

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNITED NATIONS CALLS FOR MORE SUPPORT FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN NORTH-WEST PAKISTAN

(*Islamabad*, 2 *October 2013*): More funds are urgently needed to continue critical humanitarian assistance for more than 1 million temporarily displaced people across north-western Pakistan due to insecurity since 2008, the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Timo Pakkala said today during a joint UN-Government mission to Kohat District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Pakkala and other senior UN and Government officials evaluated the humanitarian support being provided to displaced families returning from camps and host communities in KP to their homes in the Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The UN team was appreciative of the efforts made by FATA and KP authorities to facilitate the return of the displaced. UN officials expressed concern that humanitarian needs by far exceed current resources available to the Government and the United Nations.

Over the past two weeks, 9,000 people have returned to their homes in FATA. Despite resource constraints, Government authorities and humanitarian partners have provided them with return packages, including transport, non-food items, food and basic health-care services.

"The Government of Pakistan's contribution of 75,000 metric tons of wheat was crucial to support humanitarian interventions during most of 2013. A second tranche of 75,000 metric tons of wheat from the Government is required for these returnees as they will need food support for at least nine months to be able to return to their homes permanently," said Lola Castro, WFP's representative in Pakistan.

Bakht Bibi, 30, a mother of six, and her family today received assistance to return home after seven months in displacement. Bibi's family was displaced from the Tirah Valley due to increased hostilities between rival armed groups and security operations. Her family sought refuge in Peshawar, where they received basic humanitarian assistance, including food rations comprising wheat flour, rice, cooking oil and pulses.

The family's house was destroyed, so they plan to stay with a relative, whose house is partially damaged, while helping to rebuild other people's houses to earn money to rebuild their own. "We realize the conditions back home are going to be difficult with limited resources, but we look forward to working and rebuilding our lives," Bibi said.

The UN and its humanitarian partners have so far received US\$193 million since January 2013 for essential humanitarian activities in support of Government-led relief and recovery assistance to displaced people and returnees in KP and FATA. However, an estimated \$126 million is still needed between now and December. Additional funding is essential for the returning families to reconstruct destroyed or damaged house, gain improved access to education, health care, water, sanitation and hygiene services, and improve their livelihoods and economic situation.

"I thank all donors for their generosity and urge them to continue their support. Ensuring that basic humanitarian needs of the displaced are met is a prerequisite for sustainable returns and an essential foundation for longer term development in FATA," Pakkala said.

For further information, please contact:

Humaira Mehboob, +92 346 856 3656, mehboob@un.org; Hazem El Mahi,+92 346 856 3642, elmahi@un.org;

Dan Teng'o, +92 346 856 3615, tengo@un.org; Vittorio Cammarota, +92 300 8540058, vittorio.cammarota@unic.org