

HUMANITARIAN APPEAL FOR REPUBLIC OF CONGO

(Geneva/New York, 9 March 2010): Today, the United Nations and its partners launched an appeal for \$58,985,837 million to cover the urgent needs of refugees who have fled armed clashes in Equateur Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) since October 2009 and found refuge in the Republic of Congo (RoC). The appeal, which runs from January to December 2010, aims to assist some 110,000 refugees, of whom 82% are women and children, as well as 58,000 people in the host areas of the Republic of Congo.

The clashes originated in inter-communal disputes over farming and fishing rights but later widened to other parts of the province. As a result, an estimated 60,000 people fled to other parts of Equateur, 17,000 sought refuge in the Central African Republic (CAR), and 114,017 crossed into the RoC.

“The Government and people of the Republic of Congo have responded generously—again—to refugees coming from the Democratic Republic of Congo,” said John Holmes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. “But they have very limited resources and a small population, over half of whom subsist on \$1.25 per day. Significant support is therefore required from the international community,” Mr. Holmes added.

The refugees have settled in more than 100 sites along a 500 kilometre stretch of the Oubangui River between Liranga District and the border with the CAR. In most areas, they vastly outnumber the local population, on average by a ratio of 5 to 1. They have found accommodation with host families, settled in abandoned huts, occupied other buildings, or built makeshift shelters.

Two inter-agency assessment missions were conducted in November 2009, with the participation of the Government, United Nations agencies, the Congolese Red Cross, donors and other. These missions, as well as subsequent missions carried out by individual agencies, identified food, non-food items, support to livelihoods, clean water, sanitation, health care, education, and protection as the priority needs. Social services in the sites where refugees settled have been overwhelmed by the inflow, or did not exist in the first place. In addition, the increase in the population of the sites is placing great strains on local resources such as water, wood, fish and wild game, so that refugees’ coping mechanisms are not enough to meet their basic needs.

The Government of the Republic of Congo has provided assistance to the refugees from the outset of this crisis, as have the United Nations and humanitarian agencies.

In December 2009, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated \$7.9 million to seven UN agencies responding to the needs of the refugees, while a number of agencies also drew on bilateral funding and internal sources for the initial phase. The unmet portion of the \$59 million appeal comes to \$41,576,196.

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