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**Letter to the Somali People from UN HC/RC Mark Bowden  
April 2009**

**Expanding Humanitarian Aid where it is most needed**  
**Support from Somali communities**

I last wrote to you in January of this year to share my thoughts, hopes and plans for 2009. In that letter I mentioned that despite the challenges ahead, we must work together if we are to better address the needs of the Somali people. Today I write to update you on what I believe to be our most pressing priorities so far this year. I also write to stress the need for us to work together if we are to provide for those who desperately require our help.

Clear challenges are ahead for the Somali people and the humanitarian community in 2009. Most urgent is the problem you now face in getting enough water to live. April ought to be the month that brings Somalia relief from the long *Jilaal* dry season. Instead the rains are poor and the forecast is not good. I am aware of the strain and pressure that the harsh dry conditions are putting on every household and want to assure you that we are trying to do more water trucking to meet your needs, but of course, this is not an ideal solution.

This is the fourth year in a row of drought-like conditions in Somalia and many families have been forced to sell their herds or have watched them die due to drought. Dealing with this problem will require more than an immediate emergency solution and we are therefore working on longer lasting solutions, such as building water pipelines, repairing boreholes and building and repairing berkads.

At this time, Somalia needs better job creation increased support to livelihoods. We aim to do this through increasing projects such as cash for work, support to agriculture and the building of dams. I hope that these activities will help to reduce the effect of future dry seasons as well as help prevent natural disasters such as floods which have sadly had a major impact following serious drought.

