

**UN LAUNCHES PAKISTAN FLOODS 2011 RAPID RESPONSE PLAN FOR US\$357 MILLION**

(Islamabad/Geneva/New York: 19 September 2011): The United Nations called for US\$357 million to help the Government of Pakistan provide life-saving assistance to more than 5 million people left destitute by devastating monsoon rains and flooding in southern Pakistan.

The United Nations Rapid Response Plan for 2011 aims to provide food, water, sanitation, health, and emergency shelter to the worst hit families for six months. An estimated 5.4 million people have been affected by flooding in Sindh and Balochistan; nearly 1 million homes have been destroyed and 72 per cent of crops have been lost in the worst affected areas. In Sindh province, 22 out of 23 districts have been flooded, and 16 need particularly urgent assistance.

"More than 5 million people are struggling to survive massive flooding across southern Pakistan, and the rains continue to fall. They have lost their homes, their possessions and their livelihoods. The next few days will be crucial, as the UN and partners help the government to get food, safe water and shelter to the most vulnerable. One year after the largest floods in recent history, the people of Pakistan are in desperate need again. We cannot let them down." said Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary General for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The humanitarian crisis is growing as the rains continue to fall across southern Pakistan. At least 824,000 people have been forced from their homes, and have moved to make-shift settlements and relief sites on higher ground across the flood-affected areas.

"The United Nations and its humanitarian partners are working tirelessly to support Government-led efforts to provide food, water, health care and emergency shelter to the families worst hit by the floods," said Timo Pakkala, UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan. "Despite our efforts, the needs are growing. We urge the international community to fully support the Rapid Response Plan in order to save lives."

The United Nations, which is supporting the primarily Government-led emergency response effort, has assessed the needs of displaced people in more than 1500 temporary settlements. The UN and partners have activated the emergency coordination mechanism known as the cluster system, to ensure the effective delivery of food, water, health and shelter to the people who need it most.

"We extend our thanks to the international community and the United Nations for their support and immediate response to help the flood affected communities, and we encourage their continued support," said Dr. Firdous Aashiq Awan, Pakistan's Minister of Information, at the official launch of the Rapid Response Plan yesterday in Islamabad.

To date, the UN and its humanitarian partners have distributed more than 20,000 shelter kits and sets of household goods, as well as 530,000 plastic sheets. More than 650,000 people have received medicines and medical care, and 500,000 people will receive food aid by the end of September. The UN also aims to provide 400,000 people with access to safe drinking water over the coming days. Nonetheless, the level of need remains huge.

The Rapid Response Plan will be revised within 30 days to reflect evolving humanitarian needs, and to include early recovery strategies to help people rebuild their lives.

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