

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UN HUMANITARIAN CHIEF STARTS SUDAN VISIT

(New York, 29 November 2007): John Holmes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, arrived in Khartoum, Sudan on Wednesday night to begin a four day visit to Sudan.

On Thursday he met with the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Ashraf Qazi and Ms. Ameerah Haq, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan. He also held discussions with representatives of the United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as donors where current humanitarian issues and challenges were reviewed.

In a meeting with Mr. Ali Karti, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Hassabo Abdel Rahman, the Commissioner General of the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), Mr. Holmes sought assurances that the extension of the 2004 Moratorium enabling NGOs to continue to operate in Darfur would be extended.

“My discussions today with government were useful, and clear assurances were given to me that there would be no problem with the extension of the Moratorium. It is very important that we have clarity on this, particularly as on December 11 the Sudan Workplan 2008 will be launched, in which NGOs are the main implementing partners on the ground,” said Mr. Holmes.

“I also discussed with government the continuing need for a safer and more conducive environment for humanitarian workers. The key issue is safety so that we can continue to assist the government to provide assistance to these most vulnerable communities.”

On Friday, the Emergency Relief coordinator will travel to South Darfur where he will meet people directly affected by the conflict.