

**Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Ursula Mueller,**  
**Opening remarks at High-Level Event on Famine Response and Prevention on the Margins of the 72<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly**

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*As delivered*

The response to the Secretary-General's call for action in February has been swift and effective.

In total, nearly 15 million people have received life-saving assistance this year across the four countries: Somalia, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, in a coordinated and robust response to meet immediate needs and prevent further suffering.

This assistance has prioritized a comprehensive package of interventions of food, nutrition, health and water and sanitation.

To give an example of the scale-up that has been undertaken: Last month over 2 million women and children across all four countries received nutrition assistance – three times the number reached in January of this year.

In Somalia, 3 million people each month are now receiving food assistance, also a three-fold increase.

In South Sudan, 1.4 million children have been vaccinated against deadly diseases, including cholera and measles.

Last month, 7 million people received food assistance in Yemen, while over 220 cholera treatment centers, and more than 900 rehydration points across the country have been established.

In north-east Nigeria over 2 million people are receiving food and livelihood support every month.

The Central Emergency Response Fund allocated US\$128 million to support the most critical early action on the ground, making it one of the largest funding sources to the four affected countries in the early stages. We thank all CERF donors for their support to the fund.

Without a doubt, this collective effort has held back the tide of famine and saved lives that would otherwise have been lost.

The response has also been marked by stepped up collaboration between humanitarian and development actors. We will hear more from the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program Administrator, about the concrete efforts on the ground to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and coordinate around the New Way of Working.

I would like to take this opportunity to underscore how important this collaboration has been to preventing famine, but also how important it will be to remain focused on working towards collective outcomes between humanitarian and development actors in the coming years.

One striking example is the continued delivery of life-saving health care services to hundreds of thousands of people in Yemen during a deadly cholera epidemic as a result of rapid and complementary World Bank funding.

Humanitarians have also increased the use of cash assistance in humanitarian programming, including in Somalia, where close to 3 million people are being reached with cash and voucher assistance each month, across multiple sectors.

But this crisis is far from over, and the severity of humanitarian needs has not diminished. Indeed, in many places, needs have increased, in some cases, sharply, even as famine has been averted. It is critical now that we stay the course.

To do this, humanitarian responders must be fully resourced. We still urgently require \$2 billion for partners to respond to existing and increasing needs. We encourage donors to channel their contributions through the country-based pooled funds which support the highest priority components of Humanitarian Response Plans in each of the affected countries.

We also require access. The continued crises in these countries are largely the result of protracted conflict causing mass displacement; widespread violations of humanitarian law and abuses of human rights; unacceptable access constraints; crippled social service infrastructure; and decimated local economies.

This year, eighteen humanitarians have been killed in South Sudan where humanitarian convoys are routinely attacked. Between 450,000 and 700,000 people in north-east Nigeria and 1.9 million in Somalia remain effectively out of reach of sustained humanitarian assistance. And in Yemen, the main port of Hudaydah is operating with limited capacity due to damage sustained from airstrikes in August 2015; while humanitarian access remains limited in some parts of the country, often as a result of bureaucratic impediments imposed by parties to conflict.

So today while we commend a robust response to prevent famine in these four countries, we must also acknowledge that there is much more that must urgently be done.

Parties to these conflicts and Member States with influence over them, must work much harder to end the conflicts driving these crises; and ensure respect for international humanitarian law by *all* sides; while allowing safe, rapid, unhindered and sustained humanitarian assistance to reach all those in need.

I thank you for your attention.