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## Agriculture, Rural Development, and Poverty Reduction

**UN forum discusses use of new technology to fight poverty, improve health**



26 May 2009 - Experts on information and communications technology (ICT) from the United Nations, private industry, non-governmental organizations and government agencies are meeting in Geneva to look at ways to use the latest digital innovations to fight poverty and improve public health.

“The objective is to introduce cutting-edge, innovative knowledge, experiences, expertise and best practices”

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to the work of the UN, and the UN Commission on Science & Technology for Development in particular, according to the UN Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID), which organized the one-day meeting.

“New technologies can boost education through distance learning, content creation and delivery, and teacher training,” GAID noted in a news release. “They can help create new job opportunities for people living in poverty. These technologies can also empower women and the disadvantaged to increase their access to information and participate in the economy.”

The Alliance also noted that advances in health information systems based on ICTs are improving patients care and healthcare providers’ productivity worldwide. However, developing countries lag behind in employing ICTs to these ends.

“While diseases in developing countries account for over 90 per cent of the global disease burden, it is estimated that only 10 per cent of the more than \$100 billion spent annually on health research is allocated for health problems prevalent in these countries,” it stated.

Today’s meeting will discuss how this divide can be bridged, using digital approaches and opportunities. It will also address new opportunities created by the technological innovations and rapid advances in mobile access for fighting poverty and promoting development.

Other UN agencies participating in the meeting include the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

### UN-backed public symposium calls for ‘deep and lasting’ financial reforms



20 May 2009 - A public symposium on the global financial crisis has recommended “deep and lasting” reforms to avoid a repetition of the current downturn, according to its sponsor, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The two-day meeting in Geneva of some 360 UN experts, government officials and members of the public also recommended that “significant international efforts and funding be supplied to stimulate developing-country economies and to support employment in those nations, and that steps be taken to stabilize currency-exchange rates,” UNCTAD said in a press release.

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The symposium, which began on 18 May, also said "recent reports of economic improvement in industrialized countries should not be taken to mean that the downturn is over, and should not lead decision makers to ignore the profound and longlasting effects on poor countries." Other recommendations included a debt moratorium for heavily indebted developing countries so that they have more money available for stimulating their economies, and a global programme to preserve and protect jobs in developing nations.

The conclusions of the symposium will be sent to the UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, scheduled for 1-3 June in New York.

In a separate communiqué, UNCTAD said its studies showed that foreign direct investment (FDI) worldwide decreased by 15 per cent in 2008 and was liable to decrease further in 2009.

A pick-up in FDI flows will depend on a series of factors such as the speed of economic and financial recovery, the return of investor confidence, and the efficiency of public policy in addressing the causes of the crisis, the agency added.

### **UN agency goes online with animal farming website**



A vet in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) gives a goat anti-worming Treatment

22 May 2009 - The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) launched an online website today serving as a one-stop-shop for the latest information about the welfare of farm animals.

The agency said that the Gateway to Farm Animal Welfare internet site is a source of reliable information on legislation and research findings on livestock, as well as on animal welfare standards, practices and policies.

Giving developing country governments, professionals and producers online access to the latest information and the opportunity to contribute information relevant to their own situation, the portal will help to improve livestock welfare, health and productivity worldwide, FAO said in a news release issued to promote the site.

FAO noted that since the 1990s, the core of the livestock production industry has shifted from the Northern to the Southern Hemisphere with a few developing countries emerging as significant forces in the sector.

Livestock production accounts for 40 per cent of the value of agricultural output around the world, and animal food products provide one-third of the global population's protein intake, according to FAO.

The agency noted that animals also contribute income, social status and security to roughly one billion people, including many of the world's poor.

"This portal meets a real information need in this extremely important area," said Samuel Jutzi, FAO Director of Animal Health and Production Division.

Among the animal welfare issues covered on the new FAO website are transport, slaughter and pre-slaughter management, animal husbandry and handling and the culling of animals for disease control.

The agency expects the site's main users to be farmers, government officials, lawmakers, researchers, as well as the livestock and food industry and non-governmental organizations.

## Top UN official calls for development 'new deal'



Helen Clark

26 May 2009 - The current global economic crisis – the deepest in decades – has underscored the need for a “new deal” for development that addresses both climate change and poverty, the head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said.

The worldwide financial turmoil is exacerbating the effects of high food and energy prices which drove as many as 200 million people into extreme poverty in recent years, said UNDP Administrator Helen Clark.

