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**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**

**UNITED NATIONS AIDS FLOOD SURVIVORS IN NICARAGUA**

(New York: 25 October 2007): United Nations agencies in Nicaragua are working in cooperation with the Government of Nicaragua to provide assistance following the flooding that has hit the Central American country.

Heavy rain over the past 12 days has caused flooding in several departments in Nicaragua, affecting approximately 24,000 people in 177 communities in the departments of Estelí, Madriz, Chinandega, León, Managua, Masaya, Granada, Carazo, Rivas, Jinotega and Matagalpa. Some 7,000 people have been evacuated to 77 shelters. Eight people have drowned and two remain missing. Over 1,900 houses have been damaged, of which 33 have been entirely destroyed. Other damaged infrastructure includes one church, over 1,700 latrines, 413 wells, 22 bridges, seven public buildings, over 1,300 kilometres of paths and roads and 59 sewage systems.

In Matagalpa, low-intensity landslides were also reported. In the municipality of Matagalpa, potable water service is limited due to the destruction of the distribution network. Water sewage lines were also damaged, which has led to the spillage of sewage into the river. There have been cases of diarrhoea, respiratory infections and headaches in several shelters in Matagalpa. In the agricultural sector, according to data from 15 October, as much as 4% and 14% of the total corn and bean crops have been affected.

Experts agree that, should precipitation continue, the losses could rise significantly. On 22 October, the Government of Nicaragua declared a national emergency.

The Government of Nicaragua, through the National System of Prevention, Mitigation and Attention to Disasters (SINAPRED), is delivering food, clothing and medical assistance to the affected population and conducting damage and needs assessments.

On Saturday, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) carried out a mission to affected areas in order to support the mobilization of medical brigades and teams to fight epidemics. On 21 October, 500 blankets were distributed to the affected community in Matagalpa. The World Food Programme (WFP) is providing technical assistance to SINAPRED to help in the calculation of food needs for the affected population. In addition, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including CARE, Adventist Development and Relief Aid International (ADRA), Agro Acción Alemana (German Agro Action/GAA), Plan Internacional, World Vision, and Food for Hunger International, as well as the United States Agency for International Development/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), have provided aid.

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Priority needs identified so far include chlorine treatment systems, cleaning and protection of water sources, health promotion, mattresses for families in shelters, and corn and bean seeds.

Nicaragua was hit by Hurricane Felix on 4 September, which affected over 162,000 people in the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN). On 14 September, the United Nations system in Nicaragua and its partners issued a Flash Appeal for \$41 million, which is so far only 27% funded. The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) provided \$5 million in emergency aid in the aftermath of the disaster for assistance in shelter, food, health care and disease prevention, and water and sanitation.

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