I. Key Messages

1. Almost three million people have been affected by the civil unrest which began in Syria in March. This includes thousands who have fled the country, and many more who have sought refuge with family and friends away from their homes. Food and fuel prices have risen and the economy is in decline.

2. As of now, the United Nations and partners have been unable to comprehensively assess people’s needs. Due to insecurity, a limited number of international staff remain in the country.

3. To date, the bulk of the humanitarian response has been carried out by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, and the Syrian people. However, growing needs have led the Red Crescent to request additional support to feed 1.5 million people. Across the border, UN agencies and national Governments are providing assistance to people in camps in Turkey and Lebanon.

4. A number of suggestions have been made on how to provide assistance to Syrians affected by the current unrest. These include the establishment of humanitarian corridors and/or buffer/safe zones. At present, the humanitarian needs identified in Syria do not warrant the implementation of either of these mechanisms. Before any further discussion of these options, it is essential to get a clearer sense of what exactly people need, and where.

5. I reiterate my call on all parties to comply with their obligations under international law.