

**EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR'S
KEY MESSAGES ON SOMALIA (HORN OF AFRICA)
4 February 2012 • Issue Number 8**

I. Key Messages

1. Famine conditions are no longer present in Somalia, according to the latest analysis released by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit and Famine Early Warning System. This news is very welcome. The massive scale-up of humanitarian response, strengthened local partnerships, innovative programming and a better-than-expected harvest have helped improve the situation and reduce the numbers of people who need life-saving help.

2. However, the situation remains critical for at least 2.34 million people in Somalia. In southern parts of the country, 1.7 million people will need food, clean water, shelter and other assistance just to survive. Mortality rates remain among the highest in the world, while continued conflict and lack of access to people in need remain major operational challenges.

3. We must not forget that the progress made is fragile. Without continued and generous support from the international community, these gains could be reversed. Years of conflict and poor rains have left millions of Somalis vulnerable. We cannot allow humanitarian efforts to be interrupted and I urge all involved to minimize the impact of armed conflict on ordinary people. We must all must keep our attention firmly focused on Somalia and ensure that we do not fail the most vulnerable.

4. Even with the good harvest, food stocks are expected to run low by May. While continuing to provide life-saving help, we also need to focus on building up people's ability to cope better with future droughts and food crises. We need to restore families' livelihoods now so that people do not have to depend on aid. This includes making sure people have seeds and tools before the next planting season.

5. We have shown that humanitarian organizations in Somalia can achieve results even in the most challenging of environments. Vaccination campaigns have reduced measles cases by half; more than 450,000 acutely malnourished children received nutrition supplements; and we tripled the number of people getting food to 2.6 million. The newly-strengthened presence of the United Nations and other international partners in Mogadishu demonstrates our continued commitment to the Somali people.

For more information, please contact:

Amanda Pitt, OCHA New York, pitta@un.org, Tel. +1 917 367 5126 (desk), +1 917 442 1810 (cell)

Mark Turner, OCHA New York, turner5@un.org, Tel. +1 917 367 5707 (desk), +1 917 951 3047 (cell)

Elisabeth Byrs, OCHA Geneva, byrs@un.org, Tel. +41 22 917 2653 (desk), +41 79 473 4570 (cell)

www.unocha.org

The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

Celebrating 20 years of coordinated humanitarian action