

**AFRICAN UNION**

الاتحاد الأفريقي



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## **CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE PLEDGING CONFERENCE ON THE SITUATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA**

### **BACKGROUND**

The African Union Commission, concerned about the humanitarian, food and nutritional crises occasioned by the drought situation in the Horn of Africa decided to organize a pledging conference to raise resources and awareness amongst AU Member States and the wider international community towards alleviating the plight of the affected populations in the region. Once again the Horn of Africa, and in particular, Somalia, is gripped with severe drought situation which has now escalated to the point of famine being declared in two regions in Somalia. The drought situation is said to be the driest year since 1950-51 in 11 or 15 analyzed pastoral zones. The situation has rendered a staggering estimated number of over 11.5 million people (with 3.3 million affected in Somalia alone) to be in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. There is a growing concern that the negative impact of the drought will continue to increase. It is equally important to note that other countries in the region have also been affected and the magnitude of the crisis is a growing concern across the Horn of Africa. The only difference is that the affected countries are currently at different level of coping capacities and disaster mitigation. At the extreme is Somalia, where governance has withered and state institutions are non-functional due to the protracted conflict situation.

### **THE SETTING**

It is important to recognize the fact that there is already a cohort of international efforts underway to raise awareness and resources to intervene in the current situation. The need at the moment has been put between US\$ 500-600 million. Of this amount, only US\$ 150 million have so far being raised. It is also important to note that ongoing efforts at the international community level is also focussed on raising the funding gap from mainly Western countries or what is termed the traditional sources of funding, it is therefore, imperative to take cognisance of this fact in the planning for the pledging conference.

It is against this backdrop that African Union's focus is now panned towards its Member States as well as on the non-traditional sources of aid such as the League of Arab States, Organization of Islamic conference, the Regional banks such as BADEA, etc. It will send the right signal and give the African Union and the peoples of Africa the

requisite voice in the scheme of things. To this end, and for the purpose of the Pledging Conference, the presidency of the individual RECs on the continent will be expected to represent them at the highest level and they will also coordinate the various responses from the RECs.

With regard to the focus on Africa and alternative sources of fund aid, it is not implied that the invitation will be restricted, but to underscore the fact that the resources to be expected from the traditional sources of fund will at best be very limited at this time.

Beyond Member States, Africa will involve its organized private sector in the development of the continent. There are companies around the continent that could be called upon to donate to the noble cause of emergency intervention of this nature. These companies could use their involvement as part of their corporate social responsibility to the peoples of Africa. The *raison d'être* being the need to diversify the sources of funding beyond Member States.

It is suggested that the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson lead an immediate campaign drive to these countries, drawing their attention to the seriousness of the situation as well as inviting them to the conference. Such campaign drive could also include engagements with Chief Executive of some of these big African Corporations at the different capitals conveying the same message.

## **PURPOSE**

- African countries should be proactive in addressing the drought situation in the affected states and the purpose is to bring the drought situation in the Horn of Africa to the consciousness of African leaders by calling on them to give direct financial or in-kind support to the region in general and to Somalia, in particular. The support of this nature by African countries gives concrete expression of solidarity with the plight of the affected populations and will also portray Africa in better light.
- To assist in filling the funding gap with respect to immediate needs in the areas of water and sanitation and health and nutrition on the one hand; and on the other to also target mitigation programmes from a regional approach to ensure that the cycle of drought is broken.
- To sensitise African leaders and the international community at large on the necessity to focus on medium-to-long term crisis-mitigation strategy in a manner that strengthens the coping mechanisms in-country as well as increasing the African Risk capacity and disaster reduction mechanisms. Therefore, the fund to be raised by the African Union will be used to fill emergency funding gap through operational partners such as UNHCR and WFP, while the longer term mitigation programme at the regional level will be carried out through FAO and WFP among others.

## **HIGH REPRESENTATIVE**

Former President Jerry Rawlings is the High Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission on Somalia and has been mandated by the AU PSC to report on the Humanitarian crisis in Somalia and the way forward. In this regards, former President Rawlings has already visited Mogadishu on the 18 to 20 July 2011 where he was received at the highest level in addition to visiting the affected people.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

The wider donor community, Member States of the African Union, African organized private sector, Regional Economic Communities, Gulf States, Middle East International Financial Institutions- Islamic Development Bank & Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), African Development Bank, and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

## **EXPECTED OUTCOME**

It is expected that the conference will generate funds which will target the two forms of interventions i.e. emergency and recovery / sustainability. The funds to be generated will be made through the dedicated account to be opened for the purpose and will be managed by the AU which decides on the agency (ies) to be used and the programmes to be supported.