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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

ADVISORY GROUP DISCUSSES 2007 GOAL FOR EMERGENCY FUND

(Geneva and New York: 12 October 2006): Convening in Geneva today, the Advisory Group to the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) will examine the success of the Fund in its first seven months of operation and recommend a funding goal for 2007.

Fifty-two Member States, Japan's Hyogo Prefecture and the private organization Disaster Resource Network have pledged more than \$273 million to the Fund's grant facility since its 9 March 2006 inauguration. Of the total pledges, approximately \$266.4 million has been transferred to the Fund, leaving only \$6.6 million in outstanding pledges.

The United Nations has committed \$174 million in CERF contributions as funding for over 250 projects in 26 countries experiencing humanitarian crises around the world. Some \$97 million has gone out under the CERF's rapid response mechanism and close to \$77 million has been allocated to underfunded emergencies in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Republic of Congo, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

In the seven months since its establishment, the CERF has helped promote early action to reduce the loss of life in these crises. For example, following the outbreak of fighting in Timor-Leste in April 2006, which left more than 135,000 people homeless overnight, the \$4 million grant from the CERF's rapid response facility helped the World Food Programme (WFP) ensure that food was available to those affected and provide supplementary rations for children and pregnant and lactating women.

In Darfur, the \$4.5 million allocated to WFP to support the use of helicopters by UN agencies and their partners provided access to IDP camps that would otherwise be out of reach for humanitarians. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, allocations of \$38 million from the Fund's mechanism for financing underfunded emergencies has accelerated priority lifesaving assistance, including projects for malaria control, responding to an outbreak of cholera, mine action and the protection of IDPs. In Ethiopia, \$3 million in CERF funds went to support the UN response to recent floods. And in Afghanistan, an \$12.7 million grant was used to assist 2.5 million people in drought-stricken areas.

The CERF aims to save lives by providing quick initial funding for life-saving assistance and rapid response in sudden onset, rapidly deteriorating, and under-funded emergencies. It is used to help redress the existing imbalance in global aid distribution, as a result of which millions of people in so-called neglected or forgotten crises remain in need, while others benefit from better-funded programmes. Comprising a grant facility of up to \$450 million on top of the previous \$50 million revolving fund, the new CERF allows for up to two thirds of its grant facility to be allocated to rapid response, with the other one-third reserved for addressing underfunded emergencies.

Today's meeting of the Advisory Group, whose 12 members appointed by the Secretary-General serve in their individual, expert capacities, will allow them to discuss the funding goal for 2007 replenishment, in keeping with their mandate to provide periodic policy guidance and expert advice on the use and impact of the CERF. A donor pledging conference is scheduled to take place on 7 December at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

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