



United Nations Association in Canada
Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies

UN Leads in New Efforts to Address Famine in Somalia

22 July 2011, Ottawa - Famine in Somalia has killed tens of thousands of people in recent months and could grow even worse unless urgent action is taken – both to feed the hungry now and to make enduring agricultural and development investments to avert continuing disasters. Today's situation is a human catastrophe of monstrous proportions.

"Hundreds of people are dying every day and if we do not act now many more will perish," said UNA-Canada Executive Director, Kate White. "This is a tragedy of immense proportions, and calls for both food assistance right now and the immediate scaling up of investments to help farmers and their families to protect their assets and continue to produce food."

Following the UN's recognition of the famine status on July 20, an international emergency meeting will be held in Rome on Monday, 25 July, to address the escalating crisis in the Horn of Africa and mobilize international support. The French government, holding the G20 presidency, requested the UN's FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) to organize the High-Level Ministerial Meeting, with 193 Member States, UN agencies, international organizations, development banks and non-governmental organizations included.

Famine is classified using a tool called the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, with three main criteria: severe lack of access to food and other basic necessities for large populations, acute malnutrition rates among children exceeding 30 percent and Crude Death Rate exceeding 2 people per 10,000 population per day.

The United Nations Association in Canada (UNA-Canada) is working alongside many to enable Canadians to provide assistance to Somalia and neighbouring areas struggling to meet the needs of thousands caught up in this dire disaster. **Immediate relief** will be channeled through **UN Agencies** and the **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**. Over the longer run the Food and Agriculture Organization will lead on the planning and implementation of solutions in an area too often subject to desperate deprivation and distress.

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