Statement attributable to the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Ms. Marta Ruedas, on Sudan opening a new humanitarian corridor for food aid into famine-struck South Sudan

Khartoum, 26 March 2017. The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan, Ms. Marta Ruedas, today welcomed the decision by the Government of Sudan to open a new humanitarian corridor for food aid to be delivered by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) from El Obeid in central Sudan to Bentiu, a town in Unity State, South Sudan, where 100,000 people are enduring famine amid a deepening humanitarian crisis across the country.

“By opening this cross-border corridor, the Government of Sudan is showing its commitment to the people of South Sudan and further strengthening cooperation with the international community to pull South Sudan back from a widening famine that could affect another 1 million people,” said Ms. Ruedas. “This decision also comes at a critical time just before South Sudan’s rainy season, which starts in May and usually renders these roads impassable.”

This week, WFP will be moving an initial delivery of 11,000 metric tons of sorghum – including 1,000 metric tons donated by the Government of Sudan - in seven convoys of 30 to 40 trucks, which is enough to feed 300,000 people for three months. The convoys will take up to four days to complete the 500km journey. The humanitarian corridor will not only allow for the timely delivery of the food aid, but will also help reduce reliance on air operations, which cost six to seven times as much as moving food by river and road.

At least 7.5 million people across South Sudan – almost two thirds of the population – need humanitarian assistance. Sudan is also currently hosting over 350,000 South Sudanese refugees, who have arrived since the conflict erupted in December 2013.

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