

I speak on behalf of Switzerland and Brazil, co-penholders of the Syrian humanitarian file. We thank Deputy Special Envoy Najat Rochdi and Director of OCHA's Operation and Advocacy Division Edem Wosornu for their briefings. We also welcome the participation of Syria, Türkiye, and Iran in today's meeting.

In the midst of conflict and crisis in the Near East, we must not forget the people in Syria. After more than a decade of conflict, the humanitarian situation remains dire. Half the Syrian population is displaced, and needs have reached unprecedented proportions. In recent months, the country's food and water crisis has worsened. This, combined with persistent socio-economic decline, is driving more people into deeper poverty and severely straining their coping mechanisms.

The recent upsurge in violence and hostilities, notably in northwest Syria, the worst in years, has accentuated civilian suffering. It has displaced thousands and threatened the safety of vulnerable communities and aid workers. We are concerned about the increase of attacks on aid workers and recall that they are protected under international humanitarian law. The escalation of hostilities, including the repeated strikes on Damascus and Aleppo airports, have also impacted aid delivery. A long-lasting ceasefire according to resolution 2254 across the country is the only way to avoid further death, injury, displacement and human suffering.

We call on all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. This includes ensuring the rapid and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to all civilians in need throughout Syria, abiding by the international humanitarian law principles regarding the conduct of hostilities, particularly the prohibition of attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and ensuring the safety and protection of civilians. We condemn the recent shelling of displacement camps in the northwest, which have caused numerous civilian fatalities and injuries.

Mr President,

It is essential to maintain all aid modalities, including cross-border and cross-line, to ensure that humanitarian organizations can continue their indispensable work throughout Syria to reach people in need. The extension for the Bab Al-Salam and Al-Ra'ee crossings is welcome, as is the continued flow of vital humanitarian assistance through the three crossings, including Bab al-Hawa.

In northwestern Syria, 4.1 million people are in need of humanitarian support, 3.7 million are food insecure, 2.9 million are internally displaced, and 2 million are living in camps – the majority of whom are women and children. Their reliance on international assistance at this critical juncture is undeniable. We stress the need for stable and long-term arrangements to effectively address these escalating humanitarian needs. This would be facilitated by an extended and predictable duration of access authorizations.

The current UN Humanitarian Response Plan faces a significant funding shortfall. While we acknowledge recent additional pledges, it is concerning that only 33% of the required \$5.4 billion has been secured. Specifically, only 30% of the necessary funding for early recovery projects and livelihood activities has been secured so far. This funding gap hampers the ability of the United Nations and its partners to assist affected communities.

Regarding the protection needs, we echo the concerns raised on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women by OCHA's residents and regional coordinators. Gender-based violence remains a pervasive issue in Syria, encompassing physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, further aggravated by ongoing conflict, displacement, and economic crisis. We commend the UN's commitment to lead efforts to address gender-based violence in Syria, focusing on providing critical services to survivors, addressing root causes, and protecting the rights and well-being of women and girls.

We are grateful for OCHA's and all UN agencies' efforts in maintaining humanitarian operations under challenging conditions throughout the year. The Syrian people, who have endured so much suffering and trauma, especially children who have never known peace, need a chance for a better future. The Security Council must also play its part by continuing to work constructively to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria.