



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **European Union increases its support for Basotho affected by the severe drought**

European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, announced that the European Union has increased to **5.5 million euros** (approximately **88 million maloti**) the support provided under the EU's humanitarian aid budget for those Basotho most affected by the severe drought. This represents new EU funding of 3.5 million euros on top of the 2 million euros in humanitarian aid that the EU already mobilised in March 2016, following the appeal of the Government of Lesotho for international support to respond to the impact of the drought on the population. Commissioner Stylianides said that *"this substantial increase in the EU funding provided in response to the drought in Lesotho will allow the EU and our three implementing partners to extend into the first half of 2017 the vital humanitarian aid provided to the most vulnerable"*.

The two EU funded projects already under implementation by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) are getting top-up funding, bringing the total amounts allocated to 2 million euros for WFP and 1.5 million euros for FAO. In addition, an amount of 2 million euros has been allocated to a new EU supported drought relief project to be implemented by Action Aid.

The project undertaken through WFP is already providing unconditional food assistance for vulnerable families through targeted cash transfers. Meanwhile the FAO implemented project is providing vulnerable households with complementary support such as training and kits for home gardening and nutrition, as well as food production packages and associated training on integrated sustainable farming practices. The new project to be implemented by Action Aid will also address short to medium term food security needs of vulnerable drought affected households.

European Union Ambassador, Michael Doyle, said that *"the EU's provision of additional humanitarian aid funding to support vulnerable Basotho most affected by the current drought is in keeping with the commitment given by the EU at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 to support countries most affected by the current food security crisis caused by El Niño"*.

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