

UN approves \$22 million loan to boost agricultural work to prevent famine in Somalia

21 March 2017 – The United Nations agricultural agency will be further scaling up its activities in drought-hit regions of Somalia thanks to a \$22 million loan approved this week by the UN emergency response fund.

“More than 2.9 million people are at risk of famine and many will predictably die from hunger if we do not act now,” said the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien, in a news release.

As under-secretary-general, Mr. O’Brien heads the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which manages the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

“CERF is one of the fastest ways to enable urgent response to people most in need,” he said, explaining that the loan will bridge a crucial gap and allow FAO to immediately save lives and livelihoods of farmers and herders until additional funds from donors are received.

This effort is part of the international response to prevent another famine in Somalia five years after the previous one devastated the country.

Across Somalia, 6.2 million people will face acute food insecurity through June 2017. Of these, nearly three million people are in Phases 3 (crisis) and 4 (emergency) of the five-phase International Phase Classification for Food Security (IPC), representing more than a two-fold increase from six months ago. Phase 5 is famine.

“Livelihoods are people’s best defence against famine and this \$22 million loan is critical to FAO’s famine prevention and drought response in Somalia,” said FAO Deputy Director-General for Programmes, Daniel Gustafson.