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

STATEMENT ON BALKAN FLOODS

(New York/Geneva, 18 May 2014) I am very concerned by the devastating floods in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, which have so far claimed more than 35 lives and affected hundreds of thousands of people. Reportedly the worst floods in the Balkans in decades, emergency responders fear that more rain could lead to further rises in water levels, additional storm surges and landslides.

In all three countries, the Government is leading the flood response, distributing food and other relief supplies, and providing emergency shelter. A state of emergency has been declared in Serbia and Bosnia, where tens of thousands of people have been evacuated.

The United Nations and humanitarian partners have offered assistance to the authorities. I dispatched a UN Disaster Coordination and Assessment team to Serbia and life-saving supplies are on their way from Brindisi. Teams from the World Food Programme, the UN Refugee Agency, the UN Children’s Fund, the UN Development Programme and the International Organization for Migration are working with the authorities to help assess people’s needs and provide food, clean water and sanitation support and debris removal.

I welcome the speedy response by the national authorities and their partners and the support provided by neighbouring countries and other members of the international community. We must do all we can to ensure that further loss of life is prevented and help people recover.

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