



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

---

PRESS RELEASE

**US\$ 269,600 NEEDED FOR FLOODS PREPAREDNESS IN TESO**

**(Kampala 16 June 2008):** The humanitarian community in Uganda has today launched an appeal for US\$ 269,600 to facilitate increased disaster preparedness in flood-prone areas of eastern Uganda.

“In calling for this money now, we are demonstrating our commitment to reduce the effects that future flooding and water-logging could have on vulnerable communities,” said Timothy Pitt, Head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) in Uganda. “A relatively small investment now can do more to save lives and protect property than larger sums once disaster strikes as it did last year.”

While the Ugandan Meteorological Department’s seasonal forecast for the period June to August predicts near normal rainfall levels for the Teso and Bugisu regions, international forecasters are continuing to predict a 40 per cent chance of above normal-levels of precipitation for the period September to November 2008. If such heavy rains as were experienced in 2007 were to recur, flooding and water-logging – with their negative impact on an already vulnerable population – will again wreak havoc on eastern Uganda.

To minimize this risk, the humanitarian community is seeking US\$ 269,600 for several high-impact projects that can be effectively implemented in the flood-prone areas of eastern Uganda prior the high-risk period starting in late August 2008. Developed in conjunction with district local authorities in the affected areas, these projects are designed to:

- **Strengthen District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs)** in at-risk areas through trainings on disaster risk reduction;
- **Increase community awareness** of potential disaster risks through public education and information campaigns; and
- **Reinforce infrastructure** in high-risk areas, including through rehabilitation of critical or alternative bridges and roads and supporting district governments to improve access to local communities through road rehabilitation..
- Develop a **comprehensive and inclusive contingency plan** for disaster response, incorporating lessons learnt from the 2007 floods disaster.

Today’s appeal is part of a wider Floods Disaster Preparedness Plan that envisages the installation of an early warning system based on Internet and Radio Technology (RANET). An additional US\$ 676,728 will be required over three years (2008-2010) for the establishment of the RANET network of 15 stations to monitor weather and climate trends in the Kyoga Basin.

The majority of projects will be implemented in the Teso sub-region – the area worst-affected by the 2007 flooding in which an estimated 50,000 households suffered damage to or the loss of their homes and/or means of livelihood following unusually heavy rainfall between July and November. In the most affected areas, the hardest hit household lost 90 per cent of their first season crops, while a prolonged dry spell has withered many crops planted in the delayed second season in the fields. Some projects in Pader District have also been proposed.

The 2007 floods underscored the need for a more rigorous flood early warning monitoring system and the need for better disaster preparedness and mitigation throughout at-risk areas of Uganda. The Plan complements the comprehensive national contingency plan for floods which is expected to be developed under the auspices of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, under the Government’s leadership. The humanitarian community in Uganda has offered support to facilitate the contingency planning exercise, which is expected to be finalized before mid-July 2008.

Partners involved in the Floods Disaster Preparedness Plan launched today include district authorities in the areas of implementation, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the non-governmental organizations Oxfam, Concern Worldwide and Medair and local faith-based and relief organizations such as SOCADIDO, TEDO and ECO, as well as the Uganda Red Cross Society.

**For more information, please contact:**

*Kristen Knutson, Public Information and Donor Liaison Office, OCHA Uganda: +256 772 759996 (mobile), +256 312 244 888 (office), [knutson@un.org](mailto:knutson@un.org); or Denis Okello, National Information Officer, OCHA Uganda: +256 772 749857 (mobile), +256 312 244 840 (office), [okellod@un.org](mailto:okellod@un.org).*