



The largest alliance of U.S.-based international nongovernmental organizations focused on the world's poor and most vulnerable people.

19 September 2016

H.E. Mr. Stephen O'Brien
Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

H.E. Mrs. Mary Robinson
United Nations Special Envoy on El Niño and Climate

H.E. Amb. Macharia Kamau
United Nations Special Envoy on El Niño and Climate

H.E. Amb. João Vale de Almeida
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

H.E. Amb. Mahboub Maalim
Executive Secretary
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

Dear H.E. O'Brien, H.E. Robinson, H.E. Kamau, H.E. Vale de Almeida, and H.E. Maalim:

We are writing to thank you for hosting the upcoming 23 September 2016 high level event responding to the impacts of El Niño and mitigating recurring climate risks. Like you, we are alarmed by the weak international response to the El Niño crisis to date, especially given early warnings. We are also concerned that more than a year after warnings of an El Niño, there is a resource gap of \$3.4 billion to respond in East and Southern Africa, Asia Pacific, and Central America. This is particularly worrying for the 40 million people living in Southern Africa that will require ongoing assistance through the spring of 2017. The high level event has the potential to fill the funding gap and make sure that in the future, early warnings lead to early action.

Since mid-2015, there were strong warnings of the impact of El Niño precipitated droughts and floods that decreased food security and water availability with consequent impacts on agricultural production, health, nutrition, protection, and education. These early warnings were not matched with appropriate funding or early action interventions and as a result, 60 million people around the world have been affected by El Niño.

We are pleased that the Secretary General's Special Envoys on El Niño and Climate have committed to developing a global blueprint to prevent such crises in the future and to lay out a global approach to early warning and early action to reduce vulnerability and build resilience. However, in order for the blueprint to succeed, it must unlock significantly greater funding for early action. This issue has hampered previous efforts and requires prioritization in the coming months. As you know, while the blueprint is being developed by the Special Envoys, the United Nations is developing a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in consultation with NGOs and our partners that we will commit to undertake collectively. We welcome the development of the SOPs to set out thresholds for action to ensure an earlier response to forecast crises, and urge the Special Envoys to get buy-in from donors and affected countries at the high level meeting.



While the current focus must be on responding to El Niño, especially in Southern Africa and Ethiopia, according to the FAO, current forecasts indicate a La Niña episode may start between August and October 2016, and that there is a 55 to 60 percent chance that it would continue through the beginning of 2017. A La Niña would generally impact the same regions as El Niño and could bring much needed rainfall and relief to drought affected areas, but it could also bring floods, landslides and cyclones so communities must be safeguarded from further erosion of their livelihood assets, increased malnutrition and communicable diseases that typically spike during times of drought and floods.

Again, we thank you for hosting the upcoming high level event on El Niño and future climate risks and commit to working with you to realize the following recommendations:

- Fill the \$3.4 billion funding gap to be able to provide assistance to the 60 million people affected by El Niño especially as the impact will last until May 2017. We stand ready to work with you to promote initiatives to encourage private philanthropists, businesses and other relevant partners – including governments – to contribute resources
- Seize the opportunity to break the cycle of failing to respond to predicted weather events by developing and implementing a blueprint document that leads to triggers for action and funding for early response.
- Ensure Donors and affected countries support the Standing Operating Procedures. We commit to helping the United Nations develop the SOPs and along with our partners, undertaking them when there is a medium to high risk of an El Niño, La Niña, or other climate-related disaster.
- Support the Special Envoys in hosting a meeting in November to address scale up of assistance and whether new funding mechanisms are required to fund early action at scale.
- Extend the Special Envoys' mandate to be continued in 2017 under the new Secretary General.
- Work with, not around, local actors. Local communities have rich knowledge of the risks they face. Effective strategies for early response should build on local knowledge and local analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities. In order for the blueprint, SOPs, and other disaster risk reduction efforts to succeed, they must be based on empowering local actors and at-risk communities to be active decision-makers and risk-managers in their own preparedness.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Yours Sincerely,

1,000 Days
ACDI/VOCA
ACTED
Action Against Hunger
Adeso
ADRA International
Alliance to End Hunger
American Jewish World Service
American Red Cross
American Refugee Committee
Americares



Bond
CARE International
Catholic Relief Services
Center for Women Policy Studies
Centre for Convention on Democratic Integrity Ltd/ Gte
ChildFund International
Concern Worldwide U.S.
Coordination SUD
General Board of Global Ministries/UMCOR, United Methodist Church
Global Communities
Global Health Council
Headwaters Relief Organization
Heifer International
Helen Keller International
IMA World Health
INMED Partnerships for Children
InsideNGO
InterAction
International Medical Corps
IntraHealth International
Islamic Relief USA
Keystone Human Services International
Mercy Corps
NCBA CLUSA
Oxfam International
Planet Aid
Project Concern International (PCI)
Refugees International
Relief International
Salvation Army World Service Office
Save the Children
Seva Foundation
The Hunger Project
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United Muslim Relief
WaterAid
World Food Program USA
World Hope International
World Vision US
Zakat Foundation of America