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Ireland and UNICEF respond to drought emergency

13 April 2016, Addis Ababa: The drought caused by the El Niño global climatic event has driven food insecurity, malnutrition and water shortages in affected areas in Ethiopia.

In recognising the gravity of the situation, the Government of Ethiopia and its humanitarian partners have identified that 10.2 million people, 6 million of them children, are in need of food assistance, while 5.8 million people require access to clean drinking water and basic latrine facilities throughout the year.

In this latest tranche of support, Ireland has provided over €110,000 (ETB 2.6 million) worth of aid for the drought response. This includes 40 water tanks – 20 each with 10,000-litre capacity and 5,000-litre capacity respectively, 3,000 jerry cans, and shipment from the UN Humanitarian Response Depot in Accra, Ghana to the UNICEF Ethiopia warehouse in Addis Ababa. UNICEF will use these materials to scale up provision of immediate life-saving water supply across 31 worst-affected *woredas* (districts) nationwide through government-led water trucking campaigns. In coordination with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, UNICEF will deploy the tanks to schools and health centres.

“Ethiopia has made impressive development gains in recent years and we must not let the drought undermine this progress. Our additional support is in response to calls from the Ethiopian Government to assist their humanitarian action; to save lives and protect livelihoods,” says H.E Mr Aidan O’Hara, Ambassador of Ireland to Ethiopia. “In recent weeks, UNICEF has been carrying out real-time water assessments in 30 worst-affected *woredas*. The April results show that 68 per cent of the population is using less than five litres of water per day in the worst-affected *woredas*. The water tanks from Ireland will be used to deliver water to the most acutely affected areas”.

“On behalf of the Government of Ethiopia and UNICEF, I would like to thank the Government of Ireland for its continued support for life-saving interventions in this drought emergency,” said UNICEF Representative to Ethiopia, Ms Gillian Mellisop. “Provision of clean and safe water is essential to prevent and contain outbreaks of water-related diseases such as Acute Watery Diarrhoea and scabies, as well as protect children from traveling long distances to collect water, keep children in school and support health and nutrition services.”

As the WASH cluster lead, UNICEF supports the Government of Ethiopia and other partners in the rehabilitation, maintenance and construction of new water supply systems, provision of water purification and treatment chemicals, scaling up of water trucking activities, and provision of sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools. In addition, UNICEF is exploring innovative ways to use satellites to detect deep groundwater for large scale, multiple-village water supply systems. As part of the overall drought emergency response, UNICEF supports programmes in child protection, education, health and nutrition.

The support to UNICEF comes on top of €9.1 million provided by Ireland to Ethiopia in response to the El Niño drought. This includes €3.8 million given in 2015 to the Humanitarian Response Fund, managed by the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs. A further €1.8 million in humanitarian assistance was provided in 2015 through three NGO partners in Ethiopia: GOAL, Trócaire and Concern. In January 2016, €3.5 million was provided to the World Food Programme to provide highly nutritious food for children under the age of five as well as pregnant and lactating women. This year Ireland will also contribute €10.4 million to the Productive Safety Net Programme which is providing cash and or food support to some 8 million people.

About Irish Aid: Irish Aid is the Government of Ireland's overseas assistance programme. It is managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. For more information see: www.irishaid.ie

About UNICEF: UNICEF works in more than 190 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org

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