“Alas, those least responsible for the crisis stand to bear the brunt of its impact over the longer term,” she told the annual session of the Executive Board of UNDP and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Simultaneously, the world’s poorest are also bearing the brunt of climate change, linked to the world’s unsustainable use of natural resources, said Miss Clark, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand.

“These global problems reflect our interdependence, and they require global solutions,” she stated, calling for a multilateral system that will boost the standard of living for the most vulnerable people and ensure their voices are taken into account by decision-makers.

The financial crisis, the Administrator said in her first address to the Executive Board since assuming her position earlier this year, is threatening to roll back gains made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight ambitious anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline.

For example, some sub-Saharan African nations are on target to meet some of the MDGs, but not all by 2015, and the recession could drive up the number of people living in extreme poverty in the region, she noted.

Despite aid commitments for Africa made by donor nations, the pledges remain unfulfilled, Miss Clark said, voicing hope that this year’s meeting of the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialized nations will mobilize resources.

The global response to climate change should also be folded into development, she said. Countries are expected to conclude a new pact on curbing greenhouse gas emissions, to replace the Kyoto Protocol whose first commitment period ends in 2012, at a UN conference in Copenhagen later this year.

“To this end, UNDP must step up its work this year to support developing countries achieve an outcome at Copenhagen in December which is consistent with designing a sustainable path out of poverty and for achieving the MDGs,” the Administrator said. “The deal to be sealed at Copenhagen must be a development deal, too.”

## Education

### Education brings normalcy:

Over 180 schools in the Swat Valley have been destroyed in the past month. To restore education to displaced children’s lives, UNICEF is assisting camp primary schools and providing school supplies for thousands of boys and girls.

“It’s very important for UNICEF to make sure that schoolchildren get a bit of normalcy but that they also can continue their education and not lose the academic year,” said Ms. Paradela.

Child-friendly spaces set up in the new camps also offer safe environments where children can play and receive psychosocial support.

Child-protection teams monitor unaccompanied and orphaned children, and make sure that households headed by women have access to services and supplies.

UNICEF is also providing safe water, latrines and hygiene kits for children and families displaced by the fighting in north-west Pakistan.

## Health and Population

### Child deaths drop by nearly 30 per cent, says UN health agency



21 May 2009 - Deaths of children under five years of age have plummeted by almost one third since 1990, the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) said today, while cautioning that greater action is necessary to achieve similar success in other areas, in particular maternal and newborn health.

Some 9 million children under the age of five died in 1997, marking a sharp decline from the 12.5 million estimated to have died in 1990, according to "World Health Statistics,"

WHO's first progress report on the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the eight globally-agreed anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline.

"The decline in the death toll of children under five illustrates what can be achieved by strengthening health systems and scaling up interventions, such as insecticide-treated mosquito nets for malaria and oral rehydration therapy for diarrhoea, increased access to vaccines and improved water and sanitation in developing countries," said Ties

Boerma, Director of WHO's Department of Health Statistics and Informatics.

But the new study, which is based on over 100 health indicators collected from WHO's 193 Member States, cautioned that in many African nations and in low-income countries, the fourth MDG – slashing child mortality by two-thirds – may not be met.

Dr. Boerma said that while encouraging progress has been made at the half-way point to the 2015 deadline, "there needs to be more effort to strengthen health systems in countries affected by high levels of HIV/AIDS, economic hardship or conflict."

Additionally, he called for greater attention to be paid to the poorest groups within countries where progress is slowest and child mortality remains high.

Maternal and newborn health has seen almost no improvement, Dr. Boerma said, with nearly 40 per cent of deaths among children under five occurring in the first month, even first week, of life. "While the data are patchy and incomplete, it appears that the regions with the least progress are those where levels of maternal mortality are highest."

Boosting these rates will involve addressing weak health systems, emerging health threats such as pandemics, and climate change, he added.

### Fashion retailer H&M partners with UN to boost HIV awareness among youth



A health worker counselling women about HIV/AIDS treatment

21 May 2009- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the international fashion

retailer H&M have teamed up to call attention to the issue of HIV among young people.

H&M chose UNFPA as one of the recipients of its 2009 Fashion against AIDS (FAA2) campaign. As a result, the retailer will give the agency 25 per cent of donations to the campaign to support UNFPA's HIV prevention projects in Bahrain, Egypt, Oman and Turkey. Those schemes will be carried out by Y-PEER, a groundbreaking youth-to-youth initiative.

