Background

1. On 16 September 2013, the IASC Emergency Directors met with the key donors to the Syria Crisis to discuss the humanitarian situation in Syria and in neighboring countries, and to consider how to make progress on key operational challenges. As agreed at their meeting in July 2012, Donors and Emergency Directors discussed (i) ways to ensure greater coherence in the efforts made by humanitarian organizations, development actors and international financial institutions, in addressing the needs of countries hosting Syrian refugees; (ii) how to make progress in unlocking new financial resources for the Syria crisis; and (iii) the measures currently put in place by humanitarian organizations to mitigate the risk of aid diversion in Syria. The meeting was hosted in Stockholm by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

2. In her opening remarks, Ms. Ann-Sofie Nilsson, Director General for International Development Cooperation, Government of Sweden, noted the continuing deterioration of the situation inside Syria with more than 100,000 killed, and 2 million refugees. She reiterated the need to find a political solution to the crisis. Ms. Nilsson also underscored that all parties must enable aid to reach all people in need, in full respect of international humanitarian law. Rising insecurity, bureaucratic restrictions, and criminality, were all making humanitarian access increasingly difficult. Ms. Nilsson noted that a “change of momentum” was needed to address access issues. She also highlighted the challenges being faced in countries neighboring Syria, including Iraq, to address the plight of refugees. She underscored the importance of humanitarian and development actors working together, to ensure that efforts build the resilience of refugees and host communities, and called for a push for comprehensive coordination in neighboring countries.

Update on the humanitarian situation in Syria and Neighbouring Countries

3. Due to telecommunication difficulties with Damascus, the briefing by Mr. Yacoub El Hillo, the RC/HC for Syria, could not take place as originally scheduled.

4. Mr. Amin Awad, Director of the UNHCR Regional Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa and Regional Refugee Coordinator, gave an overview of the refugee situation in neighboring countries, noting that the situation remains fluid and displacement continues. Over 2 million refugees have fled Syria, of whom 50% are female, and 1 million are children. UNHCR is making continuous efforts to address the backlog in registration, which is primarily an issue in Lebanon. Priorities continue to be access/open borders, sexual and gender based violence prevention, child protection and psychological support. Mr. Awad underscored that one of the challenges of the Syria refugee crisis is that 80% of refugees are not residing in camps. This makes assistance to host communities particularly important and the delivery of aid logistically complicated (for example, in Lebanon, refugees are dispersed across 1,400 localities). Mr. Awad also described UNHCR’s work

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1 Including some 737,000 to Lebanon, 522,000 to Jordan, 490,000 to Turkey, 180,000 to Iraq, 117,000 to Egypt and 14,289 to North Africa as of 12 September
in updating contingency planning and preparedness to serve as one of the standard emergency procedures. Efforts are underway to prepare the 2014 Refugee Response Plan (RRP6), including the undertaking of sectoral assessments, and coordination with Governments of the region and the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator to ensure synchronization with the SHARP.

**The Response to the Crisis in Neighboring Countries**

5. **Mr. Nigel Fisher, the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator**, highlighted the stress felt by host communities due to the refugee crisis, as well as the range of protection issues being faced by refugees. He noted the need to build resilience in affected communities and highlighted the concerns of host countries for their own social cohesion, security, stability and access to social services. Mr. Fisher stressed the need to support refugees and host communities in close collaboration with Governments, by placing emphasis on resilience, protection, education, the use of technology, environmental management and support to social services and infrastructure. He stated that these efforts went beyond humanitarian assistance and called for cohesion and complementarity between humanitarian, development, financing frameworks and bilateral support. He also noted that exceptional transparency was required, and coherence in the roles of implementing actors.

6. **Mr. Amin Awad, Director of the UNHCR Regional Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa and Regional Refugee Coordinator**, reiterated the importance of ensuring complementarity between humanitarian and development components of the response. He noted that UNHCR helps support host countries’ resilience on three levels: through provision of support for refugees residing in host communities; direct support for host communities; and working with municipalities. He highlighted the 4 September meeting bringing together the Foreign Ministers of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey hosted by UNHCR in preparation for the High-Level Segment of UNHCR’s Executive Committee on “Solidarity and Burden-Sharing with Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees,” to be held in Geneva on 30 September 2013. The High Level Segment will enable the international community to explore venues to fortify International solidarity and burden-sharing with host countries, including, increased opportunities for humanitarian resettlement, the opening of additional avenues of funding beyond traditional humanitarian sources. The High Level Segment will also look into providing additional development aid to the affected communities and emergency development needs of the host countries. The aim of these events is to promote awareness and solidarity with host countries in the region rather than as a pledging conference. It also aims to bringing attention to the plight of refugees.

