



## **ASIA/PAKISTAN - Using solidarity to fight radicalism; UN makes appeal**

Islamabad (Agenzia Fides) – In order to face all the problems associated with the vast relief operation taking place amidst the floods in Pakistan - the fatigue in aid, corruption, discrimination, opportunism of Islamic fundamentalist groups - "further effort in international solidarity is needed," Fides was told by Fr. Mario Rodriguez, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Pakistan. "We are in need of all the help we can get for emergency relief and rehabilitation. Now it looks as if the season of autumn sowing will also be lost, resulting in severe suffering for the population. The agricultural economy of the country is on its knees and this will lead to food insecurity, hunger for millions of people," says the priest.

There is also an urgent need for efforts from the international community and donors "in order to combat the opportunism of extremist Islamic groups that are dedicating themselves to works of charity and assistance of IDPs (see Fides 16/9/2010). If these groups are given the chance to remedy the lack of government aid, they will become even stronger," warns Fr. Rodrigues.

"We cannot abandon millions of our brothers in difficulty and in the direst poverty to themselves. The number of problems in the operations of humanitarian assistance cannot become an excuse for being selfish and forgetting about solidarity," reiterates Fr. Paolo Cristiano, a priest of the Community of Sant'Egidio who recently returned from an aid mission in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the United Nations yesterday launched a fresh appeal for the country, requesting \$2.1 billion to meet the needs of more than 15 million displaced people, said Valerie Amos, Secretary General Adjunct for Humanitarian Affairs, following a mission in Pakistan.

International aid, including 483 projects of the United Nations, the Organization for Migration (IOM), and 156 international and local NGOs, will be sent to the following areas: agriculture, management and coordination of refugee camps, food and water supply, tents, rehabilitation of communities, education, healthcare, and logistics. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 18/09/2010)