

United Nations



الأمم المتحدة

Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator

Sudan

السودان

## PRESS RELEASE

### **SUDAN: HUMANITARIANS ASSIST HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE AS THE COUNTRY FACES ITS WORST FLOODING IN DECADES**

**Khartoum, 21 September 2020.** Humanitarian organizations in Sudan have reached over 350,000 people with life-saving assistance as continued torrential rains threaten more damages in the worst floods to hit the country in three decades. Over 120 people have lost their lives and the number of people critically affected exceeds 770,000, according to the Government's Humanitarian Aid Commission. The Government declared, two weeks ago, a State of Emergency in the country due to the unprecedented flooding.

"We are, in fact, talking about one of the worst floods since 1988, when one million houses were damaged or destroyed. We are assisting thousands of people, but the rains will probably continue, and the number of people affected could further increase over the coming days," said Paola Emerson, Head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Sudan.

Since the beginning of the season in July, aid organizations, in support of the Transitional Civilian Government of Sudan, provided emergency shelter and household items such as kitchen utensils to more than 150,000 people who have lost everything when their houses collapsed or were washed away by floodwater. Humanitarians have also provided health services to over 200,000 people affected by the storms and critical support on water and sanitation to over 350,000.

The quick response has been possible as UN agencies and partners, with support of its donors, prepositioned supplies to meet the most immediate needs of 250,000 people before the rains started. But the numbers exceeded all forecasts and Government and humanitarians are now in a race against time to mobilize more funds and supplies to continue the operation. "The Government is responding, and donors are coming forward. Civil society organizations are also supporting people who are in dire need of assistance. But Sudan was already facing a very difficult situation before the rains and the floods increased the need of assistance," said Ms. Emerson.

The crisis will not be over when the rains stop, and the full impact of the destruction will be felt in the months ahead. Thousands of farms have been damaged in the middle of the agricultural season, compromising the harvest and the food security of thousands of families.

Access to clean water, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been compromised. “Nearly 16,000 latrines were destroyed and the collapse of the Bout Dam hampers access to water to more than 100,000 people in Blue Nile alone,” warned the Head of OCHA Sudan.

Extreme weather events are a reality in the region and affect Sudan year after year. “But these shocks are becoming more frequent and unpredictable. We connect droughts with floods and this year we had the locust infestation in several countries in Eastern Africa,” said Ms. Emerson. Humanitarian organizations in Sudan are increasing operations and the support from donors is impressive. But the Humanitarian Response Plan remains underfunded. “We only received 15 per cent of the US\$110 million requested for health services. This is less than half of the total received last year, when we didn’t have a COVID-19 pandemic,” said Ms. Emerson.

The funding for water, sanitation and hygiene services, critical for COVID and floods response is also extremely low, less than 22 per cent of the total required. “If we don’t receive more support soon, we will not be able to continue our work. It means that fewer people will receive medical attention or have access to clean water and sanitation services to prevent diseases. We are running out of stocks. More is urgently needed to ensure that we do not fall short at this critical moment for the people of Sudan,” finalized Paola Emerson.

\*\*\*

**Note to editors:**

Additional information on the humanitarian consequences of floods in Sudan can be found [here](#).

**For further information and interview requests, please contact OCHA Sudan:**

Saviano Abreu: +249 912 174 454 | WhatsApp: +34 628 498 279 | [deabreuisidoro@un.org](mailto:deabreuisidoro@un.org)