With over 5 million youth worldwide living with HIV, young people are at the centre of the global epidemic, UNFPA noted in a news release. The agency seeks to provide young people with access to information and services to protect them against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

H&M has launched the FAA2 campaign with the organization Designers Against AIDS, which aims to raise AIDS awareness using elements from pop culture.

Their second collaboration is a clothing collection featuring designs by world-famous singers and others which will be sold in nearly 1,000 H&M stores worldwide by the end of this month.

### **Top UN official urges end to mother-to-child AIDS transmission by 2015**



Michel Sidibé

21 May 2009- The head of the United Nations agency charged with coordinating the fight against HIV/AIDS has called for a virtual elimination of mother-to-child AIDS transmission worldwide by 2015.

"We can prevent mothers from dying and babies from becoming infected with HIV," Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint

UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), told this week's meeting of the World Health Assembly in Geneva.

According to UNAIDS, evidence shows that timely administration of antiretroviral drugs to HIV-positive pregnant women significantly reduces the risk of HIV transmission to their babies.

"It is a proven, inexpensive, and effective intervention," UNAIDS said in a news release. "Despite this, latest estimates show that in 2007, only 33 per cent of HIV-positive pregnant women received the necessary treatment and only 21 per cent of women in low- and middle-income countries were tested for HIV as part of their antenatal care.

"Progress in this area can only be achieved by integrating programmes which prevent the transmission of HIV from mothers to their children into the broader reproductive health agenda," the agency stressed. Mr. Sidibé met with more than 80 health ministers during the World Health Assembly to underscore the commitment of UNAIDS in supporting countries to achieve their universal access goals. He outlined key priority areas in which joint action by the UN could make a significant difference to the AIDS response and a positive contribution to the broader development agenda.

In a related development, UNAIDS and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Forum of Arab and African Parliamentarians for Population and Development to work towards achieving access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for all people in the region.

In the agreement, the three parties pledged to strengthen the parliamentarians' role in addressing universal access, including by creating awareness and influencing public opinion, as well as ensuring that legislation protects and promotes human rights and that funds are allocated to the issue.

## Cancer fight in developing world gets boost from joint UN initiative



IAEA says making radiotherapy accessible is a key component in any comprehensive cancer control programme

26 May 2009- Two United Nations agencies are launching a joint initiative aimed at strengthening and accelerating efforts to fight cancer in developing countries, using their respective strengths in the areas of health and radiation medicine.

Cancer is projected to be among the leading causes of deaths worldwide, with more than 70 per cent of all fatalities occurring in low- and middle-income countries, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which has teamed up with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the Joint Programme on Cancer Control.

"In low- and middle-income countries, cancer overwhelmingly affects the poor. This has huge implications for human suffering, health systems, health budgets and the drive to reduce poverty," said WHO Director-General Margaret Chan, who signed the new agreement with IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei.

"The IAEA has long provided radiation technology and expertise to developing countries, but radiotherapy alone cannot halt the growing global cancer crisis," said Mr. ElBaradei. "The Joint Programme with WHO underlines our conviction that only through combined effort and collaboration can we bring hope and relief to those whose lives are threatened by cancer."

The new initiative will set the stage for the two agencies to work together, building on their areas of expertise to create a more

coordinated and robust approach to combating cancer in poor countries.

In a related development, Dr. Chan has appointed Nancy Goodman Brinker, founder of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, as WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Cancer Control.

Ms. Brinker, a former United States Ambassador to Hungary, businesswoman, health care advocate and philanthropist, will raise awareness of the need for comprehensive cancer control policies, with an emphasis on poor countries.

"The disease burden has shifted from wealthier to less affluent countries, and her advocacy will help in building awareness in low- and middle-income countries," said Dr. Chan.

## Environment

### Another step towards new climate change pact taken with online UN publication



Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

20 May 2009 - Progress towards achieving an ambitious new treaty on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is gathering pace, the top United Nations climate change official said, announcing the online publication of the text to be negotiated by nations this December in Copenhagen.

"This document marks an important point on our road," said Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). "It's the first time [a] real negotiating text will be on the table which can serve as a basis for

governments to start drafting a Copenhagen agreed outcome.”

Governments attending the Copenhagen conference on climate change are expected to adopt an agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol, whose first commitment period for reducing greenhouse gas emissions ends in 2012. The negotiations on reductions to be achieved by industrialized countries after 2012 centre on issues related to the scale of the reductions, improvements to emissions trading and the Kyoto Protocol's carbon offset mechanisms, as well as concerns relating to land-use change and forestry.