7. **Mr. Gustavo Gonzalez, UNDP Sub-Regional Development Coordinator**, provided an overview of the impact of the Syrian crisis on development prospect in neighbouring countries, particularly Lebanon and Jordan. According to recent estimates, some USD73 billion is needed for the reconstruction of infrastructure in Syria, and it will take more than 8 to 10 years for Syrian refugees to return. Mr. Gonzalez stressed the need to complement humanitarian efforts from a development angle. This development response comprises a range of response components – from support to public financial management\(^2\) to budget support and realignment of regular cooperation frameworks (such as UNDAFs to address the new emerging development needs), to a

\(^2\) A USD150 million soft loan was provided by the World Bank; a USD2 billion loan was endorsed by the IMF to provide liquidity to the Jordanian Government.
series of interventions to support host communities\(^3\) as well as the engagement with the private sector\(^4\). He highlighted that a comprehensive regional approach should determine the synergies between the humanitarian, development and political components in the region. Clarifying the linkages between the RRP\(^6\) and the on-going development response in Lebanon and Jordan is a priority. Mr. Gonzalez also expressed the need to agree on coordination mechanisms, noting the centrality of the role of RC/HCs and the facilitation and supporting role that can be played by regional structures (e.g. a regional consultative group could be established, with the inclusion of donors). He emphasized on the need to develop a ‘Common Results Frameworks’ –including humanitarian and development interventions- to be used as a regional dashboard to identify gaps and priorities and bring more consistency in the planned interventions. He announced that the Regional UNDG will meet in October to discuss the development approach to the Syrian crisis.

8. **Mr. Ferid Belhaj, World Bank Director for the Mashrek Region and Iran**, stated that the World Bank’s strategic value-added was to contain the spill over effects in the region, and particularly in Lebanon, where the institutional set-up was fragile. He noted the crisis’ tremendous economic and social ramifications on "host communities". He added that Lebanon has become a "host nations", so to set the measure of the impact of the refugees on the country. He noted the importance of linking humanitarian relief and development, through a focus on resilience. The World Bank has carried out assessments in Jordan and Lebanon at an extremely fast pace. In Jordan, the World Bank moved quickly to secure a dialogue with the Government and design projects to address local governance and build resilience of impacted communities; the World Bank has set up joint coordination mechanisms and has allocated a USD 10 million grant to Jordan. In Lebanon, the World Bank carried out an economic and social impact assessment to open up the support of the international community\(^5\); discussions on the establishment of a MDTF are on-going.

9. In the plenary discussion, donors recognized that the development of a comprehensive regional strategy was moving forward and that partners were working on this issue comprehensively and with an unprecedented level of cooperation. They underscored the importance of ensuring synergies and consistency between the humanitarian and development frameworks and called for continued, close collaboration between UNDP, UNHCR, the World Bank and the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator in this regard. They agreed that the right people and the right coordination structures were now in place, although the possibility of a regional consultative mechanism was also highlighted. All the while, it was understood that the work on this approach needed now to continue with the development of timelines and results.

10. Participants also agreed to build a comprehensive Dashboard by country, by sectors, with gaps and needs with timelines, sources of funding and delivery mechanisms. They agreed that a first version of the Dashboard would be presented in advance of the next meeting of Emergency Directors and Donors on Syria, scheduled for 4 November in Amman. The importance of including affected governments was also noted

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\(^3\) Including employment generation, community infrastructure rehabilitation, social cohesion, and restoration of local authorities

\(^4\) For example, a UNDP consultation will be launched in Jordan and Lebanon in October to explore private sector’s contributions in terms of corporate social responsibility as well as in direct investments to expand basic social services and housing in host communities

\(^5\) This will underpin the High-Level meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon, hosted by the President of Lebanon Michel Sleiman, in the margins of the UN General Assembly on 25 September
Unlocking New Sources of Funding for the Syria crisis

11. The discussion on mobilizing new sources of funding was led by Mr. Claus Sorensen, Director General for ECHO, and Mark Bowman, Director General, DFID. During the discussion, participants recognized that an unprecedented amount of funding was needed to meet the needs of the Syria crisis. In addition to the funding shortfall for Syria, the (understandable) prioritization of the Syria appeal was impacting negatively on other large humanitarian crises, which are seeing a funding decline compared with last year.

12. Participants identified BRICs, the Gulf countries and the private sector as the most likely to provide additional support to the response effort. Current donors were also encouraged to “dig deeper” to find additional funding.

13. Participants agreed that high-level diplomatic efforts were required to effectively involve the BRICS and the Gulf States. The UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, had recently played a leading role to this effect, in the margins of the G20 Summit in Saint Petersburg. Donors recognized the importance of true partnership with BRICs and Gulf countries as the key to unlocking new funding. Donors agreed to advocate within their own capitals for high-level outreach to these countries. The role to be played by the UN Representative for the Gulf in mobilizing funding from the Gulf was also noted.

14. Noting the opportunities presented by the upcoming UN General Assembly, the UK and EU invited donors to announce new funding commitments at the UK-hosted High-Level Meeting and the EU/Jordan High-Level meetings in the margins of the General Assembly. The UN General Assembly was also seen as a good opportunity to rally further involvement by the BRICS.

15. The possibility of another UN-hosted pledging conference in Kuwait, in January 2014, received significant support. It was noted that holding a conference in January would allow all the funding plans and budgets (including for the development components) to be completed and available. It would also allow the necessary political engagement, including by using opportunities in the upcoming UN GA and high-level meetings. A proposal was also made to meet in early December to review the final drafts of the appeals prior to finalization and launch in mid-December. The utility/need for such a meeting will be decided at the 04 Nov meeting.

