

Statement at the launch of the Revised Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator
Valerie Amos
New York, 17 September 2010

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues.

Thank you for joining us today for the launch of the Revised Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan.

Let me start by echoing the Secretary-General's thank you to Member States and individuals who have already been so generous since this disaster began in late July. The funds you committed to the first plan have helped us reach millions of people with much needed supplies including food and clean water and in delivering much needed healthcare. Many countries have also given funds bilaterally to the Government of Pakistan. This aid is saving many lives.

Since the first plan was launched on 11 August, the flood waters have continued moving from north to south and affected millions more. Of the 21 million people whose lives have been disrupted over the last seven weeks, at least 12 million are in desperate conditions: with no regular access to clean drinking water or health facilities, and only a minimum of shelter. This in a population where people are already extremely vulnerable. Given these conditions, which I saw on my visit last week, we need to do everything we can to avert a health crisis.

This revised appeal reflects the increased number of people we are aiming to reach and covers a 12 month period.

The complexity of this disaster, coupled with the ongoing challenges posed by the IDPs and refugee crisis, means that Pakistan is experiencing several different disasters simultaneously rather than just one big one. In some places, especially in the south, waters are still advancing and people still haven't received enough help. Elsewhere, the waters have begun to recede and people are eager to get back to what is left of their homes, rebuild, plant crops and restart their lives. But many have lost everything.

That is why the emergency response is just one part of this revised appeal. In addition to the assessments of emergency needs, it contains detailed proposals for early recovery projects. Without these projects, we are not able to give people the tools they need to get back on their own feet. Our ultimate goal is to help the people of Pakistan to rebuild their lives as quickly as possible.

The humanitarian community has learned many lessons about how to manage the transitions from emergency relief to early recovery and on to longer term development and reconstruction. They will all be applied in Pakistan. Some 80 percent of those affected by these floods are farmers. In the months to come, millions of Pakistanis will be relying on the agriculture and livelihoods projects as much as on the lifesaving assistance we are providing.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues.

Nothing in Pakistan's history forewarned us this was coming. These floods defied all expectations. There were contingency plans but this disaster is not business as usual.

The revised appeal is a realistic appraisal of what is needed and what the humanitarian community can do to respond to this crisis over the next 12 months. We may not be able to reach everyone in need but I am confident that we can achieve everything we have set out to do in this appeal, if we are fully funded.

As you are contemplating what you can do to help support this appeal, please do not forget that this disaster has a human face. Like the 500,000 flood affected women who will give birth in the months ahead. The children, already weakened by illness and hunger, that need nutritional support. Those who have lost absolutely everything and do not know where to turn to what to do to get back to any sense of a normal life. They all need our help. Your contribution can make a difference.

So, through your overwhelming support for this appeal, please show that the world does understand the scale and the depth of this tragedy, that we are not prepared to just stand by when we have at our disposal the experience, the knowledge and the means to prevent so much suffering.

Thank you.