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by **Abdi Ali Raghe**
Chief Executive Director AFREC NGO- Somalia

Mr. Vice President, Excellencies, distinguished delegates and humanitarian partners,

INTRODUCTION

It is a great honour for me to be here today. Thank you for giving me the opportunity. I have been asked to speak specifically on the impact of chronic under-funding in Somalia. To that end, I would like to: 1) give a brief overview of the current situation in Somalia; 2) provide some basic information about funding of the Somali crisis; and lastly 3) share with you my views about the impact of chronically inadequate funding on the lives and livelihoods of the Somali people.

Political situation:

Mr. Vice-President,

My country has suffered from 15 years of armed conflict and general violence, and may be on the brink of still more years of conflict, state collapse and humanitarian crisis.

Since the year 2000, we have been inching toward the restoration of a central administration, law and order. Many Somalis rejoiced early this year when the leaders of our divided transitional government took steps towards reconciliation, and succeeded in convening the first session of the new Parliament in February this year at south town of Badio. But this progress was quickly overshadowed by an upsurge of fighting in and around Mogadishu between Islamists and the Secular warlord, radically changing the political landscape.

Four months and 350 deaths later, the Islamists prevailed. Their victory is largely owed to the popular support of the civilian population, who are fed up with the warlords who for so long have ruled the city and stubbornly refused any real attempts at peace. Now, the transitional government and the Islamists are reassuring Somalis that they will work together to achieve peace and democracy, and disavow terrorism. But their cooperation is by no means assured: there are signs that they may still yet resort to military solutions rather than dialogue. And so – again -- we wait and hope and pray for our leaders not to disappoint us, but to take advantage of this unexpected development. If they do not, we will surely face the resumption of another full-

scale civil war between the Islamists on one side and the government and secular warlords on the other, with potentially devastating humanitarian consequences.

Humanitarian situation

Mr. Vice-President

One might ask if the humanitarian situation could get any worse. Years of food insecurity and high malnutrition rates have just been compounded by an unprecedented drought, the worst the region has seen in over a decade. Rain in April and May 2006 helped avert a famine but massive livestock deaths, poor harvests and further displacement meant that the number of Somalis facing emergency conditions rose in 2006 from 200,000 to 915,000, while those facing an acute food or livelihood crisis rose from 345,000 to 710,000. Overall, the number of people needed for humanitarian assistance more than doubled from 1 to 2.1 million, including 400,000 displaced.

Funding situation

Mr. Vice-President

Despite these obvious levels of need, Somalia remains one of the most chronically underfunded humanitarian crises in the world. In this decade, the Consolidated Appeal for Somalia has been on average only half funded in any given year. As of June 2006, only 47 percent of the requested USD 324 million under the Somalia CAP has been received. A large proportion of that – 76 percent -- however, has been for food, leaving critical sectors such as agriculture, health, protection, security, shelter, water and sanitation with less than 20 percent of what is required. The health sector is, for instance, only about 12 percent funded, while agriculture activities are only 8 percent funded.

Funding is of course also provided outside the CAP, directly to NGOs or from Arab states to local communities, for instance. According to OCHA's financial tracking system, this has amounted to about an additional USD 25 million so far this year. But by far – and this is an important aspect I will come back to later -- the largest contributor of funding to Somalia are Somalis themselves. Somalis living abroad send home between 800 million to one billion every year, which is – even by the most conservative estimates -- more than 80 percent of that contributed by the international community.

Impact of chronically inadequate funding:

I've been asked to speak about the impact of these figures – which when combined do not begin to match the levels of need -- on the lives and livelihoods of Somalis. It goes without saying that the lack of adequate funding means that planned humanitarian activities do not take place. Of course, there are other factors that adversely affect programming, such as the lack of sustained access due to the volatile security situation and poor operational capacity.

