



News Release

26 June 2007

GOVERNMENTS, UN AGREE ON ROAD MAP TO TACKLE HUNGER IN HORN OF AFRICA

NAIROBI – Six African governments and the United Nations today agreed on a road map to tackle the root causes of rising hunger across the drought-plagued Horn of Africa, warning that the next major crisis could force more than 20 million people into needing emergency assistance.

The road map is the result of months of planning capped by two days of talks in Nairobi that ended today between government representatives of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, regional bodies, donors, international financial institutions, research organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and the United Nations.

“The hard work starts now,” said Kjell Magne Bondevik, UN Special Humanitarian Envoy to the Horn of Africa. “We have identified what works best and where. The biggest challenge is to scale up successes to extinguish hunger in the Horn rather than just fighting fires each time one breaks out.”

“The Horn is hit by some of the world’s most severe food crises and they are coming faster and more furious because of climate change, environmental degradation, political and armed conflicts and a host of other factors,” he said. “We all now need to show the commitment to end this cycle of despair and disaster, which if not stopped could next see over 20 million people in need of assistance.”

“None of this will work, however, unless the best responses are escalated across the region,” he said. “If we want to change the Horn so it supports people instead of increasingly making them victims, I appeal to you all to back this campaign on behalf of those brave survivors of one of the harshest environments in the world. Otherwise this failure will only haunt us all.”

More than 70 million people – 45 percent of the total population – in the Horn live in abject poverty and face food shortages. In the past six years, four major droughts hit the region.

The result of government-led consultations with the support of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme is a road map to scale-up prioritized interventions in the six countries. National talks since January produced a list of 170 successful projects, an armoury of interventions that can be extended and expanded in the battle against hunger.

“In the Horn of Africa to end this scourge, we need to protect and rebuild the livelihoods of the food insecure and enhance their long-term resilience to shocks such as droughts. This is what we hope to do in this comprehensive partnership,” said FAO Assistant Director-General Tesfai Teclé.

“Breaking the cycle of hunger in the Horn of Africa requires joint efforts by all stakeholders – governments of the region, UN agencies, NGOs and donors,” said Paul Gulleik Larsen, Director of the Office of the WFP Executive Director. “The challenge of meeting Millennium Development Goal One of cutting hunger in half is huge, but it is doable. The fact that six countries have joined this consultation shows an encouraging level of political commitment.”

Six sets of priorities for partnerships for food security in the Horn of Africa were identified:

Broad alliances to support millions of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists;
The environmental challenge; combating land degradation and desertification;
The role of women as a primary force for rural transformation;
Livelihoods diversification and income-generating activities for the food insecure;
Risk management and crisis response;
Institutional strengthening and community-focused capacity building.

The 170 best projects drawn from the six countries include among many others growing trees, rehabilitating land, veterinary services for drought-stricken pastoralists; agricultural advisory services for farmers; bee-keeping; dairy development; fisheries; micro-enterprises; eco-tourism; digging water wells and irrigation systems, and establishing vegetable gardens.

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