We have just launched the Overview of Global Humanitarian Response for 2014. This year, we aim to reach at least 52 million people with essential life-saving aid, including millions of Syrians who are displaced and in urgent need of food, shelter and healthcare both inside the country and across the region. I have just returned from Lebanon and from a very brief visit to Syria where I was able to see for myself the impact the harsh winter is having on communities. And our support includes communities in neighbouring countries like Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq that are hosting thousands of refugees.

The plans also include help for millions of Filipinos who are struggling to rebuild their homes and communities after typhoon Haiyan, and for the crisis in the Central African Republic where conflict and displacement have affected the entire population of 4.7 million people.

The aim of our plans is to bring life-saving nutritional support and healthcare to people caught up in protracted crises in Afghanistan, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Haiti, where millions of people need urgent humanitarian aid to survive.

One of the big issues for us looking forward is that these crises are becoming more complex; we are seeing major natural disasters in conflict countries so the complexity and scale of what we are doing is rising all the time. More than 500 aid organizations have contributed to these plans, mostly national and international NGOs. I would like to pay particular tribute to NGOs, to civil society organizations, businesses and local authorities who are the first responders and who provide valuable help throughout protracted crises. Global humanitarian action supports their efforts.

The plans total $12.9 billion to reach everyone we hope to help in 2014. This is the largest amount we have ever had to request at the start of the year. $6.5 billion of this will support our efforts in Syria and in neighbouring countries, and again, this is the largest-ever appeal for a single crisis.

I hope that Governments, private organizations and individuals who have been so generous this year will continue to support our efforts to save the lives and support the millions of people who through no fault of their own are caught in the midst of crises across the world in 2014.