

September 10, 2003

Statement from the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. J. Victor Angelo

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As a result of the current food shortages and the decreased capacity to provide essential social services, the Government of Zimbabwe, in partnership with the United Nations, appealed to the international community for humanitarian assistance during the period of 2003/04.

The UN recognizes the challenging environment the country faces in the delivery of social services, and will continue its support in mobilizing the international community around key humanitarian and recovery priorities, which have been identified together with the Government. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator also recognizes the continued collaborative efforts over the last year between the UN, the international community, the NGOs and the Government, so that the humanitarian requirements of the most vulnerable members of the country can be met.

In preparation for the implementation of the new Co-ordinated Appeal 2003/04, a defining meeting was held last week between the Government and a UN delegation. Both Government and the UN concurred that the design and the implementation of humanitarian assistance to Zimbabwe will correspond with internationally accepted and endorsed charters and conventions, in order to ensure that the assistance is credible, inclusive and transparent.

Humanitarian assistance will be directed solely by needs, and priority will be given to the most vulnerable. NGOs, in partnership with communities and their local structures, will be responsible for the selection of beneficiaries.

All parties will recognize the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian assistance.

The Government of Zimbabwe is responsible for creating conditions conducive to the safe and secure implementation of humanitarian activities and the protection of humanitarian staff throughout the country. This includes the security of all humanitarian personnel (national and international) as well as assets belonging to humanitarian agencies.

The Government confirmed the need for continued consultative meetings with all stakeholders, in order to ensure the effective implementation of humanitarian assistance. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator will continue his consultations on strengthening appropriate monitoring of humanitarian assistance across the country.

The Government issued on August 14, 2003 a policy paper on the operations of NGOs with the intention to improve on the shortcomings, which were experienced in the humanitarian and recovery programmes in 2002/03. The

Government has assured the UN that the new policy will not interfere with humanitarian operations over the coming year.

In order to ensure efficient and equitable distribution of relief items, distributions will be carried out by humanitarian agencies and organizations, in line with the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between the Government and WFP, and other relevant MOU's signed with implementing partners.

*Harare, September 10, 2003*