Key Messages

1. The humanitarian situation in Mali remains extremely fragile. Close to three-quarters of a million people need immediate assistance now if we are to prevent a further deepening of the humanitarian crisis. The security situation in the north is volatile with on-going fighting and reports of human rights abuses. Since January some 65,000 people have fled, seeking safety elsewhere in Mali or across its borders. Nearly two-thirds of the 470,000 people displaced since March 2012 are in southern and central Mali, where they and the communities hosting them are still coping with the impact of last year’s regional food and nutrition crisis. Resources are overstretched and people urgently need support.

2. More than 177,000 people have fled into Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso, many taking their cattle with them. A further 10,000 people remain stranded near the Algerian border and need urgent aid. My thanks to neighbouring countries who have kept their borders open and welcomed Malians in distress. The national authorities and humanitarian organizations in those countries need help and funding to meet the critical needs of refugees and host communities alike.

3. Humanitarian workers need to be able to safely reach all the people in need in Mali, regardless of who or where they are. The dangerous security environment continues to make it especially difficult to reach people in rural areas in the north, slowing down critical lifesaving activities and limiting the ability of humanitarian organizations to prevent and monitor abuses of human rights. It is vital that all parties to the conflict abide by their obligations under International Humanitarian law to protect civilians from the impact of the fighting and from violations of human rights.

4. The political situation in Mali is complex. It is imperative that humanitarian response efforts remain separate from the broader political and security agendas. Failure to do so would compromise the acceptance that humanitarian organizations have been able to establish so far with parties to the conflict, and endanger aid operations and access to people in need.

5. The 2013 Humanitarian Plan asks for US$409.5 million to help Malians affected by the crisis. I ask donors to give urgently and generously so that agencies can deliver life-
saving aid, including vital security and de-mining measures, and support community recovery.

6. The lack of a political solution to the crisis in Mali threatens to reverse progress in the Sahel region. Even in years with good rains and crops, millions of people don’t have enough to eat in the Sahel. In 2013, 10.3 million people could go hungry, with 1.4 million children at risk of severe malnutrition. Governments, donors, humanitarian and development partners in the region must invest in community resilience programmes, so that we can reduce vulnerability to future crises.