

Islamabad, Pakistan, 15 August 2010 - Secretary-General's press conference following his visit to the flood-affected zones in Pakistan

Mr President, Ladies and gentlemen of the media, good evening.

I am so sorry to have kept you waiting for such a long time, but there were so many places and so many people I really wanted to see and meet, and I hope you will understand.

(Brief remarks in Urdu)

Ladies and gentlemen, I have come to Pakistan for three reasons:

I am here to share my sympathy and solidarity with the people and Government of Pakistan at this time of difficulty. I am here to see for myself what is being done by the United Nations and what more is needed from the international community and I am here to urge the world to step up their generous support for Pakistan.

This has been a heart wrenching day for me and my delegation. And I'd like to thank President [Asif Ali] Zardari for his kindness to come with me for the entire schedule.

I will never forget the destruction and suffering I have witnessed today.

In the past I have visited the scenes of many natural disasters around the world, but nothing like this.

The scale of this disaster is so large so many people, in so many places, in so much need.

Nearly one out of ten Pakistanis has been directly or indirectly affected -- possibly 20 million people. One-fifth of the country is ravaged by floods. Thousands of towns and villages have simply been washed away. Roads, Bridges, Buildings, Crops. Millions of livelihoods have been lost.

People are marooned on tiny islands with flood waters all around them. They are drinking dirty water. They are living in the mud and ruins of their lives.

Many have lost family and friends. Many more are afraid their children and their loved ones will not survive in these conditions.

This disaster is far from over. The rains are still falling and could continue for weeks. Dams are at severe risk of rupture.

The United Nations and the international community and the international humanitarian community are moving as fast as we can to help the Government deliver desperately needed assistance.

Today I have had important discussions with President Zardari and Prime Minister [Yousaf Raza] Gilani about what more we can do to help.

UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, the NGOs are expanding their capacity on the ground as quickly as possible.

The people of Pakistan need food. Emergency shelters, Medicines and Clean water.

We are all deeply concerned about the spread of diarrhea and other water-borne diseases. All our combined medical capacity will be needed to provide the right drugs and care. The United Nations will also distribute clean water for at least 6 million people. We have planned food assistance for a similar number.

We want to help provide emergency healthcare to 14 million people, with special programmes for children and for pregnant women.

To do this we need more support from the international community. We have launched the appeal for \$460 million for the most immediate needs for the coming 90 days.

I thank the many governments, organizations and individuals for their generous support.

It is making a difference. I have seen that today.

But I am also here to send a message to the world: These unprecedented floods demand unprecedented assistance. The flood waves must be matched with waves of global support.

I want to announce today that I have decided to allocate a further \$10 million from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund, making a total of \$27 million altogether since the beginning of the crisis.

And as the waters recede, we must move quickly to help people build back their country and pick up the pieces of their lives. Farmers will need seeds, fertilizers and tools to replant. Education, health and nutrition need to be restored quickly. In the longer term, the huge damage to infrastructure must be repaired. The UN will be part of all this too.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have been to Pakistan many times. This is a vibrant, resilient, and generous country. It is a nation that has stood shoulder to shoulder with others around the world as part of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The people of Pakistan have been there for so many others in their time of need. Now the world must be there for the people of Pakistan.

I pledge my commitment and the support of the United Nations through this difficult period and on every step of the long road ahead. Thank you very much.

Q: If the world community does not respond adequately, given what you have seen today, what is the worst-case scenario?

SG: I think the international community has been responding generously and swiftly. You have seen the whole United Nations, agencies and international donors and countries on bilateral levels and NGOs -- they have been sending all this necessary assistance. The United Nations again appealed for \$460 million. Just the next day, we have received very generous responses. I am sure the international community will heed to our calls and appeals. I am sure that the international community will stand behind the Pakistani people. Now on the part of the Government of Pakistan under the leadership of the President and Prime Minister you have mobilized all available resources – the army and people -- they have become one, united. Now the magnitude of the disaster, the number of people affected, displaced and number of houses and damage of infrastructure and vastness of area affected, inundated by the flood. That has made [things] very much difficult. That must have given some sense of frustration on the part of your people. But I am sure that with such courage and fortitude, and resilience of your people, the international community will generously help. Thank you.

Q: There have been suggestions that there is a lack of trust in the Government of Pakistan and this is one of the reasons why the international community has not given more yet. If that's the case what can be done?

SG: I do not, first of all, agree to that kind of idea. This is a natural disaster. You have not seen such magnitude of disaster. I have seen to so many places. I have been at the scene of Cyclone Nargis, and the tsunami, and the Haitian earthquake and Chilean earthquake, Chinese earthquake. All these natural disasters may have their unique impact caused by this. However in this case of the Pakistani disaster, it's much worse than the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. And the international community's response, because of the nature of this disaster, natural disaster, which has been gradually built up therefore it might be the case that the response of the international community might have been a little bit slower than in the case of the earthquake or tsunami, which have happened in a matter of seconds and where 200,000, tens of thousands of people have lost [their lives]. Therefore there is some difference of perception in addressing this issue. I am sure that the international community is actively and generously supporting the people of Pakistan.

Q: Compared with 2005, we haven't seen the active participation of the United Nations agencies. Key issue is the food. Would you direct WFP and other agencies to reach out to the people?

SG: For your question, the United Nations [World] Food Programme and all other agencies – UNDP [UN Development Programme], UNICEF, UNHCR [UN High Commissioner for Refugees] – they have been mobilizing from day one. I have dispatched my Special Envoy for Pakistan, Mr. [Jean-Maurice] Ripert, immediately. We had a very good assessment. But at the initial stage of this crisis this response or initial assessment might have not been sufficient, but we have been providing at least one million people food and drinking water. Our target is to provide at least six million people safe drinking water and food as soon as possible. Now the whole world is standing behind the Pakistani people. Therefore it is important that on the occasion of my visit I am going to report this to the General Assembly of the United Nations on

Thursday, 19 August. And there will be another occasion to discuss how the international community can further strengthen this delivery system and accelerating assistance during the time of the General Assembly. Therefore I think the whole international community and United Nations are ready to help.

If I may add just one more thing. The Pakistani Government, the Prime Minister, and Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Interior – they have assured the United Nations that to facilitate easy access of delivery by the international humanitarian [community], they will issue visas for international humanitarian workers and NGOs on arrival for three months. I am very much grateful for these very speedy actions which will really facilitate the easy and speedy flow of humanitarian items.

Q: Is \$460 million enough? Will there be more?

SG: When this appeal was launched last Wednesday we have announced that it will be necessary to raise \$460 million for the coming 90 days for urgent and immediate humanitarian assistance. I believe that we are now in the stage of humanitarian assistance, rescue and relief. Then as time goes by, while we help those displaced persons and many other people who need immediate humanitarian assistance, we will have to think about as the second stage and third stage: rehabilitation and reconstruction. That, we will continue to discuss with the international community. My report to the General Assembly on Thursday will help first of all understand the magnitude and the necessity of Pakistani people and what needs to be done more. Now we are discussing the possibility of convening a high-level meeting on the margins of the Millennium Development Goals summit meeting in September in the United Nations. And there will be another high-level meeting, ministerial meeting, on 15 October in Brussels in Belgium. All these important occasions will provide us with a very good opportunity for the international community to discuss what needs to be done further. I am sure that as time goes by this reconstruction of infrastructure and all these systems will be discussed. Thank you very much.