

## **FLOODING IN PAKISTAN: HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL LAUNCHES FUNDRAISING APPEAL IN THE MIDDLE OF AUGUST**

*Lyon, France, 12 August 2010* – For the past two weeks, the Pakistani population has been hit by dramatic flooding which has claimed almost 14 million victims, destroyed 290,000 homes and claimed over 1,500 lives. Coinciding with the summer holidays, this unprecedented disaster has received little coverage. Because solidarity cannot be put aside for the holiday season, Handicap International has launched a fundraising appeal. Present in Pakistan since 2005, the organisation was able to take immediate action in aid of the country's most vulnerable people.

*"In January and the months following the terrible earthquake in Haiti, the relief effort in aid of the Haitian population was extraordinary,"* says Jean-Marc Boivin, director of Handicap International. *"It is vital that this succession of disasters and the holiday season do not blind us to the suffering of the Pakistani people. These floods are affecting millions of people and will have long-term humanitarian consequences, devastating entire regions. More than ever, we need to be present to help the most vulnerable people. That's why we need everyone's support"*.

On 2 August, Handicap International decided to release €100,000 in general funds to take immediate action and support its team of 200 people already active in Pakistan.

*"It's a major catastrophe, with almost 14 million victims,"* explains Stéphane Lobojois, Handicap International's head of mission in Pakistan. *"The flooding has destroyed many homes, around 290,000 in total, roughly the same number destroyed by the earthquake in Haiti last January. In some areas, our teams have to move around on foot to reach people in need."*

Handicap International's Emergency Response team is currently **distributing drinking water** in the northwest of the country, a key means of avoiding the spread of epidemics, and cholera in particular. Handicap International is also repairing water supply systems (pumps and water reservoirs) destroyed by flooding. The **distribution of emergency packs**\* enables families to process and store water, to wash and to cook. A **clear-up project** has also begun in the districts of Hangu, Swat and Kohat. Handicap International is involving local people in clearing up the waste and debris swept along by the floods, and removing stagnant water from towns, enabling the population to return and limiting the spread of disease.

Handicap International has built up **extensive expertise in crisis situations**, including in El Salvador and India (2001), Iran (2004), China (2008), Indonesia (2005 and 2009), Haiti (2010), and also in Pakistan (2005 and 2009). The organisation provides direct aid to the most severely affected victims. To ensure the most vulnerable people (the elderly, pregnant women and people with disabilities) are able to access responsive and sustainable aid, Handicap International is currently setting up a number of Disability and Vulnerable Focal Points, local facilities located close to centres of population. These focal points help identify the most vulnerable people and offer care, walking aids and emergency packs according to need.

\* 3,000 hygiene packs (soap, bath towels, toothpaste, cotton wool, anti-mosquito items, etc.); 3,000 water treatment and storage packs (bucket, jerrycan, glasses, etc.); 1,000 cooking packs (saucepans, plates, etc.)

### **Support Handicap International**

#### **On-line**

[www.handicap-international.fr](http://www.handicap-international.fr)

#### **By post** (stamp at the current applicable rate)

Handicap International / Pakistan Emergency  
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