

# **Commemoration of the First World Humanitarian Day**

**19 August 2009**

## **United Nations Headquarters New York**

The sixty-third session of the General Assembly decided in December 2008 to designate 19 August, the date of the Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad in 2003, as World Humanitarian Day. This inaugural year, the focus will be primarily on commemorating those whose lives have been lost while engaged in humanitarian operations, but will also put emphasis on current humanitarian needs and challenges.

Information packages about the Day have been prepared and include a one-page leaflet, posters, key messages, Q&A about the Day, a narrative and summaries of information on the safety and security of humanitarian relief workers and on global humanitarian assistance trends in 2009. They have been disseminated widely through the networks of the UN Secretariat and on OCHA Online in six UN official languages. Two films, one sixty seconds in length and one thirty seconds in length and a longer version of these films featuring a message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will be released for global broadcast on 19 August. A video message from Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes is also available.

At the United Nations Headquarters in New York, an exhibition of posters and photographs capturing the images of humanitarian workers in action will be the background for the launch of the first World Humanitarian Day by the Secretary-General which will take place immediately following the wreath-laying ceremony organized by the Standing Committee on the Security and Independence of International Civil Service. A special event will be held at the Parc des Bastion in Geneva to commemorate the Day.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, 19 August 2009 at 10:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** General Assembly Building public lobby - South exhibition hall

**WHAT:** The Secretary-General will launch the first World Humanitarian Day

## **Proposed Programme**

10:33 a.m.

Chief of Communications Services Section in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Oliver Lacey-Hall will serve as a moderator and ask the participants to move from the meditation room after the wreath-laying ceremony to the South exhibition hall

10:35 a.m

Assistant-Secretary-General Catherine Bragg, as the senior Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs representative will make opening remarks

10:38 a.m

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will make a statement to launch the first World Humanitarian Day

10:41 a.m

A 60 second film will be shown

10:42 a.m

Assistant-Secretary-General Catherine Bragg will make closing remarks and announce that the 3 minute film with the Secretary-General's messages will be shown throughout the day in the public lobby

10:43 a.m

Ceremony closes