UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN FUND ALLOCATES $5 MILLION FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN LIBYA

(New York, 2 March 2011): The United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos has allocated US$ 5 million dollars from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to kick-start emergency efforts to help people fleeing violence in Libya.

The funds will primarily go towards immediately scaling up humanitarian operations along the Libyan-Tunisian border. As of 1 March, up to 147,000 people had fled Libya to neighbouring countries Egypt, Tunisia and Niger. The vast majority of those crossing the border are immigrant workers seeking to escape the growing unrest and return to their countries of origin.

Of the huge numbers of people crossing the border daily many are arriving with nothing, and thousands have been left stranded, with immediate humanitarian needs for shelter, food and adequate water and sanitation facilities. There is also an urgent need to scale up the onward travel of nationals of these countries, as well as nationals from other countries such as Bangladesh, Somalia and Sudan, to help them reach their homes.

The United Nations and partners are already working closely with authorities in Egypt, Tunisia and Niger to meet basic needs and facilitate onward travel, but as the situation escalates it is evident that a much larger response is required.

The $5 million allocated by the ERC will be counted against the regional Flash Appeal for Libya, which will be released on Monday 7 March 2011.

CERF was established by the United Nations General Assembly five years ago this month to make funding for humanitarian emergencies faster and more equitable. Since then, more than 120 Member States and dozens private sector donors have pledged some $2.3 billion to the Fund, which is managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In the first five years of operation, CERF has allocated nearly $2 billion for humanitarian agencies operating in some 80 countries.