But it would be a mistake to accept these challenges as reasons for inaction. For one, there is much that can be done even within the existing operating environment, as is proven by the collective efforts of humanitarian community operating in Somalia. For instance, in response to the drought, aid workers were able to distribute food to help avert famine, bring water to those who needed it, rehabilitate boreholes and water systems, address animal health, assist farmers with seeds to plant, and undertake measles and polio vaccinations campaigns. Aid received

following the tsunami allowed the reconstruction of villages in long neglected areas of the coast. And in response to the 2004 drought in the north, and current one in south, some proactive donors funded cash-based initiatives that helped some Somalis not only survive the drought but to protect their livelihoods.

Secondly, the humanitarian community in Somalia has been more proactive and savvy than ever before in seeking, promoting and maintaining access agreements, in particular to the southern and central Somalia that have often been overlooked. And lastly, we must also not forget that international agencies continue to be able to routinely work and sustain their programmes in northern Somalia, where strong regional administrations are in place. Many local NGOs had ensured faultless provision of services at grassroots level in particular the areas seen unsafe for UN and INGOs staff to work but limited access to funding has reduced the impact of their efforts.

So, I think we can safely assume that, notwithstanding the difficult operational environment, more could be done in Somalia were more funding available. So what does it mean that more reliable funding has *not* been available for Somalia?

It means that urgent needs are not met and people do die as a result. Consider Somalia's Human Development Indicators. Despite more than a decade of international assistance, they are among the worst in the world. Infant, child and maternal mortality rates are among the highest. One in four children in Somalia die before reaching the age of five. For every 100,000 live births, 1,600 mothers die. We also have the highest number of war wounded in all of Africa, many of whom die due to the lack of proper health care.

People also suffer. Sadly, from common and easily preventable diseases as well as simply from the lack of food. Although, the bulk of humanitarian aid to Somalia is in the form of food aid, malnutrition rates routinely reach levels that would – indeed are *supposed* to according to internationally agreed standards -- trigger an emergency response. In Somalia, since January 2006, eight out of nine nutrition assessments recorded Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates exceeding the emergency threshold of 15 percent, with four recording Global Acute Malnutrition rates of more than 20 percent. In the drought affected areas, there are an estimated 58,000 malnourished children under five years of age. Current nutritional interventions are only reaching 16 percent of those malnourished children. Although eradicated in much of the world, measles outbreaks are common in Somalia and polio re-emerged in 2005, with 211 confirmed cases so far. Sixty-five percent of the population does not have access to safe drinking water, which compounds disease conditions.

But, what is less obvious and perhaps of even greater importance today in Somalia is the cumulative effect of this neglect on the **livelihoods – indeed the very existence of the Somali people**. Responsibility for this neglect belongs first and foremost to Somalia's own leaders, but also in part to the international humanitarian community.

Somalis are mainly pastoralists. Rearing livestock is their main source of income. Without livestock, their lives, livelihoods and the very fabric of Somali society are at stake. The recent drought in southern Somalia so depleted water and grazing sources that more than 70 percent of the livestock died. Widespread crop failure pushed cereal prices to their highest in six

years. In 2004, more than 80 percent of the livestock in the north were also lost to drought, and before that the Gedo drought of 2002.

Although the lack of adequate support to pastoralist communities poses perhaps the single greatest threat to Somali people's long-term survival, each year, the humanitarian community has responded to these droughts too late, with too little and with usually the wrong type of assistance.

Droughts are not a new phenomena in the Horn of Africa, which become recurrent every three years than 10 years cycle and very devastating in Somalia case. In fact, we are the lucky beneficiaries of quality early warning systems – such as the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) and the Food Security and Analysis Unit (FSAU) of Somalia -- that have well documented the progressive deterioration of pastoral livelihoods. Emergency warnings of “pervasive pre-famine conditions” for the most recent regional drought came late last year, when there was still time to protect livestock and livelihoods. We also do not lack knowledge of the ways in which pastoralists can be supported in times of scarcity – research on this topic abounds. Where livelihood interventions were already underway in the region, we were able to expand programmes right from the start of the emergency. But in Somalia, this was very limited. This is in part because aid actors themselves tend to overly focus on short-term interventions, which is what they know best, and in part, because donors do the same. Even when informed livelihood interventions are planned by actors on the ground, they very rarely fully funded. As a result, the response focused overwhelmingly on food aid, based on appeals issued long after livestock had started dying in massive numbers.

