

More than 1.8 million people in West and Central Africa affected by floods – UN



26 October 2010 – Over 1.8 million people have been affected by floods in Central and West Africa, which have also killed nearly 400 people, the United Nations humanitarian arm reported today, adding that Benin remains the country hardest hit by the disaster.

Elisabeth Byrs, a spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (**OCHA**), told reporters in Geneva that greater financial resources are needed to respond to the situation in West Africa, where over 1.6 million people have been affected and 307 have lost their lives.

Benin remained the country hardest hit by the floods, with over 700,000 persons affected, she noted, adding that OCHA will probably launch an appeal for the country at the end of this week.

The World Food Programme (**WFP**) is preparing to reach 385,000 people and 13,000 host families with food aid over a two-month period. Distributions have started in some areas, with 200,000 people, including 27,000 children, receiving food baskets consisting of corn, oil, salt, and beans.

Children are also receiving a supplementary ration of milk and therapeutic Plumpy'nut, a ready-to-eat peanut paste that is rich in protein.

The Central Emergency Response Fund (**CERF**), which provides resources rapidly to assist people affected by natural disasters and conflicts, will also contribute \$4 million to assist flood victims, Ms. Byrs said.

Meanwhile, nearly 230,000 have been affected in Central Africa, where 90 people have lost their lives.

In addition to the floods, over 52,000 cases of cholera have been reported in Central and West Africa since June, according to figures from the World Health Organization (**WHO**).

The CERF has allotted over \$650,000 to Cameroon in order to help the country fight cholera, an acute intestinal infection caused by eating food or drinking water that is contaminated.

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