

## Most vulnerable must not be forgotten, says chief of UN anti-hunger agency



16 September 2009 – With the global economy beginning to show signs of turning the corner, the head of the United Nations World Food Programme (**WFP**) today issued an urgent plea to ensure that those hardest hit by the financial crisis – considered by many to have started one year ago this week – are not forgotten.

There are more hungry people in the world and less food aid than ever before, with the number of the world's hungry to surpass 1 billion this year while the flow of food aid is at its lowest in two decades.

"For the world's most vulnerable, the perfect storm is hitting with a vengeance," WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran said in a **statement** issued in London.

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So far, the agency has received less than half of the \$6.7 billion it needs to feed 108 million people in 74 countries, she noted. At current funding levels, WFP will be forced to cut back its life-saving activities to feed the hungry in places such as Kenya, Bangladesh and Somalia.

"Donors have been extremely generous, but the fact is that the cost of food is still high, needs have gone up and this requires the world to step to the plate in a bigger way," Ms. Sheeran said.

People in the United States and Europe are increasingly relying on government safety nets for food, she pointed out, but 80 per cent of the world does not have this luxury.

"We urgently need an additional \$3 billion to meet those needs, which is less than 0.01 per cent of what was put on the table to stabilize the world financially."

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