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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

SPAIN INCREASES SUPPORT TO EMERGENCY FUND BY OVER 40%

(New York: 13 December 2007): At the high-level United Nations conference convened today in support of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the Government of Spain took the opportunity to increase substantially its generous support to the Fund to \$29.4 million for 2008.

As one of the original ten largest donors, Spain contributed \$10 million when the Fund was created in 2006. In 2007, the Government more than doubled that contribution with a donation of some \$21 million, which made it the sixth largest donor to the Fund, after the United Kingdom, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and Ireland.

“This kind of sustained and increased commitment from Member States is exactly what we would like to see from donors,” said John Holmes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. “We need substantial contributions every year, because CERF money is rapidly disbursed in order to assist millions of vulnerable people around the globe with immediate life-saving activities wherever and whenever required,” he added.

The CERF helped to save millions of lives during its first two years by providing quick initial funding for life-saving assistance and rapid response in sudden onset, rapidly deteriorating, and underfunded humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters. It helped to redress the imbalances in global aid distribution that have too often left millions of people in so-called neglected or forgotten crises in need. Since its launch on 9 March 2006, the Central Emergency Response Fund has committed \$595.3 million to humanitarian projects in 59 countries affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts. Since January 2007, the CERF has committed \$212.9 million to rapid response grants in 48 countries and \$124 million to underfunded emergencies in 23 countries. The United Nations encourages Member States to support the CERF through multi-year commitments to ensure the sustainability of the Fund.