

**Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mr. Mark Lowcock at
Remarks at High-level Meeting on Syria in margins of the General Assembly**

UN Headquarters, New York, New York, September 21 2017

As delivered

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

When we met in Brussels in April, we heard strong statements of humanitarian commitment.

Some \$6 billion pledged by over 40 governments for this year, with a further \$3.7 billion pledged for 2018.

There was also a clear agreement that the civilians whose lives have been destroyed by years of conflict must remain at the forefront of the international community's agenda. That was expressed by voicing unconditional support to meet humanitarian needs inside Syria and the region; and by highlighting the importance of support for early recovery and resilience-building for displaced Syrians and their hosts.

Life-saving humanitarian needs remain enormous and the delivery of assistance through the most direct routes remains critical.

De-escalation has resulted in calm in some parts of the country. But an increase in anti-ISIL operations in the east has caused fresh suffering and displacement. From Raqqa, to Idleb, to Deir ez-Zor, civilians continue to face serious protection concerns as fighting and access constraints continue. This year alone, another one million people have been internally

displaced. All parties to the fighting must be pressured to respect international humanitarian law.

The United Nations and its partners are assisting millions of people each month through regular programming, cross-line convoys, and cross-border programming. The importance of this latter approach cannot be under-estimated as it brings thousands of people access to otherwise unavailable life-saving services, including education and health.

Saving lives and protecting civilians remains our priority in Syria. But these humanitarian efforts must also, when possible, aim to build resilience by supporting access to livelihoods and access to basic services.

To translate the determination expressed in successive conferences in Kuwait, London and Brussels, we need to see all pledges to the UN-coordinated appeals for Syria and the region turned into contributions, including through the Syria Humanitarian Fund which provides direct support to front-line responders. The humanitarian response plan for inside Syria is only 36 per cent funded; the regional refugee and resilience plan just 39 per cent. We can and we must do better for the Syrian people.

Ultimately of course, the only sustainable way to address the humanitarian crisis is to end the conflict through a credible political agreement.

Thank you.