

**STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ON BURKINA FASO**  
**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND**  
**EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, VALERIE AMOS**

**Ouagadougou, Tuesday 22 May 2012**

*Checked against delivery*

I have been in Burkina Faso for two days looking at the impact of the current food and nutrition crisis on local communities as well as the situation of the Malian refugees.

About 2.8 million people in the country – one fifth of the total population - need help, including half a million malnourished children. The situation has been made worse by the impact of the conflict in Mali. More than 60,000 have fled the fighting and crossed the border into Burkina Faso – into areas which are already extremely vulnerable. My thanks go to the Government and people of Burkina Faso for welcoming the refugees.

Today, I visited a nutrition centre in Djibo and saw mothers from two villages waiting patiently to have their children registered and treated.

The drought and rising food prices have taken their toll. Many families have had to sell their livestock to cover their household food needs or they are eating the seeds that they should plant for the next season.

In Mentao, I met refugees in the camp. While they are very appreciative of the people and Government of Burkina Faso, they are worried about a number of things, however. Limited water and sanitation facilities; the quality and type of food; young people want to be able to go to school, and they are worried about their livestock.

I was pleased to see that the people in the local communities who are sharing the little they have are also being helped.

UN and partner organizations are supporting the work of the local administration and they are all doing a good job in difficult circumstances, but more needs to be done.

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And we need the resources to do it. Last night we launched an appeal for US\$126 million dollars, based on a plan which proposes a response to the food and nutrition insecurity, including health, water, sanitation and hygiene.

President Compaore and his Ministers conveyed to me their determination to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and take appropriate measures so that the people of Burkina Faso can become more resilient to disasters.

We support that approach, which includes improving water conservation, making irrigation systems more efficient and increasing agriculture output through better fertilization and seed choices, as well as livestock management.

The focus is on bridging the gap between relief efforts now and longer-term development initiatives.

Merci beaucoup.