

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)****FOREIGN MINISTER OF IRELAND PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN CHAD**

(New York / N'Djamena: 16 November 2007): The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, His Excellency Mr. Dermot Ahern, has today expressed his Government's continued support for Chad's humanitarian needs during 2008.

"Earlier today, I visited refugees and internally displaced persons [IDPs] in eastern Chad. It is clear that the humanitarian situation is extremely serious, and it calls for our continued response. We plan to continue to support humanitarian programmes in Chad in 2008", stated the Minister. "I believe that the humanitarian crisis in Chad can be addressed only through a political solution to the causes of conflict in the region. I welcome the renewed political dialogue in Chad, and Ireland fully supports the response of the international community as outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1778", the Minister added.

Ireland has been one of the largest donors to the 2007 Humanitarian Appeal for Chad, providing US\$ 5.3 million thus far, for a total of seven projects implemented by seven different United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

After arriving yesterday morning in the Chadian capital N'Djamena, the Minister held talks with the Chadian authorities, and met the United Nations and its partners working in the country. He proceeded this morning to the eastern towns of Abéché and Goz Beida, where local authorities along with humanitarian organizations accompanied him to visit camps and sites hosting refugees and IDPs.

"Ireland has helped this country a lot in 2007", said Fatma Samoura, the United Nations Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator (DHC), who is based in Abéché. "We trust that continued support by Ireland, along with that of other international donors, will help us to further reinforce our delivery of assistance to those most in need", she added.

Chad currently hosts over 280,000 refugees from the Central African Republic and the Sudan, and over 170,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs).

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