Inadequate funding and inappropriate responses to this and previous droughts, combined with the prolonged lack of investment in basic social services and development, have continued to knock the overall well being of the Somali people lower and lower.

One of the greatest strengths of my people, and the one that has ensured our survival so far, are the many forms of social support we provide each other. For centuries, pastoralists have dealt with the effects of cyclical droughts by moving, sharing, exchanging and selling animals. We also, as mentioned previously, send money home, extend each other credit in times of need, and take in poorer relations.

But these last lines of defense are being overstretched to the breaking point. In the absence of adequate re-stocking initiatives, there are too few camels left to share and conflict has prevented some movements to markets and resulted in over grazing in others. And while many Somalis has stayed afloat largely by means of remittances from abroad, the receipt of remittances is by no means homogenous throughout Somalia. Remittances are generally highest among the more affluent communities in northern and central Somalia, who tend to have relatives abroad, than among the hardest hit, rural communities in the south. What's more, regulatory measures in the last two years aimed at combating terrorism have resulted in smaller and more infrequent remittances. As a result, more and more Somalis have had to depend on credit. But the informal credit system is also being stretched beyond its capacity. For instance, pastoralists have been purchasing water on credit from private water tanker operators, who in turn purchase fuel on credit. The burden of debt on these and other traders on down the line has become so high that many are simply going bankrupt. Many communities have absorbed the burden of displaced relatives, but often these host communities are themselves already living in deplorable

conditions. The debt burden is now too heavy and traders have overextended themselves. During our operations, we have seen traders now shutting down because of bad debt. Continued state of widespread indebtedness is going to have an overall high cost on long-term development

The weakening of typical coping mechanisms has resulted in some disturbing trends. More and more families are splitting -- with men and boys going out in search of pasture for their remaining animals while women and young children head toward urban centers and often certain destitution. The remaining pastoralists are also competing over fewer and fewer viable water sources and grazing grounds, which is increasingly resulting in more conflict over scarce resources. Remittances are no longer being used to buy “extras” such shoes or slates for the children to attend school, but to buy water to survive. In fact, school is no longer a priority or even a possibility for many, with nearly 80 percent of the schools in drought affected areas now closed. More and more Somalis are also moving to the major towns in search of scarce employment opportunities, another certain source of conflict. Other are congregating around sources of humanitarian assistance – in other words toward increased dependence.

There are other ways too in which Somalis, in the battle to survive, are mortgaging their future. Local communities whose lives depend on protecting their natural environment are destroying it at a fast pace. Experts estimate that every ship leaving a Somali harbor with a cargo of charcoal carries an average consignment of 10,000 trees, cut down and burnt to coal. But before we pass judgment on this pillaging of the environment, we must remind ourselves that many local communities have few other options to survive.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Vice-President

In conclusion, chronically inadequate funding means that many humanitarian activities that could save lives, alleviate human suffering and protect the livelihoods of Somalis are not implemented. The long-term human and development costs of this neglect are staggering.

So far, the resilience of local communities has seen them through overwhelming odds and averted a worst case scenario – a famine the likes of the one Somalia saw in the 1974s. But this resilience is at its weakest point ever. There is an urgent need not only to provide life-saving assistance but to restore people’s eroded capacities so that they may withstand the effects of future drought we know will come.

Ensuring adequate and timely funding for life saving needs as well as livelihood interventions will help ensure that:

- Livestock and the economy and lives that depend on them are protected;
- Assets can be reacquired more quickly after a crisis;
- More children stay in school;
- Fewer Somalis are forced into destitution; and
- Conflict over scarce resources is lessened.

Without greater investment in livelihood interventions, the recovery and reinstatement of lost livelihoods will continue to be delayed, thereby creating a cycle of emergencies. In short, a twin-track approach of responding to emergencies while initiating and shifting to longer and medium-term livelihood protection programmes should be adopted. This requires a shift in the international humanitarian community's thinking, and willingness to fund, large-scale emergency livelihoods programming in pastoral settings. But it is one that for the Somali people is long overdue. The time to start is now.