

News Release

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EC GIVES €3 MILLION TO WFP'S GLOBAL NETWORK OF LIFE-SAVING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE DEPOTS

Brussels – The United Nations World Food Programme today welcomed a €3 million contribution from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) aimed at strengthening the globe-straddling network of five Humanitarian Response Depots that WFP manages on behalf of the humanitarian community.

“Commission support to the network of Humanitarian Response Depots is a concrete measure to put into action our ambition to reach people in need faster and with the right kind of help in order to save as many lives as possible,” said Louis Michel, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid. “It will also strengthen the cooperation between different humanitarian actors such as non-governmental organisations and the United Nations.”

“It means that, at the onset of an emergency, relief items can be deployed to the theatre of operations using the fastest means possible.”

Humanitarian Response Depots (HRDs) are the cornerstones of a world-wide global response system that pre-positions strategic reserves in five key locations: Accra in Ghana, Brindisi in Italy, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, Panama City in Panama and Subang in Malaysia.

The depots hold basic supplies (food, shelter, medical kits) and operational support equipment including prefabricated offices and living accommodation, communications gear, logistical items and the like.

“The HRD network enables the humanitarian community to coordinate the immediate delivery of relief aid quickly, cheaply and efficiently,” said John Powell, WFP’s Deputy Executive Director for Fundraising and Communications. “ECHO’s partnership in this WFP initiative illustrates our shared commitment to establish a predictable and robust capacity to respond to crises wherever they occur.”

The EC's aid will fund the strengthening of the depot network and the pre-positioning of logistical supplies and relief items at all depots, with a particular emphasis on Dubai.

In addition to the Commission's support, WFP has so far received donations for the UNHRD network from: UAE (US\$5 million); Ireland (US\$1 million); France (US\$700,000); Australia (US\$400,000) and multilateral funds (US\$2.7 million). Sweden has deployed staff and Italy, which participated in the founding of the network, continues to render assistance with long-term support to the Brindisi depot.

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For more information please contact (email address: firstname.lastname@wfp.org):

Brenda Barton, Deputy Director Communications, WFP/Rome, Tel. +39-06-65132602, Cell. +39-3472582217 (ISDN line available)

Gregory Barrow, WFP/London, Tel. +44-20-72409001, Cell. +44-7968-008474

Christiane Berthiaume, WFP/Geneva, Tel. +41-22-9178564, Cell. +41-792857304

Vichi de Marchi, WFP/Rome, Tel. +39 06 6513 2058, Cell. +39 348-0517605

Jennifer Parmelee, WFP/Washington, Tel. +1-202-6530010 ext. 1149, Cell. +1-202-4223383

Bettina Luescher, WFP/New York, Tel. +1-212-9635196, Cell. +1-646-8241112,

luescher@un.org