

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**April 2009**

### **UK pledges immediate £15m humanitarian support for Zimbabwe**

A £15m package to help the people of Zimbabwe was announced by International Development Secretary Douglas Alexander today.

This critical humanitarian aid will mean increased support for the country's health system, greater access to clean water and more support for struggling farmers in Zimbabwe.

The package will help address a number of urgent priorities identified by Zimbabwe's new Inclusive Government and builds on existing UK support, which amounted to £49m last year.

This UK assistance will help to:

- strengthen distribution systems for front-line health clinics with improved access to life-saving medication and basic health care for vulnerable people;
- improve capacity to respond to future health epidemics;
- reduce the likelihood of large-scale cholera outbreaks in the future by ensuring greater access to clean water;
- improve the supply and availability of food for up to 3 million people by providing seeds and fertilizer, and boosting smallholder farming, thereby reducing reliance on emergency food aid;
- support the welfare of people who have been forced to leave their homes;
- strengthen the capacity of national systems which provide essential basic services.

International Development Secretary Douglas Alexander said:

"The welfare of the people of Zimbabwe remains a major concern, with the humanitarian situation continuing to cause great hardship for millions.

"The creation of a more inclusive Government represents a real opportunity for much-needed change. We welcome efforts by the new Government to deliver economic, social and political reform. Credible progress will attract increasing support from donors and other partners to tackle the root causes of Zimbabwe's problems.

"The UK remains committed to providing humanitarian support, which is why I am announcing £15m in additional assistance to ensure that people have food to eat, and access to life-saving health services."

### **Note to Editors (To be added)**

1. The Inclusive Government came into being in February 2009, with the appointment of Morgan Tsvangirai as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe.
2. The new Government has published a Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme for Zimbabwe (STERP) which highlights priorities in terms of improving food security, tackling disease and strengthening health systems, addressing water and sanitation problems and improving capacity to provide basic services to the people of Zimbabwe. This package is aimed at supporting these Government priorities.
3. No UK money will pass through Government of Zimbabwe systems or through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.
4. The UK provided £49m towards humanitarian and other essential support in 2008/09. We expect to provide a similar amount in FY 2009/10, although this amount may be revised upwards as the new government of Zimbabwe demonstrates its commitment to democratic governance, the rule of law and sound economic reform.
5. UK assistance is provided and used alongside other international donors.