Humanitarian community appeals for $1.3 billion to assist 5.1 million people in need

The South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2016, which was officially launched on 19 January in Juba, requests US$1.3 billion to respond to the most life-threatening needs of 5.1 million people across the country. A total of 114 humanitarian organizations, including international and national NGOs and UN agencies, will implement projects that are in the HRP.

Speaking at the launch of the plan, the Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, Eugene Owusu, said: “We are in a race against time to ensure that the most desperate and vulnerable across South Sudan are reached with lifesaving protection and assistance before it is too late. Together we can quite literally save millions of lives and livelihoods.”

The launch brought together authorities, humanitarian partners and the media.

Hon. Gatwech Peter Kulang, Executive Director of the Relief Organisation for South Sudan (ROSS), said: “The HRP 2016 has clearly demonstrated the depth of the humanitarian crisis in the country, including what is expected in the coming years.”

Hon. Prof. Lokulenge Lole Timayo, Chairman of the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), said: “The spirit in which this document was produced was genuine and researched and therefore we feel it represents a good picture of what is going on in our country.” He also commended the cooperation between humanitarian partners and the Government and said he hoped this would continue as the response plan was translated into action on the ground.

Mr. Owusu emphasized the need for a conducive operating environment as a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the HRP, noting that, in 2015, humanitarian partners had to suspend operations and withdraw staff from locations when fighting erupted; offices, vehicles and vital facilities were attacked and looted; and humanitarian staff were threatened and killed. At least 43 humanitarian workers have been killed since December 2013.
ROSS and RCC pledged to work to create an enabling environment and improved access for humanitarian workers to deliver assistance to people in need in their areas of influence.

“We regret the death of many of our humanitarian workers, and most of them are South Sudanese incidentally, and therefore we would want to see to it that that should not happen,” Prof. Timayo said.

Appreciating the presence of both RRC and ROSS at the HRP launch, Mr. Owusu stressed the importance of building wider ownership and partnership across all sectors to address humanitarian challenges, saying: “It is important that we ensure and maintain consistent and constructive dialogue that is not premised on apportioning blame but rather on seeking innovative and creative solutions.”

Mr. Owusu noted that humanitarian partners have worked tirelessly to reach people in need, despite the dangerous and difficult operating environment, delivering life-saving assistance and protection to more than 4.4 million people in South Sudan by November 2015, including in some of the most remote locations.

Read more: Humanitarian community appeals for $1.3 billion to assist 5.1 million people in need -- http://bit.ly/1NjgIPV

Funds are urgently needed to address the most pressing needs of vulnerable people in South Sudan.

Aid reaches thousands of people in Leer County

Humanitarian assistance is reaching people in need in Leer County, southern Unity, following the return of inter-agency teams of aid workers to Leer town and Thonyor in the first week of December 2015.

The teams have distributed survival kits - containing critical household items, such as mosquito nets and kitchen sets, fishing kits and other supplies - which will assist more than 31,350 people. They have also conducted health consultations, repaired boreholes, and undertaken protection activities. Almost 3,500 women and girls have received dignity kits. More than 2,300 children under age 5 have been treated for severe acute malnutrition and more than 3,500 for moderate acute malnutrition. In addition, 840 pregnant or lactating women and more than 9,100 children under age 5 have been enrolled in supplementary feeding programmes.

In Thonyor, more than 4,500 children have been vaccinated against measles and polio. A child-friendly space has been set up and child protection actors are following up on cases of unaccompanied and separated children. In Leer, partners have treated and vaccinated cattle against livestock diseases and have registered unaccompanied and separated children for further assistance.

Humanitarian partners have provided food assistance in Leer County and neighbouring counties - including for 35,800 people in Dablual in Mayendit County, and over 18,500 people in Koch and Buaw and nearly 10,000 in Mir Mir, all in Koch County - and continue to expand life-saving assistance in areas throughout Leer County, including in Adok, Kok Island and Gandor.

Since fighting broke out in Unity in May 2015, humanitarian presence in Leer County has

Thousands of mostly women and children have received vital life-saving services since humanitarian partners returned to Leer and Thonyor.
“The humanitarian situation in Unity State is extremely worrying,” said Mr. Owusu. “Civilians in these areas have suffered tremendously and food insecurity and malnutrition are extremely high.”

Many people explained to aid workers on the ground that the last seven months had been among the worst of their lives.

In Leer County, many people explained to aid workers that the last seven months had been among the worst of their lives.

“Never before have people killed so randomly. Women, children, the elderly – it doesn’t make a difference to them. They rape, they abduct and they burn people in their tukuls,” Nyathep, 85, said. Nyathep’s daughter, husband and son-in-law were killed, leaving her alone with her 8-year-old granddaughter. Nyathep is unable to walk and crawled for over three hours with her granddaughter from her home to reach assistance at a registration centre set up by humanitarian partners in Thonyor.

Humanitarian Coordinator visit to Leer County

The Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan, Eugene Owusu, visited Leer Town and Thonyor on 6 January, accompanied by members of the humanitarian community, including representatives of UN entities, NGOs and donors.

“The humanitarian situation in Unity is extremely worrying,” said Mr. Owusu. “Civilians in these areas have suffered tremendously and food insecurity and malnutrition are extremely high.”

The delegation met with local authorities in both locations and expressed appreciation for the mutual cooperation that allowed the resumption of humanitarian operations.

“It is absolutely critical that the current stability be maintained so that we can continue to deliver life-saving aid in the months ahead,” said Mr. Owusu.

Read more: Humanitarian Coordinator visits Leer County following resumption of aid operations -- https://shar.es/16dPyi

Thousands displaced after clashes in Western Equatoria

Fresh fighting erupted in Yambio County on 21 January, forcing thousands of people to flee their homes, several thousand of whom have sought refuge at a humanitarian organisation’s premises.

This most recent round of fighting follows clashes which erupted in November 2015 and displaced some 30,000 people from Ezo, Tambura and Yambio counties in Western Equatoria. More than 15,000 people have fled across the border into the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda, including refugees who had been seeking protection in South Sudan. UNHCR reported that more than 8,000 people have been registered in Uganda since the beginning of January 2016.

A fact finding assessment in Yambio in December 2015 found that 325 houses had been
Some 30,000 people have been displaced in Western Equatoria State since November 2015 when fighting flared up.

Nearly a third of the malaria cases and 75 per cent of deaths reported in 2015 were of children under age 5.

Over 2 million malaria cases reported in 2015

In 2015, South Sudan experienced an unprecedented malaria outbreak, with nearly 2.28 million malaria cases and 1,340 deaths reported across the country. This was a sharp increase compared to 1.54 million cases and 718 deaths in 2014.

The outbreak in 2015 took a particularly harsh toll on children under age 5, who accounted for almost a third of the reported cases - nearly 896,500 - and 75 per cent of the deaths - about 1,010.

The number of cases in 2015 increased sharply compared to previous years. The outbreak was magnified by shortages of malaria drugs and diagnostic tests in several locations. The highest number of cases was reported in the latter half of the year as transmission increased with the onset of the rainy season in June and peaked from September to November. A Malaria Task Force formed in October 2015 to respond to the outbreak and partners have undertaken numerous activities including, larviciding and distribution of insecticide treated nets, as well as campaigns to identify and treat cases.

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