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EMERGENCY APPEAL TARGETS \$265 MILLION FOR AID IN IRAQ

Baghdad, 12 February 2008 - The international aid community today appealed for a comprehensive international response to help vulnerable people in Iraq over the next 12 months. UN agencies and NGOs said \$265 million is needed to deliver urgent relief to Iraqis suffering under the humanitarian crisis inside the country.

“The aid community is committed to helping as humanitarian needs in Iraq have risen sharply over the last two years. We have to respond rapidly those people who need support”, said Mr. David Shearer, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq.

Conflict in Iraq has exacerbated chronic problems that stem from the past two decades. An estimated four million people in the country are in need of food assistance as the Public Distribution System is weakened, and only 40 percent of the population has reliable access to safe drinking water.

Shearer elaborated in particular on emergency operations to deliver food assistance to newly displaced people who cannot access their food rations. In this light, the short term relief projects included in the appeal will not replace government services, but assist in filling critical gaps while the government expands its capacity to respond to people’s needs.

“The UN Security Council Resolution 1770 calls on all actors to rapidly address Iraq’s humanitarian needs. This emergency appeal is an action plan to fulfil our mandate,” said Mr. Shearer at the Emergency Appeal launch held in Baghdad Tuesday 12 February.

Both NGOs and UN agencies are present on the ground in Iraq working in an insecure environment, delivering aid to vulnerable communities. Mr. David Shearer emphasised that affected Iraqis need immediate assistance. “We aim to meet vulnerable people’s most urgent needs wherever we have access,” he added during the event.

This emergency appeal brings together humanitarian actors, NGOs and UN agencies alike. By fostering partnerships inside Iraq, the appeal invests in the proven will and capacity of NGOs, UN agencies and Iraqis themselves to effectively assist families in need despite the risk. 14 UN agencies and 10 NGOs are appealing for \$265 million in support of targeted relief operations to deliver emergency aid in the areas of health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, housing and shelter, food, and protection.

Humanitarian operations funded through the emergency appeal will support families until Iraq’s government has mobilized its own significant capacity and resources. These operations are designed to move into recovery programmes and are part of a wider effort to support Iraq’s own goals for stability and recovery.

The emergency appeal for Iraq is part of the global Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for 2008, which was previously announced by the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. John Holmes.