

Tapiwa Gomo, Head of Communication, gomo@un.org, Tel. +252 616 548 007
Abas Abdi, Public Information Officer, mohamud3@un.org, +252 618330000 or +252 619150457
Antonette Miday, Public Information Officer, miday@un.org, Tel. +254 731 043 156
Kenneth Odiwuor, Public Information Officer, odiwuor@un.org, Tel. +254 734 800 120