UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, VALERIE AMOS

REMARKS TO THE PRESS
JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN, 9 FEBRUARY 2015

As delivered

I am visiting South Sudan with UNESCO Special Envoy Forest Whitaker. We wanted to see for ourselves the day-to-day impact of the crisis of people caught in the middle of fighting.

Yesterday, we travelled to Ayod County in Jonglei State. People are desperate for peace. They are tired of living in fear. Many have had to flee several times. They are exhausted. They lack water; they are extremely worried for their children, who are not in school and at risk of being recruited into armed groups. Sexual violence is rife. All people want to live in safety, security and stability.

There is a woman, a child, a man behind every statistic and the numbers are large. 2.5 million people urgently need help with food.

We had an opportunity to discuss the humanitarian, economic and political situation with President Salva Kiir and his Ministers, and agreed on the importance of stopping the violence, securing an immediate and sustainable peace. It is also important to avert a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country. Thousands of children are suffering from malnutrition. The threat of hunger and disease is real.

I am very proud of the work of humanitarian organizations, who have shown extraordinary commitment, sometimes working in difficult and dangerous circumstances. 13 humanitarian workers have lost their lives since the conflict began. Many face the threat of kidnapping and have seen supplies and equipment looted. Despite this, they continue their life saving work.

Last year, aid organizations reached 3.6 million people. Thanks to the generosity of the international community who contributed $1.4 billion in humanitarian assistance, the humanitarian appeal for South Sudan was best funded appeal in the world.

My thanks also to the UNMISS team who have protected over 100,000 people in UNMISS bases.

We need to sustain this financial support to South Sudan. This year, humanitarian organizations aim to help 4.1 million people in 2015 and the cost of that is USD 1.8 billion dollars. If we
receive US$ 600 million of that by the end of February, we can take advantage of the dry season - which lasts until May - to reach more people in need and to pre-position supplies.

I would like to end my remarks by making a plea to those engaged in the conflict in South Sudan. It is heartrending to see the suffering of the people. This is a country rich in talent and resources. If this conflict continues, we will lose a generation of South Sudan’s children. If the economic stagnation is not addressed, development and support to essential sectors like health and education cannot be sustained. People need peace, stability and security.

Thank you.