



Office of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan
مكتب المنسق المقيم ومنسق الشؤون الانسانية للسودان

**STATEMENT OF THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR CONCERNING THE
DARFUR JOINT ASSESSMENT**

KHARTOUM, 24 March, 2009: Efforts to meet the bulk of immediate needs of civilians in Darfur affected by the recent NGO expulsions are currently being undertaken through a concerted stop-gap drive by the Government of Sudan (GoS), UN agencies, and the NGOs, Ameerah Haq, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, said in Khartoum today.

However, she warned, the key test lies ahead.

Concrete plans will have to be put in place if these gaps are to be bridged in a sustainable long-term manner two months from now, she said. Various partners must try to ensure that funding, plus adequate technical management and coordination capacity and administrative arrangements are in place. Only then will the civilians in need be assured of life-saving food, health care, shelter, and the water and sanitation services that were previously provided by the ousted NGOs, she added.

As agreed with the Government of Sudan a Joint GoS-UN assessment of the gaps in Darfur took place from 11-19 March. The locations visited covered all three Darfur states in the sectors of food aid, health and nutrition, non food items and shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

The cooperation between GoS and the UN during this joint assessment has been positive and took place in an open and constructive atmosphere. All sides recognised the challenges and were committed to finding solutions, Ms. Haq said.

While Government officials and partners from the NGO sector are working to cover gaps, the risks of increased morbidity and mortality are high.

Currently, over 850,000 people are still receiving potable water, thanks to the quick engagement of the Government's water department, UNICEF, and national NGOs. But, within four weeks existing funds for spare parts, fuel and incentives will be depleted and in need of replenishment. Furthermore, the issue of hygiene and sanitation requires urgent attention to prevent disease outbreaks.

While the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation are trying to address the gaps in the health sector, according to the assessment, supplies, salaries, and staff are in place until only the end of April. Up to 650,000 currently do not have access to full health care.

Ms. Haq noted, for example, that the work of INGOs managing nutritional surveillance and supplementary feeding programmes for malnourished children and for pregnant and nursing women had been interrupted.

About 1.1 million people are receiving food for March and April thanks to an *ad hoc* and one-off distribution by local food committees. However, by the beginning of May, as the hunger gap approaches, and unless the World Food Programme has found partners able to take on the mammoth distribution task, these people will not receive their rations.

About 692,400 people who would normally have received shelter materials before the rains begin will not do so unless the UN Joint Logistics Centre finds partners to carry this out and has access to previous distribution lists.

The GoS line ministries and UN agencies are working together to address pressing issues like provision of shelter to some 36,000 new arrivals in Zam Zam camp. While the 70,000 residents of Kalma camps continue to receive potable water, this depends on the continued supply of fuel as well as pump maintenance. Camp leadership must facilitate appropriate access. An outbreak of meningitis in several areas also requires urgent action.

Expertise in technical assessments, planning, programme design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation has been lost. This capacity, and the associated institutional memory and contextual knowledge, cannot be replaced easily or quickly. As such, the quality of programmes – even those that are taken on by others such as national NGOs – could suffer.

According to Ms. Haq, there are 3,142 technical staff members (2,941 Sudanese and 201 expatriates) of the ousted NGOs who could assume or contribute to this vital role.

Access to those in need is also hampered by administrative hurdles – such as the lack of travel permits and technical agreements – which hinder the work of line ministries and NGOs alike. It is also vital that there is access to areas outside government control for life saving services including the launch of vaccination campaigns for polio and meningitis

Furthermore, if current efforts at filling the gaps in a sustainable manner are to be successful, Ms. Haq said, resources will have to be made available from Government, donors or a combination thereof. “Prevailing bureaucratic impediments should be lifted and security conditions should not complicate issues such as access, if the people of Darfur are not to end up facing the most serious upheaval in years,” she said.

She welcomed the Government’s commitment to fast track the technical agreements of all remaining NGOs.

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