

**Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and  
Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator  
Ursula Mueller  
Statement to the Press  
Bamako, Mali, 31 August 2018**

Good afternoon everyone.

I have spent the past four days seeing for myself the effects of the conflicts and agro-pastoral crisis that are now affecting more than **5 million people** in Mali. This level of needs is higher than at any point since the beginning of the security crisis in 2012.

During my mission in Mali, I had several meetings with authorities, donors, affected communities and humanitarian partners.

Yesterday, in Bankass, I met with people who had to flee their homes due to violence, and the communities that are hosting them. They spoke of what they need most: **food, security, protection and peace**.

The number of internally displaced people in Mali has sharply increased since the beginning of the year to over **75,000** by the end of July. The situation in Mopti is a clear illustration of this trend. Humanitarian actors told me the number of displaced increased from 2,000 in April to **12,000 in July**.

In Mali, like in many countries in the Sahel, food insecurity and malnutrition are among the most significant needs in the regional context of agro-pastoral crisis. Affected communities exhausted their food reserves in many cases months earlier than usual and without sufficient assistance are in an acute situation of vulnerability.

This year, **4.6 million** people (i.e. **1 in 4** Malians) suffer from food insecurity, including over **930,000** who are **severely food insecure** and require immediate food assistance during the current lean season (May-August). The number of people affected by severe food insecurity is **55 per cent** higher than in 2017.

The nutritional status of children remains a major humanitarian concern, and the situation in 2018 is worse than anticipated. The number of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition has nearly doubled in the past year, from 142,000 in 2017 to over **274,000** anticipated in 2018.

Humanitarian partners have assisted hundreds thousands of people since the beginning of the year despite access challenges and limited resources.

In certain areas of the country access to people in need, and people's access to services, is becoming increasingly challenging due to growing insecurity and criminal activities affecting civilians who must not be targeted according to the international humanitarian law. Nonetheless, I commend the tireless and courageous work by humanitarian actors to maintain access to affected people by upholding humanitarian principles and building community acceptance.

Humanitarian funding for Mali has steadily decreased in recent years, while the number of people in need has increased.

This year, thanks to the contributions of donors **US\$106 million**, or **32 per cent**, has been mobilised out of the **\$330 million** required to assist **2.9 million people** targeted through the Humanitarian Response Plan. I thank them for their generosity and call the international community for more solidarity with affected people in Mali. The deficit in funding is preventing a timely, at-scale and appropriate response.

**Without funding, the crisis will worsen and become even harder to beat back.**

Finally, I am encouraged by the initiatives and the planning being made by the government, development and humanitarian actors to work together in ensuring that we are not just addressing the immediate needs but also helping restore and building livelihoods. This is essential to ensure our work today helps make communities more resilient and better able to survive future crises.

Thank you.