

CONCLUSION

The emergency is not over for the hundreds of thousands of people who have lost their home and personal assets, remain without access to clean water and sanitation services, wonder when their children can resume school, are anxious about the health risks represented by contaminated water and sediments, or simply need daily meals when their crops have been devastated or they have lost other sources of income

The prevention and mitigation of future disasters are most important, as is the planning for early reconstruction, but unless the immediate daily needs of people are being addressed in a sustained way, the human capital needed for reconstruction will have been further weakened, threatening the very recovery objective of getting the country back on its feet. This message must be heard loud and clear by the international community.

The UN System in Honduras is making a major contribution to emergency relief, and also to the preparation stage for reconstruction. Through their swift and well coordinated immediate response, agencies of the System must take credit for saving many lives and reducing the pain and hardship for tens of thousands of other victims. Their concerted efforts continue in the protracted emergency phase and in the preparation of the recovery phase.

There are many lessons to be learned from this experience, only a few of which are referred to in this note, but if only one has to be retained, it is the importance for UN System agencies to work closely together with unity of purpose towards the goal of assisting the people of Honduras overcome this emergency phase and prepare for a better future. Any improvement of in-country coordination mechanisms and those for interaction with outside partners will represent an important contribution towards that goal.