



UNITED NATIONS

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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UN AND PARTNERS REACH 250,000 WITH ASSISTANCE IN SOMALIA

(New York: 4 May 2007): The United Nations agencies and their partners working in Somalia have reached 250,000 of the nearly 400,000 people displaced from over the last three months with assistance as of today.

In total, some 394,000 Somalis have fled the capital, Mogadishu, since the beginning of February, with the majority seeking shelter in Lower and Middle Shabelle, Galgadud, Mudug and Hiraaan region. While a small number of the displaced, approximately 800 persons, have begun to return to the capital, the large majority are not yet ready to return for fear of resumed conflict.

The United Nations agencies and their non-governmental partners are working to deliver assistance in the priority areas of water and sanitation, shelter, food and health. At least 181,400 displaced persons have received non-food relief such as shelter materials, blankets, and household items from the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and its partners, while the World Food Programme (WFP) has delivered food to nearly 100,000 of the displaced. Agencies working in the health sector are providing chlorine, cholera kits and other medical supplies to health facilities.

Access to populations in need continues to be difficult due to the insecure operating environment, with localized flooding causing additional complications. Since 23 April, the airstrips around Mogadishu have been declared open for humanitarians' use, and following a United Nations security assessment, the K50 airstrip has been cleared for passengers and cargo. Overland transport into Somalia from Kenya also proceeded without incident in the past week, although transport within Somalia was hampered by rainfall and insecurity. Roads in Gedo and Lower and Middle Juba have been affected by the rains, with roads in other areas cut off by flooding. Tension and fighting around Kismayo have also caused transport delays.

Meanwhile, continued support from donors is needed to strengthen humanitarian activities. The 2007 revised Consolidated Appeal for Somalia, which requests \$262 million for urgent action, has received 37 per cent of funding to date. The majority of these funds have been channelled towards food needs, which are 97 per cent covered. Additional funding is still urgently needed in areas such as health, water, shelter and protection – those areas have only received between six and twenty per cent of the funding required.

Additionally, with the start of a new season of rains, the risk of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) is increasing. The World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed more than 23,000 cases of AWD throughout South/Central Somalia for 2007 so far, with 743 related deaths. Recent figures point to a decrease in the incidence of new cases, but the rainfall could reverse that trend.

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