The 53-page negotiating text covers a shared vision for long-term cooperative action, along with an action plan for strengthening adaptation and mitigation measures, as well as finance, technology and capacity-building.

“Meanwhile, the United States has committed to a Copenhagen agreement and a clean energy future. Industrialized countries are giving developing nations due credit for the climate change strategies they already have in place,” noted Mr. de Boer. He stressed that with only a few days before Copenhagen, time gets tighter but the world is not standing still on climate change.”

Before the UNFCCC conference in Copenhagen, some 3,000 participants, including government delegates, representatives from business and industry, environmental organizations and research institutions will gather in Bonn from 1-12 June for talks on the negotiating text.

### **Ban spotlights threat of alien species to global ecosystems on International Day for Biological Diversity**



22 May 2009 - The spread of non-native species is harming ecosystems, livelihoods and economies around the world, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, in a message to mark the International Day for Biological Diversity.

Mr. Ban said the global decline in biodiversity “remains alarming, despite agreement at the (2002) World Summit on Sustainable Development to significantly reduce the rate of loss by 2010,” citing deforestation, habitat changes and land degradation, often linked to climate change’s growing impact, as the main drivers of biodiversity loss. But another threat – and the focus of this year’s observance of this year’s International Day – is the spread of invasive alien species, he said.

“An unwanted by-product of globalization, non-native species, is harming ecosystem services, livelihoods and economies throughout the world,” the Secretary-General said, adding that the implications for poverty reduction and sustainable development are “profound.”

He pointed to the Government of South Africa, which alone is spending up to \$60 million annually to eradicate plants, such as wattles, which are invading farmland, river systems and economically-important tourist sites such as the Cape Floral Kingdom.

In the Great Lakes of North America, zebra mussels are affecting shipping, fisheries and electric power generation, while in the islands of the Pacific Ocean, rats from foreign ships are wiping out indigenous birds and in many African nations, the water hyacinth is clogging lakes and rivers, he said.

In his message, the Secretary-General highlighted the Convention on Biological Diversity, which is addressing the threat of invasive alien species by setting global priorities and guidelines, sharing information and expertise, and helping to coordinate international action.

“The most cost-effective and feasible method of control is prevention,” Mr. Ban stated, noting that a successful strategy will require collaboration among Governments, economic

sectors and non-governmental and international organizations.

"A country can only prevent invasions if it knows which species may invade, where they may come from and the best management options for dealing with them," he stressed. Individuals, too, have a responsibility, the Secretary-General said. "Abiding by local and international quarantine and customs regulations will prevent the spread of insect pests, weeds and diseases. A simple rule applies: leave living organisms in their natural habitats and bring home only memories."

Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UN Environment Programme (UNEP) marked the International Day by urging nations to "get tough" on alien species. "Far too many countries have failed to grasp the threat or are far too casual in their response," he wrote in an editorial. "This is a mistake of profound environmental and economic proportions."

Invasive alien species may be causing over \$1.4 trillion – or 5 per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – worth of damage to the worldwide economy and serving as an obstacle to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline, Mr. Steiner said.

The species "are spread from one continent to another via the global agricultural, horticultural and pet trades or by hitchhiking lifts in ballast water and on ship's hulls," he pointed out, calling for tougher customs controls and eradication programmes.

UNEP also announced the creation of a website which provides comprehensive information on global biodiversity indicators and trends, with an emphasis on reporting efforts aimed at slowing biodiversity loss by 2010.

Also marking the day, General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann said that "it is not too late to take individual and collective measures, to respond to biodiversity loss in order to protect and

sustain our daily needs and maintain our livelihoods."

### **Ban challenges business leaders to create 'cleaner, greener' global economy**



Green Economy

24 May 2009 - Calling the issue of climate change "the defining challenge of our time," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a challenge to business leaders to lead efforts to transform the global economy into one that is "cleaner, greener and more sustainable."

Mr. Ban told participants at the World Business Summit on Climate Change in Copenhagen that "you and your colleagues have the ingenuity and vision to lead by example where others – including governments – are lagging behind."

Governments are expected to wrap up negotiations on a successor pact to the Kyoto Protocol, whose first commitment period for reducing greenhouse gas emissions ends in 2012, in the Danish capital in December. "As business leaders, you are crucially placed to ensure that government negotiators seal a deal," the Secretary-General said, urging their support to harness the political will needed to reach an ambitious new agreement later this year.

Although he acknowledges the difficulties in concluding the pact, he warned that "if we get it wrong, we face catastrophic damage to people, to the planet – and to the global marketplace."

