

Chad: 2013 humanitarian response threatened by funding crisis
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The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Chad Mr Thomas Gurtner is today meeting with key regional partners in Dakar in order to develop a common Sahel strategy and to raise the alarm on the funding crisis facing humanitarian actors in Chad. Almost three months into the year, the 2013 humanitarian Common Appeals Process (CAP) of \$500 million in Chad is only financed at 9% and UN agencies forecast that humanitarian funding this year could only reach a third of the amount received in 2012.

"I have spent the last days consulting with key humanitarian actors and we all are becoming increasingly concerned by a looming funding gap that endangers to wipe out the positive advances our humanitarian programmes were able to achieve during 2012," said Mr Gurtner. "The humanitarian situation in Chad continues to be precariously volatile and we need immediate funding in order to maintain the most critical current activities, let alone respond to new crises."

Despite a higher-than-average harvest of 3.8 million metric tons in cereals in 2012-2013, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 2 million people will need assistance this year, mainly in flooded areas and the Sahel belt. Malnutrition rates are expected to soar during the lean period starting in June and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has had to increase its target of children to be treated for severe acute malnutrition this year to 150,000. The deteriorating security situation in neighbouring Darfur and the Central African Republic has also created an unexpected additional strain on humanitarian actors, with the influx of more than 12,500 Sudanese refugees and 4,000 Central African refugees to Chad in the past month.

Aminata Gueye, representative in Chad for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said: "We are facing the greatest influx of Sudanese refugees since 2004 and the UNHCR is even more concerned about the developing situation in the Central African Republic, from where we could expect more than 15,000 new refugees in the coming months. Right now, we simply do not have the funding to respond simultaneously to these emergencies and we are obliged to pull resources from existing programmes in order to assist these extremely vulnerable refugees."

Examples of funding gaps include:

-UNICEF is in urgent need of \$7 million to ensure a continuous supply of therapeutic food and adequate care for severely malnourished children across the country.

-The budget for UNHCR in Chad has been reduced by 50% over the last 2 years and currently only 30% of the required funds have been secured to maintain the 2012 levels of operation to assist 358,000 refugees and 90,000 internally displaced people. UNHCR estimates it needs \$5 million to respond to the present emergencies.

-The FAO has less than 15% of the funds needed to provide seeds and agricultural equipment to 360,000 people.

-The International Organization for Migration (IOM) does not have funding available to assist more than 2,000 Chadian returnees fleeing Darfur and more than 1,000 returnees that have been forced to leave Libya under extremely harsh conditions since January, with many more expected in the coming months.

- With the influx of new refugees, the World Food Programme (WFP) now faces a funding shortfall of \$52 million to assist refugees throughout the country. Moreover, the food required for refugees in Eastern Chad for the July-November period must be repositioned by June at the latest due to the inaccessibility of these regions during the rainy season.

- The UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) which provides air transport for humanitarian programmes in Chad has only received pledges to cover 44% of its 2013 operational budget and is being forced to reduce its fleet and aircraft sizes to maintain a limited service throughout the year.

Bruno Maes, UNICEF representative for Chad said: "This funding crisis is literally a question of saving lives: without proper treatment, a child with severe acute malnutrition is nine times more likely to die than a well-fed child. Malnutrition rates in Chad have not dropped significantly and we simply must sustain our efforts in the 426 nutrition centers across Chad or we will face dramatic consequences."

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