

**UN HUMANITARIAN CHIEF CALLS FOR URGENT PROTECTION OF
CIVILIANS AND SCALING UP OF SUPPORT TO YEMEN**

(Sana'a, 4 October 2016) - Stephen O'Brien, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, concluded his three-day mission to Yemen today calling for all parties to grant humanitarian access and uphold their responsibilities to protect civilians in a conflict that has displaced three million people, injured and killed thousands of innocent civilians, shattered the civilian infrastructure, and destroyed livelihoods in a country which was already suffering from endemic poverty.

“In Yemen, four out of five people are in need of humanitarian assistance. In the 21st century that is outrageous by any measure. I am particularly concerned about the health care system as most of the health facilities in 16 out of 22 governorates are either not functioning or only partially functioning, denying thousands of Yemenis access to much needed essential health services,” Mr. O'Brien said in Sana'a.

Mr. O'Brien met with humanitarian partners and authorities and stressed that “we must do more to deliver in this protracted emergency. Humanitarians are ready, but it is essential that we have safe and unhindered access and that people in need be afforded freedom of movement to access the services that humanitarian partners can provide”.

Mr. O'Brien travelled to the field to meet with people affected by the crisis. “My visit to Al Hudaydah hospital was heart-breaking,” said the Emergency Relief Coordinator. “Mothers bring their malnourished children for treatment but there is simply not enough medicines to treat them. The quantities of food, medicine and fuel entering the country are way below the needs and must be increased as a matter of urgency”.

The Emergency Relief Coordinator also witnessed the effects of the destruction of bridges and listened to the concerns and grievances of a community affected by airstrikes in central Hudaydah.

So far this year, aid workers have reached some 4 million people with assistance and protection. However, the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2016 is only 46 per cent funded, leaving a gap of US\$880 million. USG O'Brien emphasized that the humanitarian community has scaled up its presence in Yemen since April 2015 and has deployed strong leadership to drive the response on the ground. “We deliver emergency food assistance to 4 million people every month, but we need to do more. More funding is urgently required for the scale-up of assistance across the

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country. The UN and our humanitarian partners are ready to do so, but donors need to support resources mobilisation efforts,” Mr. O’Brien said.

Violence against aid workers and civilians continue to characterize the conflict in Yemen. On 3 October, 10 civilians including six children were killed while 17 others were injured, reportedly due to shrapnel of a shell. Since March 2015, 13 health workers have died and 31 have been injured. More than 70 health centres have been damaged or destroyed by conflict. The USG condemned attacks on medical facilities that put at risk the lives and well-being of millions of people who rely on medical assistance for survival and reminded those conducting the hostilities of their obligation to protect civilians from the devastating effects of war.

“The best humanitarian relief that can be provided is an end to the conflict. I urged the authorities, as I urge other parties to the conflict, to return to political negotiations without delay to reach a negotiated solution”.