The UN will be issuing a so-called "Copenhagen Call" at the end of the three-day meeting on 26 May, Mr. Ban said, appealing to the private sector to use its

influence to raise awareness of climate change.

“As business leaders, you must make it clear to your leaders that doing the right thing for the climate is also the smart thing for global competitiveness and long-term prosperity,” he said. “We may never get a better opportunity. And if the world’s scientists are right, we may not get a second chance.”

Mr. Ban also exhorted participants to mobilize their employees, partners and others to demand urgent action on the issue, as well as to continue finding private-sector methods to slash climate risks.

“Your customers and your shareholders will reward you,” the Secretary-General, who will be convening a high-level summit on climate change in September, said. “And your children will thank you one day.”

According to some estimates, rising greenhouse gas emissions could lead to a 5 per cent drop, or even more, in global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), compared to the prediction by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that it could cost as little as 0.1 per cent of global GDP annually until 2030 to reduce emissions. “And that does not factor in the multiple extra benefits to health and development,” he said.

Concluding negotiations on a new climate pact in December will be a boon to businesses, Mr. Ban, who arrived in Copenhagen from a two-day visit to Sri Lanka, stressed.

“We know that the right kind of deal will provide the regulatory certainty and long-term price signals that businesses are demanding,” he said. “We know that a deal can unleash investment, stimulate innovation and facilitate the global spread of low-carbon technologies.”

If the Copenhagen conference in December ends in failure, countries could turn inward in a misguided attempt to solve the climate problem on their own, the Secretary-General cautioned, pointing out that protectionist barriers could result.

He countered the argument that action on climate change should be put on hold during a global recession, emphasizing that while a global bail-out may seem costly now, “it will pale next to the enormous human and economic costs of delaying action on climate change.”

## Disaster Risk Management / Humanitarian Assistance

### EF Regional Director meets children and families displaced by conflict in Pakistan



UNICEF/Pak2009/Paradela  
UNICEF's Regional Director for South Asia, Daniel Toole, sits with children at the child-friendly space in Jalala camp.

JALALA CAMP, Pakistan, 21 May 2009 – The hot summer sun beats down on Dan Toole as he walks around Jalala Camp. The UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia, Mr Toole is here to see the children’s agency support for those affected by the biggest population displacement in Pakistan’s history.

Since 2 May 2009, more than 1.5 million people have been displaced by fighting between militants and government forces in Malakand Division in north-western Pakistan. This massive displacement has stretched government, UN and local communities’ resources to the utmost. Several new camps have had to be quickly established to accommodate it. The newly displaced people add to a pre-existing population of 555,000 people living in camps and with host

communities who have fled from fighting since August 2008. Of the two million people presently displaced, more than half are children.

"Many of the people here have left behind everything they owned," Mr Toole said. "Given the numbers of people involved, quickly deploying assistance and resources to where they are most needed has meant the difference between life and death for millions. This includes basics like safe drinking water, nutritional support, and vaccinations to prevent diseases from spreading like wildfire in crowded camp conditions."

At the camp Mr Toole visited the children and women benefiting from UNICEF supported interventions such as water and sanitation, education, health and child protection. He met school girls, visited a child friendly space and met displaced families.

Jalala Camp is one of the 23 camps where more than 220,000 displaced people have sought refuge. Here and at other camps, UNICEF works with the provincial government and other partners to provide essential services for children. Over 25,000 people benefit from comprehensive medical services, and 37,000 children have been vaccinated against measles. In pre-existing camps, 31,000 children have been screened for malnutrition and provided supplementary or therapeutic feeding if need be. Similar programmes are soon to be launched in the newly established camps.

Through UNICEF support, drinking water and sanitation facilities help prevent outbreaks of disease amongst 112,000 people. Schools and child-friendly spaces provide familiar routines and psychosocial support for children, and trained workers work to provide counselling, information and support. A registration drive has also identified families and children in particular need of support, such as unaccompanied children.

About 80 per cent of displaced people are living with friends and relatives or using their dwindling savings to rent accommodation.

The sudden influx of thousands of displaced people has severely strained basic social services and infrastructure in host communities, which also need urgent support to prevent deteriorating services and additional strain on host families.

During his three-day visit to Pakistan, Mr Toole also met government officials at a federal and provincial level and discussed how best UNICEF and government can work together to protect children from the violence and unrest which has overcome their homeland.

