

Launch of OCHA in 2011

**Friday 21 January 2011, at 10:00 a.m.
Conference room 7 (North Lawn Building)**

**Transcript of ERC's speech
- Checked against delivery -**

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the launch of *OCHA in 2011* where we will set out our plans for the coming year. We are going to start with a very short film before I give a presentation on our work and open up to statements and questions from Member States.

film

Thank you, I've now been five months in my job and I have managed to visit Pakistan, Haiti, Niger, and Sudan. I can see from those visits, but also if you look at the data, that this is a challenging time for humanitarians. Two-hundred-and-fifty natural disasters were reported in the past 12 months and 11 billion dollars' worth of humanitarian programmes are required to respond to 19 crises in 32 countries affecting 71 million people.

These are big numbers, but behind every number there is an ongoing tragedy with a human face. Twenty years on, OCHA's mandate is more relevant than ever and the scale of recent disasters has made us question whether the system is fit for purpose. Our challenge is to determine how to ensure effective coordination among competing agencies in a resource-short environment. It is right to review, but most importantly to look forward. We are our people and we are diverse. We come from 99 Member States and Observers, 40 per cent of us are women and we are all passionate about what we do.

How do we deliver? Well, within six hours of a new crisis, we lead assessment and coordination teams to support national authorities and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators. Last year, we led UNDAC missions to Haiti, Benin and Pakistan, El Salvador and the Comoros, Ukraine, Cook Islands and Albania. We coordinated more than 60 urban search-and-rescue teams in Haiti alone. Our teams support national governments and international response agencies to access a range of established tools and services, like the CERF. The aim is always to ensure life-saving assistance and protection is provided to anyone who needs it, regardless of nationality, location, social group or religious belief. The response system is built around shared responsibility, which means you, the Member States, the UN, the NGO community and perhaps most importantly the representatives of people we are trying to help at the site of the crisis. We work with our partners to maximize the impact of the money raised to help countries in crisis.

Last year, we coordinated humanitarian programmes valued at \$11 billion. A total of \$7.5 billion of that is contributed by donors to prioritized action plans: 45 per cent for

emergency food; 10 per cent for emergency health; 5 per cent each for agriculture, refugee-related support, emergency shelter and non-food items, emergency water, sanitation and hygiene projects; 4 per cent for early recovery; 3 per cent for emergency education; and 2 per cent each for de-mining, protection and rule of law.

At the global level since 2006, 123 Member States and Observers have relied on us to manage their humanitarian contributions through programmes funded through the CERF. In 2010, 38 Member States contributed over \$150 million for emergency response funds managed by OCHA in-country in 16 emergencies. For example, the occupied Palestinian territories, Colombia, Sudan, the DRC, Pakistan, Haiti and Indonesia.

In 2010, the number of organizations with projects in the consolidated appeals was more than 650, compared with just 30 at the beginning of the decade. This year we will continue to improve our understanding of the effects of the global challenges which face us: climate change, food and energy price increases, population growth and urbanization. We will look at future humanitarian needs, and how the humanitarian system can adapt to be more effective in today's rapidly changing, inter-connected world. We've played a leading role in advancing humanitarian policy on protection of civilians and IDPs, and for the first time in the humanitarian community, a system-wide Gender Marker was rolled out in consolidated appeals and pooled funds in 12 countries, including Chad, Haiti, Kenya, Niger, oPt, Somalia, south Sudan, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Member States have all recognized the importance of humanitarian activity free of political and other bias. And part of my job is to continue to make that case on behalf of all of you, and on behalf of the people around the world who need our help and support, some living in extraordinarily difficult conditions. I do that through my visits, through my interaction with government, with non-governmental organizations and others, and through the media.

But we need the facts to tell the story. Who is affected? Where and how? And what can we do about it? We share the information with you and with others. Last year, we produced over 200 situation reports explaining the priority needs, funding requirements and short-falls, and coordination concerns for 40 crises. We supported maintenance of information banks explaining who is doing what and where in 26 countries. These tools facilitate coordination and reduce programming gaps. Coordination saves lives. By bringing together people who need to come together, to agree on what needs to be done urgently and by whom.

Just taking Haiti as an example, in Haiti 85 NGOs included projects in the earthquake appeal, and hundreds more participated in coordination fora. We work to support government action in the wake of an emergency. We track information on access problems to support negotiations with parties to conflicts, so that people in need can be reached, as in Somalia. And we use the consolidated assessment needs information that we have, in the DRC for example, to prioritize response activities, and to direct donor funding to the areas of greatest needs. We are the proud stewards of many parts of what we call the 'humanitarian response system' that you all know so well, which includes

CERF, IRIN, ReliefWeb, UNDAC, INSARAG, numerous guidelines, the Humanitarian Coordinator system, and so on.

But we know that there will be an increasing need for our services, with more disasters and ongoing challenges. As well as sudden earthquakes and some protracted conflicts, we are already responding to emergencies affecting millions of people, caused or worsened by the impact of climate change, insecurity over food and water, economic and political crisis, migration and urbanization, rapid population growth and making sure the money we raise is spent efficiently and effectively. We are learning the lessons from Haiti and Pakistan, and we are committed to implementing them. We will step up our efforts to make sure that as broad a range of people as possible support our work. People need to understand what we do and the challenges we face.

We know that we cannot respond to increasing demands alone, and there is capacity today that did not exist two decades ago. But we also need to broaden the coalition of Member States who support multilateral humanitarian action, and we need to bring more partners into our existing response mechanisms, like INSARAG and UNDAC, and consider the kinds of mechanisms that may be needed to respond to contemporary challenges.

We are going to begin piloting a more focused approach to preparedness, helping teams in countries prepare to set up coordination mechanisms, agreeing on roles and responsibilities with national authorities, improving the way we manage information, and work on making sure that when our services are needed, they are ready and available.

We must all coordinate our efforts better and I will continue to speak out for this. I am committed to keeping OCHA on course to be a strong and effectively managed organization. To meet the scale and scope of the humanitarian challenges that lie ahead, and to help people more effectively, we need to work ever more closely with Member States, regional bodies, our operational partners and the private sector, among others, to broaden the coalition for multilateral humanitarian action. That is why we continue to look forward to working with you, and to your continued support. Thank you very much.