Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and
Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien
Remarks to the press
Amman, 20 September 2015
As delivered

This has been my first official visit to Jordan as the Emergency Relief Coordinator. I want to thank the Government of Jordan and the people of Jordan, and the Syrian refugee families I’ve visited, for the warm welcome I’ve received everywhere in the past couple of days.

Yesterday I met with His Excellency Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour and expressed my profound appreciation of the Government and the Jordanian people’s generosity over the past four years hosting Syrians seeking protection and assistance.

Jordan is a crucial and strategic partner for the international community, facilitating the delivery of assistance to Syrian refugees and enabling the delivery of aid across the border into southern Syria.

There are nearly 630,000 Syrian refugees registered by UNHCR in Jordan. There are many more not registered, living in Jordanian communities. And yesterday I had the honour of visiting the Za’atari camp which has grown in size as the conflict in Syria has dragged on and deteriorated year after year.

Za’atari camp alone hosts 80,000 refugees.

I met Omar in the Za’atari camp who hopes to become a football player. Children will always have dreams for the future even in the most difficult of circumstances. Omar and millions of other Syrian refugees haven’t given up hope. We cannot give up on them either.

The international community has been generous over the past years in response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria. But a disproportionate share of our common responsibility has fallen on the neighbouring countries. This includes Jordan, which has kept their borders open for millions of people seeking sanctuary from the brutality of the war.

Syria’s neighbours are reaching the point where the rest of the world must urgently share more of the responsibility in responding to the humanitarian needs created by the Syria crisis and support the most vulnerable people.
The United Nations has comprehensive plans aiming at saving lives and alleviating suffering inside Syria and in the neighbouring countries, including Jordan. The regional plan also addresses the needs of affected local communities and helps strengthen their ability to resist future shocks.

But the needs generated by the Syria crisis are outpacing the generous funding we have received. Combined, our humanitarian appeals have only received 38 per cent of the funding necessary for 2015.

I thank those who have already stepped up, but I must now urge each and everyone in the international community to do more to support Jordan and other countries in the region and increase their support for the crucial humanitarian response.

Thank you.