



For immediate release

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\$462 MILLION APPEAL FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR PALESTINIANS

Jerusalem- United Nations humanitarian agencies along with international and national non-governmental organisations operating in the oPt (West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza Strip), appealed today for USD\$ 462 million to fund humanitarian assistance programmes. These programmes respond to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the oPt, mostly in parts of the West Bank where the Barrier, Israeli settlements and access restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities affect the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of persons, and in the Gaza Strip, where the Israeli blockade has given rise to a rapid and significant increase in poverty and unemployment in the last year.

“This is an assault on human dignity with severe humanitarian implications”, stated the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator in the oPt, Maxwell Gaylard. “Many people, especially in the Gaza Strip, are paying a heavy price, struggling daily to have enough food and water to feed and wash their children,” he added.

The high levels of poverty and unemployment have lead to an exhaustion of coping mechanisms and to an increasing dependency on humanitarian assistance. This situation is compounded by the rise in global food prices, severe weather/drought conditions, the deepening of the internal Palestinian political division, and by the ‘de-development’ process occurring in the Gaza Strip.

This is the sixth time in a row that the Consolidated Appeal has been launched in the oPt- last year’s appeal was 69% funded. “The Appeal is directed to help the most vulnerable Palestinians, especially children, single-headed households and the poorest who do not have any other resources to rely on,” said Gaylard, the most senior humanitarian official in the oPt. “Humanitarian assistance can cushion the deteriorating humanitarian situation but it can not stop its decline,” he concluded.

The 2009 Consolidated Appeal includes 159 response projects which cover a range of sectors including protection, food and food security, cash for work and cash assistance, health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, agriculture, and coordination and support services.

For more information please contact

Juliette Touma, +972-(0) 54-3-11-808, toumaj@un.org

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