

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**STATEMENT ON ZIMBABWE BY JOHN HOLMES, UNITED NATIONS
UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR**

(New York, 18 September 2008): The humanitarian community in Zimbabwe is moving quickly to provide assistance to the large needy groups in Zimbabwe, particularly the most vulnerable. This is a critical moment, which comes immediately after the peaceful resolution of the political stalemate in Zimbabwe and the lifting of the restrictions on field operations of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Already, NGOs and UN agencies are re-establishing operations to provide basic life-saving assistance and expect to reach nearly three million people across the country by October. During this period when humanitarian needs are particularly acute, we - the United Nations, the Government of Zimbabwe, the humanitarian and development communities and regional countries - must work more closely than ever to ensure that these needs are met.

The 2008 Consolidated Humanitarian Appeal is currently funded at 60 % of the \$394 million required. Critically under-funded sectors include emergency agriculture and emergency education. Funding in health, water and sanitation also remains low. This is worrying at a time when the people of Zimbabwe urgently need food, seeds, fertilizers and essential drugs, among so many other priorities.

While the humanitarian community must urgently step up immediate interventions, I call on the donor community to step up its funding in parallel, particularly to priority sectors and projects. On its part, the Government of Zimbabwe must ensure safe, unfettered access by the humanitarian community as it undertakes its critical work.

For our part, we will continue close cooperation with the Government of Zimbabwe, regional countries and organizations as well as development partners to support humanitarian efforts and recovery initiatives.