

COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

UNICEF mobilizes staff and supplies to respond to the humanitarian needs caused by the unrest in Libya

NEW YORK/TUNISIA, 2 March 2011 - As concern mounts over the influx of returnees and migrant workers to Tunisia, UNICEF is mobilizing staff and relief supplies to the western and eastern borders of Libya.

UNICEF Director of Emergency Operations, Mr. Louis-Georges Arsenault arrived Wednesday in Tunisia to meet with government authorities, UN agencies and the National Red Crescent to discuss the humanitarian needs resulting from the unrest in Libya.

UNICEF Charter flights are expected to reach the two neighboring capitals in the coming days with over 160 metric tons of supplies to address immediate humanitarian needs on the Egyptian and Tunisian borders, and are being pre-positioned for a possible response within Libya.

Initial supplies, including hygiene kits, nutrition items and recreation and psycho-social relief items have been given priority. While numbers of families crossing the border into Tunisia are reported as relatively low to date, UNICEF is concerned that within Libya, children and women have been severely affected by the unrest.

Mr Arsenault will travel to Ras Jdir, on the Tunisia – Libya border on Wednesday to meet with people who have fled the unrest in Libya. He will also meet with aid officials and local authorities to discuss the needs of those at the Tunisian border.

UNICEF today issued an Immediate Needs Document requesting \$7.2 million to address the urgent needs of children and women affected by the crisis in Libya. This document will feed into the Inter-Agency flash appeal due in the coming days.

The appeal for funding comes as UNICEF moves to scale up operations with staff already deployed to the border regions of Tunisia and Egypt to assess the needs of returnees and migrant workers fleeing civil unrest in Libya. On both borders UNICEF is working in support of UNHCR, IOM, and in collaboration with Egyptian and Tunisian Red Crescent Societies.

About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org

For Further information please contact:

Najwa Mekki, UNICEF Tunisia, Tel: + 216-98-349-142, nmekki@unicef.org

Tania McBride, UNICEF New York, Tel: +1 212 824 6949, tmcbride@unicef.org

