**Statement by Mr. Mark Cutts, Director, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**

**at the International Donor Conference for Reconstruction and Development in Darfur**

**Doha (7-8 April 2013)**

Your Excellency Deputy Prime Minister,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Looking back over the last ten years in Darfur, it is clear that the focus of the international community has been primarily on humanitarian needs and peacekeeping, rather than on tackling longer-term development issues and the underlying causes of conflict. This conference provides a much needed opportunity to start a new chapter in Darfur, with far greater focus on recovery, reconstruction and development.

But it would be a mistake to think that development activities alone can resolve all of Darfur’s problems. With over a million displaced people still in camps – many of them with little prospect of returning to their places of origin in the immediate future due to continued insecurity and the occupation of their land by other groups – and with inter-tribal fighting and armed conflict continuing to displace people in parts of Darfur, it is clear that the humanitarian and peacekeeping challenges in Darfur remain enormous. We must continue to provide life-saving humanitarian support to the most vulnerable, including malnourished children, elderly people, and the many girls and boys, women and men who are most at risk.

The twin challenges we face, of meeting immediate humanitarian needs while laying the foundations for a secure, peaceful and prosperous Darfur, are not mutually exclusive. Humanitarian response must take place in the context of a sustained search for durable solutions, while development activities must – as the Darfur Development Strategy recognises – be firmly rooted in the reality of the current situation on the ground. This conference provides us with a unique opportunity to meet these challenges head on and to ensure that Darfur’s problems are tackled together by humanitarian and development actors in a coordinated and collaborative manner, with strong leadership from the Government of Sudan.

We have been feeding displaced people in camps for ten years. Unless we see greater cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, we may easily find ourselves spending more money on providing hand-outs to people in camps for the next ten years. If we are serious about finding durable solutions for displaced people, we need closer collaboration with the Darfur Regional Authority, State authorities and development actors, including experts in the fields of urban planning, urbanization, pastoralism, land rights, and environmental issues.

The recent IDP conference in Nyala provided an excellent opportunity for displaced people to voice their concerns and to participate in discussions on how to resolve problems of continued displacement. I would like to congratulate the DRA, and particularly the Voluntary Returns and Resettlement Commission, for organizing that conference. It provided a much needed platform for dialogue, confidence-building and reconciliation. We must continue to support efforts like this to enhance dialogue between displaced people, Arab nomadic leaders, state authorities and civil society.

I would also like to welcome the commitments that have been made by the Government of Sudan to improve access for both humanitarian and development workers. Unrestricted access is vital if we are to make real progress in addressing the multiple humanitarian, reconstruction and development challenges in Darfur.

Finally, I would like to commend the State of Qatar for its role in organizing this conference and bringing together donors, humanitarian and development organizations from around the world. Our aim now must be to work together with the Government of Sudan and the people of Darfur to ensure that the next ten years are characterized not by a continuation of large scale humanitarian need and aid dependency, but by recovery, development and increasing prosperity.