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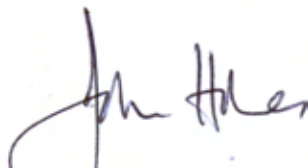
OCHA
UNSCO (gaza)

Note to the Secretary-General

Post-Conflict Assessments in Gaza ✓



1. Your office asked for a brief note on this.
2. As soon as a ceasefire is fully in place, we will want to work rapidly to assess the immediate humanitarian needs, to identify and fill the immediate humanitarian gaps, and to restore basic services as far as possible. At the same time we will need to begin the parallel assessment of recovery and reconstruction needs. Planning for all this is well underway, including the key UN agencies, notably UNRWA and UNDP, and fully involving the World Bank and others on the recovery and reconstruction side. We are also working on this with key donors, including the EU, US and Norway. As soon as the circumstances allow, we will want to send teams into Gaza to begin all this work quickly. We will also start to mobilize resources as necessary, including through international conferences devoted to recovery and reconstruction.
3. At this stage we cannot put any kind of reliable figures on the extent of the destruction or the cost of reconstruction, but it is already evident that reconstruction will be a major, long-term task, costing billions of dollars. Donors will also want to be sure that their efforts will not (once again) be wasted by further fighting in the future.
4. In all this, we need to bear in mind that access to and within Gaza may remain severely limited for quite some time. Even if an immediate ceasefire is agreed upon, it is unlikely that Israeli troops will fully withdraw from the Strip. They will continue to impose a series of restrictions on movements within Gaza. Restrictions on access of staff and goods to Gaza, which were imposed during the eighteen-month truce, are also likely to be maintained, at least partially. So expectations of instant results need to be kept in check.
5. The security situation may also remain volatile for weeks. In these conditions, it is not clear how many UN international staff will be allowed in Gaza by UNDSS (the current threshold is 10). The deployment of assessments missions and additional staff to the region, if required, will therefore need to be carefully coordinated. We may also need to try to control the likely influx of high-level visitors.
6. There are of course already thousands of UN staff in Gaza and Jerusalem, the vast majority from UNRWA. WFP, UNICEF and UNDP are also fully present. There is a strong OCHA office in Jerusalem, with a field presence in Gaza. These teams have not only been responding to the latest crisis since it started but, despite the chaotic circumstances and very limited access, have begun to carry out preliminary assessments and response activities on a daily basis. The decision to increase the Consolidated Appeal to 526 million was taken on the basis of these assessments.


John Holmes
12 January 2009

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cc: Mr. Dervis,
Mr. Pascoe,
Ms. Abu-Zayd,
Ms. Sheeran,
Ms. Veneman,
Mr. Veness

Note to Mr. Nambiar



Please find enclosed a Note to the Secretary-General on Gaza.

Many thanks.

John Holmes
12 January 2009