

Recovering with resilience: Pakistan floods one year on

(Islamabad: 28 July 2010): One year ago Pakistan was hit by unprecedented monsoon rains and floods. Across the country the scope and scale of the crisis was exceptional, affecting the lives of over 18 million people, washing away communities and livelihoods, and forcing millions to flee from their homes. The crisis took the lives of a confirmed 1,980 people and left an estimated 14 million in need of humanitarian assistance.

The People of Pakistan have shown remarkable strength and resilience throughout the disaster, supporting each other to overcome extraordinary adversity. “Yesterday in Muzaffargarh, I met over 200 pupils in a summer camp at a temporary learning center; I engaged with a Community Based Organisation that mobilized villagers to rebuild their homes; and I met with farmers who restored their irrigation system and now grow new crops. This resilience gives me hope and reminds me of the necessity to continue to all work together—the people of Pakistan, the Government and the humanitarian community,” said the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Assistance to Pakistan, Rauf Engin Soysal.

The Government of Pakistan has led the response with the United Nations and other humanitarian actors supporting national efforts. During the early days of the disaster the Government and the international community worked together to provide relief to the millions of people in need of immediate support, relocating and evacuating the most vulnerable, setting up camps to provide assistance, and striving to access as many people as possible, displaced in scattered settlements throughout the flood-affected regions.

As the floods receded and people returned to their places of origin, many found their homes and livelihoods had been washed away. As relief continued in the worst affected areas, early recovery began, supporting communities to rebuild their homes and restore their livelihoods, also supporting local authorities to recover from the devastation so that they are able to assist the millions of people affected by the floods.

With a crisis of such magnitude, the response has been complicated and challenging, but it has also been successful as a result of collaboration, cooperation and coordination, with the Government, the UN and with other humanitarian actors working together as best possible to support millions of people affected by the floods.

The Government, the UN and other humanitarian actors have also been working together to prepare in case of future floods, with the monsoon season already having started. Today the Government, the UN and other humanitarian actors in Pakistan are better prepared to respond should another flood occur. With increased knowledge and experience of working in emergencies in multiple provinces, strengthened relations with the local, regional and national authorities, contingency plans for further flooding, and having learned lessons from the floods response, the disaster response capacity in Pakistan is significantly improved. There is still more work to be done

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“The UN is committed to the continued support of the people affected by the floods in Pakistan and urges the international community to continue supporting early recovery and follow through on the response,” said Mengesha Kebede, acting UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Pakistan.

In collaboration with national response efforts the UN will continue to support communities recovering from the destruction caused by the floods, and will strive to bolster resilience to the risks of future flooding.

The Pakistan Flood Relief and Early Recovery Response Plan is currently funded at 69.6 % (or US\$1.3 billion) of the total requirements of US\$1.9 billion. More than US\$600 million is still needed to support early recovery activities and achieve the objectives set out in the floods response plan. The UN has released a report on the floods response titled Pakistan Floods One Year On available at www.pakresponse.info.

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