

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**

**HUMANITARIAN FUND GIVES OVER \$1 BILLION TO HELP THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE WORLDWIDE**

(New York, 14 October 2008): The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has now allocated more than one billion dollars for humanitarian aid around the world since it was launched in March 2006. An allocation this week of \$202,714 for nutrition and supplementary feeding for women and children in Tajikistan, which is suffering from chronic food insecurity made worse by a poor harvest and soaring food prices, took the total allocations beyond the one billion dollar level.

“As recently as two years ago, humanitarian agencies faced with a sudden onset crisis such as an earthquake or cyclone struggled to find resources to start life-saving operations,” said John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. “CERF can now allocate funds within days of an emergency or a disaster to kick-start relief efforts saving thousands of lives,” added Mr. Holmes, who manages the Fund on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Funded by voluntary contributions, the CERF was approved by the General Assembly in December 2005 and officially launched on 9 March 2006. The Fund aims to save lives by providing quick initial funding for life-saving assistance and rapid response in sudden onset or rapidly deteriorating emergencies and by ensuring a fair distribution of funds where crises are forgotten or neglected. CERF has allocated more than \$674.9 million altogether since it was launched to rapid onset disasters. So far this year, \$264.7 million was allocated to such emergencies, including \$94 million to countries particularly affected by the global food crisis.

By providing humanitarian assistance to neglected emergencies, the CERF’s under-funded window helps redress the imbalance in global aid distribution to millions of people in so-called forgotten crises. Since inception, the Fund has committed more than \$325.2 million to 33 countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq and Zimbabwe, which did not have adequately funded programmes.

Sixty-five countries around the globe have benefited from CERF. The top three beneficiaries have been the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has so far received \$131.6 million or 13.2 percent of the total allocations, Sudan which received \$77 million (7.7 percent), and Afghanistan, which has received \$56 million (5.6 percent).

The strength of the Fund lies in the wide donor support from Member States. Ninety-three Member States, the Holy See, companies from the private sector such Western Union, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, and the SCOR Group, and individual donors have contributed more than \$1.1 billion to CERF since its inception. The Fund has stayed true to its mission of being a Fund for all by all. It aims to raise \$450 million every year, in addition to a revolving loan element of \$50 million. An independent evaluation earlier this year found CERF had achieved its basic objectives of providing predictable and effective funding of humanitarian needs.

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