16. Participants also noted that the private sector could be a source of additional funding - oil companies, in particular, were seen as potentially playing a more important role in this regard, given the vested interests in regional stability. While public fundraising campaigns were deemed useful and important, there was recognition that more needed to be done to mobilize civil society around the humanitarian situation in Syria before any such campaign, and that the likelihood of raising large amounts was low, given that public support for victims of conflict was traditionally less than that for victims of natural disasters.
Managing risk of aid diversion in the Syria context

17. The discussion on managing the risk of aid diversion was led by Mr. Ted Chaiban, Director of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF, and Mr. David Kaatrud, Director of Emergencies, WFP. Each presented the measures being taken by their organizations to mitigate the risk of aid diversion.

18. Mr. Kaatrud explained how the risks of aid diversion – and the mitigation measures in place – differ at different phases of the food distribution process. Classic monitoring and control mechanisms are applied to the entry, transportation, and packaging of food. At the distribution stage, monitoring becomes more complex, and the risk of aid diversion becomes highly dependent on the presence of staff and monitoring facilities. In any given month, WFP is able to physically monitor with its staff up to 14% of its 300 Food Distribution Points (FDPs) in Syria, and prioritizes those where the highest cargo movement is recorded. WFP is looking at expanding its monitoring coverage with additional monitoring facilities, such as third party monitoring arrangements, but the ability to mitigate risks at the Final Distribution Point level is constrained by growing pressures on the extent and quality of access. WFP cautioned that the development of a common approach to risk management and reporting is important, but should not undermine the well-established accountability frameworks between agencies and their donors.

19. Mr. Ted Chaiban described the operational challenges in Syria and highlighted the need to accept residual risk once due diligence measures are defined and applied. He underscored the security risks faced by staff and partners while delivering aid, and conducting monitoring. He explained that UNICEF uses multiple sources of monitoring, including its own staff, third party monitoring (newly instituted), community monitoring, and micro- and macro- assessments to manage risk. UNICEF is now expanding the monitoring of aid delivery using third party monitors and the triangulation of information collected. Mr. Chaiban encouraged a ‘realistic’ discussion of the extent to which monitoring is possible given the security environment. He proposed to frame this discussion within a broader approach of risk management and monitoring, having defined the measures that would constitute due diligence (a process to be led by the RC/HC and the HCT agencies in Syria). He also proposed that donors consider the two-tier reporting requirements proposed in the background paper and reach agreement on the handling of aid losses, assuming due diligence measures have been undertaken.

20. Participants acknowledged that the issue of managing risk was a delicate one and at its core is trust and confidence between agencies and donors. They reaffirmed that the utmost priority was the provision of humanitarian assistance, and that an amount of residual risk needed to be tolerated in view of the dangerous operational environment. They also recognized that the most effective risk mitigation measures are increased access and community acceptance.

21. Donors welcomed the work undertaken by agencies to outline their risk mitigation measures and underscored the utmost importance that they attached to this issue. They underlined the need to immediately be notified when diversion happens, to allow them to explain the incident to their constituents rather than being exposed to being informed by third parties. They also encouraged full transparency of aid
diversion as the best policy and agreed with the two-tier reporting modality presented in the background document. In general, donors expressed their readiness to share risk as long as all possible due diligence measures were taken. They also noted the need to protect beneficiaries interviewed during monitoring and to ensure the safety of staff carrying out the monitoring. While some participants called for the harmonization of the definition of aid loss and risk tolerance, others called for defining due diligence. The possibility of involving other partners, such as NGOs, in risk management was discussed. Participants also encouraged further transparency on the limitations of monitoring mechanisms in difficult operating environments.

**Update on Key Operational Issues: Access and Key Humanitarian Asks**

22. **Donors were interested in hearing about the status of access in Syria, and agreed that this must be top priority on the agenda of those with influence over the parties to the conflict.** Agencies explained that while some progress has been made on access to some areas, overall humanitarian access has worsened. Access has been very difficult for hard hit areas and hot spots such as Homs Old City and Eastern Ghouta, where ICRC and SARC have been asking access for the past six months. ICRC noted that, on a positive note, that a pause in the fighting was achieved in order to re-establish water for Homs and Hama. The delivery of medical aid to civilians and wounded is still problematic and a violation of international humanitarian law.

23. **Work will continue to push for more humanitarian access inside Syria.** The key asks submitted by the ERC to the Security Council will continue to be pursued. The ERC and the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a common statement on people trapped in hard to reach areas, as cross-lines activities continue to fail to reach more than 2 million people, including in the hardest-hit areas. It was also noted that the attention on chemical weapons, which is necessary and understandable given the abhorrence of their use, should not distract from the large number of deaths caused on a daily basis by conventional weaponry and the dire humanitarian situation throughout the country.

24. **The next meeting of Donors and Emergency Directors on the Syria Crisis is scheduled for 04 November in Amman, Jordan.**