



# PRESS RELEASE



UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,  
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

## **IMMEDIATE AID NEEDED TO AVERT FOOD CRISIS IN EASTERN AFRICA**

**United Nations**, 18 January 2006: The UN Envoy for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury, on Wednesday appealed for immediate international aid to assist millions of people in Eastern Africa facing crippling food shortages.

Millions are at risk in eastern Africa after a potentially devastating drought wiped out this year's crop. Humanitarian agencies have raised the alarm that unless urgent supplies of food and non-food items are delivered to the region, the impact on lives and livelihoods could be more severe than the drought of 2000.

It is estimated that some 3.5 million people in Kenya, 1.75 million in Ethiopia, 1.4 million in Somalia and 60,000 in Djibouti have been affected by severe drought conditions.

The UN World Food Programme has said it is short of \$ 44 million and without new donations the food agency will run out of food to distribute in drought-affected areas by the end of February, especially in Kenya.

"It is imperative that the donor community step up to the plate and avert this impending food crisis affecting some of the world's Least Developed Countries. For countries like Somalia, Djibouti, and Ethiopia, among the world 50 LDCs – the situation is made even

more precarious given the high levels of poverty. Reports that thousands of food insecure families are already living on a knife's edge are distressing and warrants immediate attention from the international community," Under-Secretary-General Chowdhury said.

According to WFP, in Somalia about 64,000 tonnes of food aid are needed until June 2006 to feed the drought affected population; so far only 16,700 tonnes are available.

In Djibouti, severe drought conditions have worsened the food security conditions of large numbers of pastoralists.

Underscoring the urgency of the situation, Mr. Chowdhury called for "concerted and sustained" measures to solve the LDCs chronic food shortages.

"I implore the international community to take practical measures to deliver on its promise to help LDCs attain food security and reduce malnutrition," he said.

Halving the proportion of the people living in extreme poverty and hunger by 2015 is the overarching objective of the Programme of Action for LDC adopted at the UN conference in Brussels in 2001. Despite their determined efforts, LDCs are not on track to reach these targets.

Mr. Chowdhury urged LDCs and their development partners to implement these commitments through significant investments in appropriate modern agriculture, storage and transport infrastructure as well as rural development.

For further information, please contact: Ricardo Dunn, Information Officer, United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Tel: (917) 367-2471. Email: [dunn@un.org](mailto:dunn@un.org).