Excellency Sheikh Ahmed Bin Mohamed Bin Jabr Al Thani,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Can I begin by thanking Qatar for hosting this morning’s meeting, where we are spotlighting two countries in the world where people need our continued support. They are two of the longest running and largest humanitarian crises in the world today. We need more than ever to find new ways of working with them – not just to respond to these crises, but also to address the underlying problems behind them. The Humanitarian Coordinators for Somalia and Sudan will speak to you about these countries in a moment. What I would first like to do is to speak about the general appeals process and to draw your attention to some of the 15 other crises that are covered by our consolidated appeals in 2012.

For almost 20 years, the Consolidated Appeals Process has brought together United Nations agencies, Non-governmental organizations, donors, governments and other partners to prepare joint plans for responding to humanitarian crises. This year 466 organizations are participating in the process. And between them, they have put together projects that if totally implemented would help at least 51 million of the most vulnerable and needy people in the world.

The situation in the horn of Africa remains the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. In addition to the 2.5 million people who urgently need our help in Somalia, 521,000 Somali refugees are also living in very difficult conditions in Kenya.

The drought and food insecurity situation in the Sahel is at the top of our list of priorities, where in Niger, more than two million people are living in chronic food insecurity. In a recent study, a full 100 percent of families questioned said they had already reduced the amount they ate every day because they did not have enough food. In Chad, a widespread food crisis threatens an estimated 1.6 million people.

Mauritania and Burkina Faso are also gravely affected, as is Mali where due to the current political tensions of conflict, desperately needed humanitarian assistance projects are in jeopardy.
People in Yemen continue to face conflict, hunger, and malnutrition. Many do not have access to even basic services like education and healthcare. Our plan for Yemen targets nearly four million people of those in most urgent need. And as many as twice that number, we think, need some kind of help.

And many of those living in the occupied Palestinian territory face chronic shortages of basic food and medical supplies on a daily basis. In the West Bank, we see the impact of planning and zoning laws which are having a negative impact on people’s daily lives. The appeal sets out a two-year strategy to tackle the most urgent humanitarian needs.

Our other priorities this year include the Democratic Republic of Congo where people are still struggling to find a path back to stability; Afghanistan, where more than a million people are suffering acute food insecurity; Sudan, which we will hear more about later; and South Sudan, where there is rising food insecurity, continued violence, disease outbreaks and flooding.

We are also planning to help people who are hit by crises that may be smaller or less acute, in countries including the Philippines and Haiti. There is no such thing as a minor emergency for those affected.

The Minister has already mentioned Syria where we are responding. We urgently need more access for humanitarian workers and supplies, and it is critical that we continue to ensure impartiality and neutrality of our response efforts.

Support for multilateral humanitarian action is broadening. This is reflected in the number of Middle Eastern and Gulf organisations that have projects in the appeals. It is also reflected in the number of Governments in the region that are donating through the multilateral system, either through the consolidated appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund, or other common funds.

I am extremely grateful for the continued generosity and support of the people and governments of this region, and particularly again for Qatar for hosting today’s event. I would like again to thank my fellow panellists for the engagement of their organisations, the Qatari Red Crescent, and the OIC for their continued engagement and support. And Dr Al-Meraikhi I’d like to thank you for your continued support and also for chairing this morning’s important event.

Thank you.