<u>OCHA OPERATIONS DIRECTOR WELCOMES POSITIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT OF ERITREA</u>

(Asmara/New York, 31 July 2013):   Returning to New York after a two-day visit to Eritrea, OCHA Operations Director John Ging has welcomed improving cooperation between the United Nations and the Government amidst concerns over the impact of delayed rains on food insecurity.

"UN agencies are working with the Government to help the Eritrean people to help themselves," said Mr. Ging. "Building resilience and self-reliance is our shared top priority."

In January 2013, the UN and the Government of Eritrea signed a new three-year Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework, paving the way for renewed joint efforts to improve food security and nutrition, expand access to health care and clean water, and strengthen the resilience of communities to better cope with disasters such as droughts.

During his visit, Mr. Ging met the Minister of National Development, Dr. Giorgish Teeklemichael; the Political Advisor to the President, Mr. Yemani Gebreab; and humanitarian partners and representatives of the donor community, to discuss progress in implementing the Framework, as well as next steps. He expressed his satisfaction that the constructive dialogue and partnership is yielding positive results.

"Eritrea continues to make impressive progress towards achieving several Millennium Development Goals," noted Mr. Ging. "But the Government also recognizes the challenges that lie ahead. The delayed rains this year are a pressing reminder of the difficult climactic conditions faced by the Eritrean people. We are committed to working with the Government in support of their goal to halve hunger by 2015."

The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.