"Despite limited resources, security issues and a rapidly changing situation we have made a good start," said Mr Toole. "In this interconnected world, it is a global necessity to work together and ensure that children displaced by conflict are supported through these difficult times, and can build lives of health, security and opportunity. With sufficient support and resources, we hope to achieve just that."

To continue assisting and expand its support to the displaced children and women till the end of the year, UNICEF urgently needs over US\$ 40 million dollars.

### **Urgent need to set up more camps for Pakistan's displaced, says UN agency**



Displaced people shortly after reaching Jalala camp in North West Frontier Province, Pakistan

20 May 2009- With thousands of people uprooted by violence in north-west Pakistan continuing to make their way to safety, the United Nations refugee agency said it is crucial to set up more camps and ensure speedy access to assistance.

Almost 1.5 million people have escaped fighting between Government troops and militants in the Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP) in recent weeks, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"Thousands of displaced people continue to arrive in camps and to approach registration centres," UNHCR spokesperson Ron Redmond told reporters in Geneva.

He said that on average, some 100,000 people have been registered daily in the 89 registration points established in Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Peshawar, Kohat and Charsadda districts of NWFP.

With reports of thousands of new arrivals in Abbottabad, Manshera and Haripur districts, the agency is planning to help set up more registration centres to ensure the internally displaced persons (IDPs) can get the help they need as quickly as possible, he added.

Of the nearly 1.5 million people that have fled so far, some 131,000 people are staying in camps, with more than 1.3 million staying in private accommodation, with host families or friends, and some in schools.

The new influx is in addition to the over half a million people registered in NWFP who had fled other parts of the northwest, including the tribal areas, over several months since August 2008.

"Most of the 15 new camps established this month in response to the new influx are already full," noted Mr. Redmond. "There is an urgent need to identify new sites and establish new camps."

UNHCR is also helping the NWFP Ministry of Social Welfare to carry out a 'fast track' registration process to ensure people can get assistance. It is discussing with authorities a process to cross-check and verify data in a way that will identify duplicate registrations, inconsistencies and remove people from the earlier influx who may have returned home.

High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, who wrapped up a three-day visit to the area last weekend, has called on the

international community for a massive influx of support to assist the surging numbers of uprooted people in the South Asian nation.

### **Revised Humanitarian Response Plan 2009 Launched** **UN and partners call for US \$ 543 million in humanitarian relief for Pakistan's displaced**



22 May 2009 - Fleeing from intensified insecurity in Pakistan's northwest provinces, some 1.7 million displaced people have been registered since early May and are now either living in relief camps or with host families. Traumatized by their journey, and leaving with virtually nothing, these vulnerable men, women, and children are in urgent need of food rations, safe water supply, medical assistance and shelter from soaring temperatures.

The United Nations System agencies and humanitarian partners, including Pakistani NGOs, INGOs, and the Federal and Provincial authorities, are working together to ensure we get relief to people as quickly and effectively as possible, and sustain services to them over the coming months.

Displaced children need to be able to continue schooling, mothers and babies need special health and nutrition assistance, and all displaced families need access to primary and emergency medical care, as well as clean water and sanitation to prevent the spread of disease. In addition, the overstretched resources of host communities need to be supplemented to provide for the families they are supporting.

"The scale of this displacement is extraordinary in terms of size and speed, and has caused incredible suffering," notes the

acting UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Martin Mogwanja. "We are calling for generous support from the international community, in addition to the assistance being provided by both ordinary families and the national authorities."

In response to the Government of Pakistan's request for humanitarian assistance, the humanitarian community has revised the Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan to expand assistance and protection to the rapid and recent inflow of IDPs, as well as continue to support the 550,000 people who had fled the situation since last August. Rapid needs assessment of currently inaccessible areas and immediate response to families remaining there will be implemented as soon as access allows.

A total of 165 projects presented by 52 UN agencies, national and international NGO partners require US \$543,172,583. With US \$88,524,302 already provided or committed, the humanitarian community is calling for the remaining US \$454,648,281 to be contributed urgently, to fund the assistance needed by the most vulnerable and worst affected for the rest of the 2009.

### **Ongoing conflict triggers massive displacement of families in north-west Pakistan**



UNICEF/Pak2009/Ramoned  
Children from a displaced family warm themselves beside a fire at a camp in Islamabad, Pakistan.

JALALA CAMP, Pakistan, 22 May 2009 – Since the end of April, a new army offensive against militants in north-west Pakistan has caused the displacement of more than 1.5 million

people. They've joined the 555,000 people already displaced since October of last year and still unable to go home.

