

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**NEW FUND GIVES \$ 2.5 MILLION TO PRIORITY PROJECTS IN THE
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

(New York/Geneva/Bangui, 1 October 2008): The new Common Humanitarian Fund has allocated \$ 2.5 million to 16 priority projects in the Central African Republic. With this funding, aid agencies will protect the lives of newly displaced people, provide health care and water to people struck by violence, ensure the survival of infants and young children and help the displaced who are returning to destroyed villages to restart their lives.

“The pooled fund will help to make humanitarian action in the country more efficient and better coordinated,” said John Holmes, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. “Thanks to the fund, aid organisations on the ground can channel the money where it is most needed and respond to a breaking emergency faster than ever,” he added.

Close to \$ 2.8 million has so far been pledged to the fund by Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and Sweden. Roughly a quarter of this money has been reserved for the cash-strapped humanitarian air service, which would otherwise have had to halt operations. The air service transports goods and aid workers to isolated communities which are hard to reach by car because of insecurity or poor roads. Some funds have also been given to a project to repair roads and bridges in conflict areas, so that aid can effectively be delivered to the hardest-hit people.

“The common fund makes it easier for donors to channel money to projects that address pressing, unmet needs of Central Africans suffering from the violence,” said Mai Moussa Abari, acting Humanitarian Coordinator in the country, who signed off on the projects. “Mechanisms are now in place to ensure that aid gets to the people who need it most in a timely and transparent manner.”

The new funding mechanism will help provide life-saving assistance to 110,000 displaced Central Africans, 83,000 people who recently returned to villages devastated by conflict and one million people struck by the violence in the north and the far south-east of the country. United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have launched an aid programme of \$114 million in 2008. So far this year, donors have funded 80% of the programme.