

Background

The humanitarian situation in Syria continues to deteriorate. Some 12.2 million people, including 7.6 million internally displaced people, are in urgent need of assistance. There are serious concerns about the situation of the 4.8 million people that live in hard-to-reach areas, particularly the 212,000 people who reside in communities that are besieged by either the Syrian Government or armed opposition forces. And there are ongoing serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws. In addition, there are more than 3.8 million refugees in neighbouring countries and North Africa, placing enormous strain on host governments and communities. While a political solution to this crisis is sought, efforts to protect civilians and deliver much-needed aid to people at risk must continue.

For the past two years the Amir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has hosted the High-Level International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria attended by representatives from Member States, regional organisations, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations. The pledging conferences raised US\$1.5 billion in 2013 and US\$2.4 billion in 2014 from more than 40 donors. The Amir of Kuwait has generously agreed to host and open the Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria in Kuwait City on 31 March. The Conference will be chaired by UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Purpose

Despite the generosity of countries in the region and beyond, the appeals for Syria and neighbouring countries remain underfunded. In December 2014, humanitarian partners launched the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (US\$5.5 billion) and the Strategic Response Plan for Syria (\$2.9 billion). Together, they request US\$8.4 billion to help nearly 18 million people in Syria and the region in 2015. The 2015 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan focusses on protecting affected people and providing life-saving aid to those in need. The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan addresses the adverse social, humanitarian and economic effects of the Syrian conflict in neighbouring countries

The aim of the conference is to raise the financial resources required to enable United Nations organisations and partners to meet urgent humanitarian needs in Syria and neighbouring countries, support host communities and contribute to the stabilisation of neighbouring countries.

Participation and Level of Representation

The conference will be at the ministerial level. Invitations will be sent by the UN Secretary-General to Member States encouraging their participation and pledges during the conference.

Almost 80 Member States, including those who have contributed to the Syria Appeal in the past as well as potential new donors will be invited along with four regional organizations - the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), League of Arab States (LAS), the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the European Union (EU) at the level of Secretary-General and Commissioner. About 20 places are reserved for NGOs working both inside and outside Syria. Other participants are expected from development finance institutions and UN agencies.

Format

The Conference will be a **one day event** dedicated to raising resources for the Syria crisis. Accordingly, the core of the event will be the announcement of pledges by participating delegates.

Opening: The Conference will be opened by the Amir of Kuwait, followed by a statement of the UN Secretary-General as chair of the conference.

Brief Film/ Video Presentation: After the opening, a short (3-4 min) film will be screened highlighting the conditions in Syria and the main humanitarian issues.

Overview of response, priorities and funding needs: This will be presented by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (OCHA); the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Administrator of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Announcement of pledges: Participants will be invited to announce pledges (maximum 3 minutes each) against the funding requirements.

Closing: Closing remarks will be delivered by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Press Conference: Participants to be determined.

A report of the conference listing the pledges will be prepared and disseminated within a week of the conference.