It's the largest population displacement Pakistan has seen since the country was created in 1947. Each day, hundreds of families arrive at hot, dusty camps like Jalala after fleeing the fertile valleys of Swat, Lower Dir and Buner Districts. More than half of those displaced are children, and all of them urgently need humanitarian assistance. Jalala camp, which opened less than three weeks ago, now hosts more than 11,000 people.

### **Pakistan: Ban calls on donors to fund \$500 million appeal to help displaced**



In Jalala camp, Pakistan, displaced young girls and men queue separately for cooked food

22 May 2009 - Urging the international community to show their solidarity with the nearly 2 million people who have been driven from their homes by violence in Pakistan's northwest, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasized the urgency of raising over \$500 million to assist those affected by the clashes.

In the capital, Islamabad, the United Nations and its partners launched a Humanitarian Action Plan, appealing for \$543 million to help the more than 1.7 million people who have escaped fighting between Government forces and militants in the Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP) since 2 May.

"The Secretary-General is concerned that Pakistan is currently witnessing rapid displacement on a massive scale," according to a statement issued by his spokesperson. Further, he stressed the importance of

providing aid in partnership with the Pakistani Government and humanitarian agencies.

The UN has identified food, safe water, medical assistance and shelter from the sweltering heat as priorities, also recognizing the need for displaced children to continue schooling and for mothers and babies to access special health and nutrition assistance. "The scale of this displacement is extraordinary in terms of size and speed, and has caused incredible suffering," said Martin Mogwanja, acting UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan. "We are calling for generous support from the international community, in addition to the assistance being provided by both ordinary families and the national authorities."

Responding to the Government's request for humanitarian help, the current appeal has been expanded to provide aid and protection to the newly displaced people as well as to the 550,000 people who had fled clashes last year in the same region.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that 200,000 of the more than 1.7 million recently uprooted people are living in camps, while the rest are staying with friends and family or in schools and other communal buildings.

With temperatures climbing to 45 degrees Celsius, the agency is working to provide shade above tents to protect the internally displaced persons (IDPs) – who have escaped from much cooler climates in the Swat Valley – from the intense heat. Until now, the displaced had been receiving cooked meals from the Government, but to allow them to cook their own food, UNHCR is constructing kitchens in camps, as well as fabric screens around tents to provide women with more privacy, agency spokesperson Andrew Purvis said.

Outside the camps, UNHCR field teams have carried out assessments and have started handing out basic relief supplies in more than 700 schools where thousands of people are seeking refuge.

Highlighting the needs of nearly 70,000 pregnant women who have been forced to flee their homes by the recent fighting, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is boosting its support for reproductive health care – centering on comprehensive maternal, neonatal and child health care and psychosocial support – for IDPs in NWFP.

The agency said that almost 6,000 women are due to give birth within the next month, with nearly 1,000 of them needing surgery for pregnancy-related complications. "We are basing our help on the specific needs of women and families, with a focus on safeguarding human dignity," said Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, UNFPA's Executive Director.

The agency, which is also operating mobile service units, voiced concern over the special risk placed on pregnant women by the massive dislocation, exacerbating the already limited access to prenatal, assisted delivery and emergency obstetric care.

### **Displaced people still streaming out of Pakistan conflict zone – UN**



Displaced family from Swat packs up non-food items received from distribution point in Yar Hussain camp in Swabi,

Pakistan 26 May 2009- Clashes between Government forces and militants in north-west Pakistan are continuing to uproot people from their homes, with nearly 130,000 people being registered daily as displaced, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The agency said that provincial government authorities have noted that the number of uprooted from the Swat, Lower Dir and Buner districts registered in a fast-track process

since 2 May has now reached almost 2.4 million people. However, UNHCR cautioned that these figures are being verified and could change.

Currently, the federal Government and provincial authorities are discussing how to provide further aid to internally displaced persons (IDPs) beyond the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), UNHCR spokesperson Ron Redmond told reporters.

“Many people are still reportedly stranded in the conflict zones,” he said, adding that the curfew in effect in the area is lifted for only several hours, with roads becoming quickly congested with people rushing to escape the area.

The fare for a bus ride from Mingora, in Swat District, to Mardan town to the south has tripled from 2,000 rupees, or \$24, to 6,000 rupees, or \$74, according to those who have fled.

Mr. Redmond said that his agency is working with the Government to build separate shaded communal areas for men and women in several camps to provide access to cool areas. In sectors where there is electricity, these spaces have electric water coolers and fans, among other items.

