STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE REVISED PAKISTAN FLOODS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN ON SEPTEMBER 17, 2010

Mr. Secretary General,
Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs,
My distinguished colleague, H.E. the Permanent Representative of Pakistan

Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. Secretary General, for convening this meeting for the launch of the ‘Revised Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan’.

Pakistan has been severely affected by the massive floods and the humanitarian catastrophe continues to unfold. The extent of devastation is unprecedented in its geographical spread and around 21 million people are still adversely affected. There has been extensive damage to crops, live stock and infrastructure. The challenge is particularly enormous as 80% of the floods-affected population is dependent on agriculture for its livelihood.

We applaud and support the good work done by the UN agencies, the international community, the NGOs and the civil society present in the field. Their role has been critical in bringing much-needed relief and succour to the vulnerable population. I am happy to note that the UN agencies are ramping up complimentary programmes such as emergency food and nutritional assistance, distribution of agricultural inputs, rehabilitation of damaged lands and infrastructure and micro financing.

Mr. Secretary General,

India is familiar with the consequences of natural disasters and therefore understands very well the trauma and the suffering that our Pakistani brethren are going through.

We cannot remain unconcerned with this grave humanitarian crisis of enormous magnitude in our immediate neighbourhood. As a member of the international
community and more significantly as a close neighbour, India recognizes its responsibility to support Pakistan.

Our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Foreign Minister Mr. S.M. Krishna have spoken to their counterparts in Pakistan and offered assistance.

Earlier today I had the honour to hand over to you Mr. Secretary General in the presence of H.E. the Permanent Representative of Pakistan a cheque for US $ 20 Million for the UN’s Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan. A further US $ 5 million is being contributed by the Government of India to the World Food Programme for its relief efforts in Pakistan.

Natural disasters, Mr. Secretary General, know no boundaries. This contribution is a small but significant gesture from the highest levels of the Indian Government conveying the message that the people of India stand by the people of Pakistan in their hour of need. We are committed to assisting the people of Pakistan in all possible ways in these difficult times.

Mr. Secretary General,

I have no doubt that the people of Pakistan have the strength and resilience to overcome this natural disaster. However, the magnitude of the tragedy makes it incumbent on the international community to pool its energies and resources and to assist Pakistan in its efforts to rebuild and rehabilitate the devastated region. Generous support from the international community to the ‘Revised Pakistan Floods Emergency Response Plan’ would be critical in providing necessary impetus to ongoing relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Thank you.