

## Aid agencies welcome start of £15m UK aid commitment to health and nutrition programmes in Somalia

Aid agencies working on life-saving health and nutrition programmes in Somalia welcome significant new funding from the UK Department for International Development (DfID), which has been made available today.

The £15 million (\$18.25m) committed by DfID will be immediately invested in supporting a consortium of nine charities to scale up access to health and nutrition services across the country, as fears of a potential famine grow.

The new grants will allow the SNS consortium to reach almost 400,000 people with essential health services and over 150,000 malnourished children and mothers with life-saving nutrition.

The announcement is part of a major package of new financial commitments from the UK Government to the drought response in Somalia totalling £100 million. This is on top of £10 million already allocated in January 2017. This new support will rapidly accelerate the humanitarian response to the devastating impact of the drought. In line with the life-threatening risk posed by disease outbreaks and malnutrition, £15 million will be immediately invested in supporting nine charities to scale up access to health and nutrition services across the country.

The money comes as the lives of hundreds of thousands of Somali children are at risk, with more than 360,000 children expected to require treatment for acute malnutrition.

There is also growing concern about the increase in the number of cases of cholera and Acute Watery Diarrhoea cases across the country, as clean water sources dry up and pastoralists move into IDP camps.

Rapid action by DfID to support the scale-up of the humanitarian response in Somalia now means that nine charities can immediately ramp up the response to health and nutrition risks facing children and communities in 17 out of 18 regions across Somalia/Somaliland.

Chris Golden is Consortium Manager for the health and nutrition consortium of NGOs and says: “DFID’s announcement of £15 million is a major investment that will save thousands of lives in Somalia. With the UK government’s support, we can immediately ramp up life-saving treatment of diseases; treat children suffering from acute malnutrition and reduce the risk of death among communities in one of the world’s most urgent humanitarian crises”.

Nine charities will work together to provide a combined package of vital health and nutrition support to communities on the frontline of the crisis and builds on substantial investment by DFID to date in strengthening the health and nutrition sector in Somalia/Somaliland.

In the next six months, aid agencies will work with officials from the Ministry of Health to treat children for common diseases like diarrhoea, pneumonia and malaria – the ‘killer diseases’ for children if left untreated – in six regions where communities are in urgent need of assistance including Banadir, Bay, Galgaduud, Hiraan, Lower Shabelle and Mudug, with much of the screening and tracing of children at need being carried out by locally active Community Health Workers.

Aid workers will be sent out to rural locations to screen children and identify cases of acute malnutrition. Children who have acute, severe and moderately acute malnutrition will be referred for treatment to Primary Health Units and mobile health teams for immediate treatment. Children who need treatment for medical complications will be taken to hospitals for treatment.

### Notes to editors

1. The consortium includes: Action Contre la Faim (ACF), CARE, CESVI, Concern, International Medical Corps (IMC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Health Poverty Action (HPA), Save the Children and Trocaire.
2. DfID announced £100m to support the 2017 drought response in Somalia on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. This is in addition to £10million of additional funding announced by the Secretary of State for International Development in January.