Along with its partner agencies, UNHCR has begun distributing bricks to families to build individual kitchen stoves – to allow them to cook their own meals with rations from the UN World Food Programme (WFP) – in some camps. Until now, they had been eating cooked meals distributed by the Government.

“At the same time, UNHCR continues to witness many acts of generosity from the Pakistani community towards their fellow citizens,” Mr. Redmond said, noting that one private donor contributed food packages for over 2,000 people in Jalojai camp, which now houses a further 50,000 newly displaced people since 2 May.

Meanwhile, others are donating food, clothes and mattresses to thousands of families taking refuge in schools, he said. One woman who now lives in the Pakistani capital,

Islamabad, but is originally from Mardan, travels every weekend to her hometown to bring cash, clothes and tea she collects from her friends to give to the displaced people, Mr. Redmond reported.

UNHCR is also boosting assistance to people living in schools in Mardan and Swabi districts, and is also planning to help the many uprooted people sheltering with relatives, friends or in rental accommodations.

Over the weekend, 36 tons of relief supplies – tents, plastic rolls, kitchen sets, jerry cans, soap, generators, water tanks and purification equipment – were airlifted to Islamabad by the Italian Government and donated to UNHCR.

Additionally, a UNHCR relief bank in Nowshera has been receiving in-kind donations, such as sleeping mats and water coolers, from private donors.

Mr. Redmond said that the agency is continuing to purchase more supplies within Pakistan and to ship items from its stockpiles around the world, but underscored that it “urgently needs funds to accelerate the purchase of relief supplies for its operation.”

Last Friday, the UN and its partners launched a \$543 million appeal to help the nearly 2 million people who have escaped the violence in NWFP.

In a statement, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed his concern that “Pakistan is currently witnessing rapid displacement on a massive scale.”

## Cross Cutting Themes / Other Issues

### Ban pays tribute to late women’s rights champion Helvi Sipilä

20 May 2009- Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon paid tribute to Helvi Sipilä of Finland, a renowned women’s rights advocate and

former United Nations official, who passed away on 15 May at the age of 94.

“Ms. Sipilä powerfully demonstrated the effectiveness of women’s leadership,” Mr. Ban said in a statement issued by his spokesperson.



Helvi Sipilä (right) with Margaret Bruce, Chief of the Status of Women Section, Division of Human Rights in this 23 February 1967 file photo

“She has left a legacy which serves as a reminder that no effort should be spared to ensure the equal participation of women in decision-making in all areas of life.” The “lifelong champion of the rights of women” served as Secretary-General of the first World Conference on Women in 1975 in Mexico City.

She was also the first woman to hold the rank of Assistant Secretary-General at the UN, where she served in different capacities for many years, including as the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Ms. Sipilä remained active after retiring from the UN and was the first woman to run for president in Finland in 1982.

### **Russian tennis star partners with UNESCO to serve notice on gender inequality**



Russian tennis star Vera Zvonareva

20 May 2009 - Russian tennis ace, Olympic bronze medallist and Grand Slam champion

Vera Zvonareva was named as a Promoter of Gender Equality by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Ms. Zvonareva, who at 24 is currently ranked number 6 in the world, has been appointed to call attention to gender equality issues at the national and global levels, and take part in women’s leadership programmes through the UNESCO-Sony Ericsson WTA Tour partnership.

“I am very happy to announce that Ms. Vera Zvonareva is being designated as the fourth UNESCO Promoter of Gender Equality,” said the agency’s Director-General, Koïchiro Matsuura.

Ms. Zvonareva joins other distinguished Promoters of Gender Equality, including current Tour stars Venus Williams of the United States, Tatiana Golovin of France and Zheng Jie of China, as well as Tour founder and pioneering tennis player Billie Jean King, who was appointed Global Mentor for Gender Equality last year.

Mr. Matsuura stressed that as global role models, “these formidable athletes and successful women are a source of inspiration in their deeds both on and off the court, driving the message that gender equality is a goal that can and must be realized in order for us to achieve peace and sustainable development.”

Since its 2006 launch, the UNESCO-Tour collaboration has raised substantial funds; initiated a series of programmes promoting gender equality and women’s leadership; developed a global TV and print advertising campaign. Also, Sony Ericsson tournaments have kicked off advocacy, awareness and fund-raising activities on behalf of the Partnership.

Some of the resulting activities include a women-only night school programme in Liberia; a project to create a group of successful female politicians, business women and athletes in Cameroon; a project to raise the percentage of rural women involved in

local affairs in China; and legal rights workshops to empower women in Jordan.

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