



UNITED NATIONS

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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

EMBARGOED UNTIL 3:00 P.M., FRIDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

UNITED NATIONS LAUNCHES FLASH APPEAL FOR NICARAGUA

(New York, 14 September 2007): The United Nations today launched a Flash Appeal to help meet mounting emergency needs in Nicaragua, after category-five Hurricane Felix made landfall on 4 September, with winds reaching approximately 270 kilometres per hour. The affected zones are located in Nicaragua's North Autonomous Region (RAAN) of the Atlantic Coast. The appeal calls for \$22,870,535 for emergency life-saving relief for 162,373 people and an additional \$16,380,100 as the estimated initial requirement for early recovery for assistance over the next six months. The total required is \$39,250,635, a figure that is expected to undergo revision in the coming weeks.

A preliminary evaluation carried out by SINAPRED, Nicaragua's National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Assistance, estimated that just over half of the population of RAAN, living in 49 communities, was affected by the hurricane. While the confirmed death toll stands at 67, and an additional 110 people remain missing. Almost 10,000 houses have been affected, of which almost 8,000 have been completely destroyed. In addition, the storm damaged over 5,000 wells and destroyed almost 6,000 latrines.

The appeal calls for assistance in food aid, shelter, health, water and sanitation, education, nutrition, protection, early recovery, telecommunications in emergencies, protection, security, logistics, and coordination. General food distribution will be carried out for 3 months within the most affected communities, as well as at the evacuation centres. As early as possible, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) will assist affected communities and households with the reconstruction of their livelihood assets and infrastructure. In addition, in the health sector, immediate needs include medicines and emergency health kits, support to shelters, rehabilitation of health centres, water quality control, epidemiological surveillance and disease control, as well as logistical support, especially because of the difficulty of access to the affected areas.

"I hope donors will respond generously to help the people affected by this devastating storm in this already poor and inaccessible area," said John Holmes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. "As the longer-term economic impact is also bound to be grave, their assistance will prove crucial in the recovery effort that follows."

To kick-start the appeal, the United Nations will supply funding from its Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which provides seed funds for life-saving programmes not yet covered by donors.

With the issuance of the Nicaragua Flash Appeal, the eleventh flash appeal in 2007, the aid community has eclipsed the previous record of 10 flash appeals, which was reached in 2005. Except for the appeal for earthquake survivors in Peru, all flash appeals this year have been for climate-related disasters such as cyclones, hurricanes, floods, and drought. With four months of the year still to go, more flash appeals are likely to be issued.

For further information, please call: Stephanie Bunker, OCHA-New York, +1 917 367 5126, mobile +1 917 892 1679; Dizery Salim, OCHA-New York, +1 917 367 9262; Elisabeth Byrs, OCHA-Geneva, +41 22 917 2653, mobile, +41 79 473 4570. OCHA press releases are available at <http://ochaonline.un.org> or www.reliefweb.int.