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**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**

**Press Release**

**HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN 2008: UNITED NATIONS APPEALS FOR  
OVER \$312 MILLION FOR WEST AFRICA.**

(Dakar/New York: 18 December 2007): The United Nations launched on Tuesday an appeal requesting over \$312 million in support of humanitarian activities in West Africa in 2008, in order to ensure humanitarian assistance for some of the poorest countries in the world.

The Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for West Africa, launched on 10 December 2007 in Geneva by John Holmes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, is a part of a global appeal for \$3.8 billion that will allow humanitarians to assist 25 million people in 24 countries.

Six key sectors of humanitarian intervention, including food security and nutrition, rapid response to health emergencies, protection and movements of populations, natural disaster preparedness, water, sanitation and hygiene, and coordination have been identified by humanitarian actors. The CAP 2008 for West Africa includes projects in 15 countries in the region: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

“Humanitarian actors who joined us in this appeal are willing to undertake new challenges that keep arising due to the complexity of emergencies in this part of the world. These new crises are characterised not only by complex vulnerability caused by the deterioration of coping mechanisms as the local populations are constantly subject to all kinds of misfortunes, but also by an increasing involvement of the humanitarian actors in endeavours that, in principle, should have been handled by development programmes,” said Hervé Ludovic de Lys, Head of the OCHA Regional Office for West Africa.

In 2007, donors contributed some \$190 million, or 54% of the total requested in the humanitarian appeal (CAP) for West Africa. It was a well-appreciated response by donors, who remain aware of the humanitarian challenges prevailing in the region.

During the latest rainy season, West Africa experienced the heaviest rains recorded in the last thirty years resulting in floods that aggravated the already worrying situation prevailing in the region, with malnutrition, epidemics of cholera and meningitis and losses of seeds, crops and cattle amongst their many consequences.

The CAP is an action plan developed by different UN agencies with the participation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The plan presents the strategic priorities for the humanitarian action in 2008. It will be revised in mid-2008 in response to the evolution of the socio-political situation in West Africa.

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