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PRESS RELEASE

Inter-Agency Mission in the western Côte d'Ivoire; more than 16,000 internally displaced persons

Abidjan, 10 January 2011... Under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Ndolamb Ngokwey, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) composed of non-governmental organizations and UN Agencies, went to Duékoué, Man and Danané from 8 to 9 January 2011.

The aim of the mission was to assess and provide further support to actions already being carried out by different humanitarian actors and establish a mechanism which will give members of the HCT access to vulnerable and affected groups and deliver an emergency response, without delay, in a coordinated manner.

From 16 December 2010 to 9 January 2011, more than 16,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), of whom the majority are children and pregnant and lactating women were forced to leave their villages and take refuge in Duékoué, Man and Danané. Human casualties and the loss of property are to be deplored, particularly in Duékoué.

The delegation met with local civilian and military authorities, traditional chiefs, religious leaders, as well as civil society organizations and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The Humanitarian Coordinator reminded local authorities met by the delegation, of the need to ensure the protection of civilians as well as compliance with human rights standards and to facilitate access to humanitarian emergency aid by the affected population.

The mission enabled the UN Agencies and the NGOs to have a clearer idea of the living conditions and needs of the IDPs. The areas identified as requiring immediate emergency assistance were health, nutrition, shelter, protection and social cohesion.

During the mission, a supply of medicines and non-food items were handed over to the Catholic Mission of Duékoué, which is providing shelter for thousands of IDPs. Local authorities made a commitment to grant access and provide security to humanitarian actors in order to ensure that vulnerable and affected people benefit from the emergency humanitarian aid.

According to the Humanitarian Coordinator: *“No-one can remain indifferent to this human suffering. Together we all have the duty and the obligation to take action in a coordinated manner for the benefit of the affected and vulnerable people immediately».*

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