

PRESS RELEASE**EU donates €33 million (1.8 billion ETB) to UNICEF and WFP
to restore essential education services and implement school feeding programmes in conflict-affected areas in Ethiopia**

Addis Ababa, 21 November 2022 - The European Union (EU), through its partnership with UNICEF and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), has granted €33 million (1.8 billion Ethiopian Birr) to restore education services and implement school feeding programmes so children living in conflict-affected areas in Ethiopia can get back to learning.

H.E. Roland Kobia, Ambassador of the European Union to Ethiopia said: “Children are the innocent victims in any war and often suffer the most. Their lives are disrupted, and their education is interrupted. Overall, nearly two million children are out of school due to conflict across the country. As we begin to build the pathway to peace, the EU is committed to getting children back into the classroom, where they belong. This funding will strengthen the education system in an integrated manner through the provision of education, health, protection, school feeding, WASH and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of schools. Children’s safe access to quality education is critical to the future of the country.”

In 10 conflict affected regions, just over 8,500 schools have either been partially damaged or destroyed. In northern Ethiopia alone, over 1,500 schools are non-functional.

The education component implemented by UNICEF, will include the rehabilitation of schools, reduce rates of school dropouts and also scale-up the ‘My Home-Bete’ approach.

“We are deeply grateful for this generous contribution from the EU,” said Gianfranco Rotigliano, UNICEF Representative in Ethiopia. “The ‘My Home-Bete’ programme combines accelerated learning, child protection and life skills training in schools. If we are to prevent a lost generation, we need to act now and get children, especially girls, not only back in school but provide services to help them recover from the trauma they have endured due to conflict and also teach life skills so they can become our future doctors, teachers and leaders.”

The funding will also support WFP to provide nutritious school meals to 50,000 children across Northern Ethiopia. WFP’s school meals will ensure that conflict-affected school-age girls and boys (including IDPs) continue to receive access to food, and this will attract children to enrol in school and continue their education. Evidence demonstrates that school meals contribute to the protection of children from child labour, particularly for boys, and child marriages, particularly for girls.

“I welcome the EU’s timely contribution to WFP’s school meals to keep children, especially girls, in school, who have been affected by the conflict in Northern Ethiopia,” said Claude Jibidar, WFP Ethiopia Country Director and Representative. “By providing nutritious school meals we can address both immediate hunger and nutritional needs of children as well as laying the foundations for developing human capital, with benefits for children, communities and Ethiopia. Our strong, combined approach together with the EU and UNICEF is essential to support children and their families to get back on their feet and rebuild their livelihoods.”

Overall, this support will benefit nearly 80,000 children and 60 schools will be reconstructed or rehabilitated. Meanwhile, the EU’s support to WFP will enable them to provide nutritious school meals to 50,000 children in schools across Northern Ethiopia.

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