

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND  
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, VALERIE AMOS**

**Remarks at the launch of the Syria Response Plans 2015**  
**Berlin, 18 December 2014**

*As delivered*

Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for joining us for the launch of the 2015 Syria Strategic Response Plan, and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan. My particular thanks to Foreign Minister Steinmeier for hosting us and for his opening remarks. And thanks to Economic Cooperation and Development Minister Gerd Müller for his support.

Germany's strong support to the United Nations and our work encompasses a number of different areas, and is extremely comprehensive: Support on the political front, trying to find a political solution to the crisis in Syria and the region. Support for our humanitarian work and our development activities. Support to the stabilization plans in countries in the region: As a refugee receiving country and also financial support.

I would also like to thank my fellow panelists, High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, UNDP Associate Administrator, Gina Casar, and NRC Secretary General, Jan Egeland.

I will speak about the situation inside Syria. High Commissioner Guterres will speak about the impact of the Syrian crisis on the people and countries in the region.

In less than four years, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria has gone from one million to over 12 million. Vital infrastructure has been destroyed, leaving millions of people without clean water and electricity. The economy of the country has collapsed. And the ongoing conflict has forced millions of Syrians to flee their homes and find shelter wherever they can. Unable to work, their livelihoods are shattered.

Behind the huge numbers lies unimaginable human tragedy. Half of those displaced are children living through the trauma of what they have witnessed. Girls and women raped. Violence, brutality, death and destruction are now part of daily life.

The one thing that will bring the country back on the path to peace and stability - a political solution to the crisis - remains elusive. In its absence, humanitarian workers remain committed to helping every vulnerable Syrian they can despite the difficult and dangerous circumstances in which they work.

Over the years we have watched Syria's fall from a middle-income country to one in which there is now 75 per cent poverty. We must take a different approach. Continue our life-saving work, but also looking at how we can sustain people's livelihoods despite the conflict, and support a path back to longer term development.

That is what the plans we are launching today are intended to achieve. People affected by conflict need food, shelter, water, medicine and protection; but they also need support for rebuilding their livelihoods, maintaining education and health services and rebuilding fragmented communities.

The conflict in Syria is not only destroying people's lives today. It will continue to erode their capacity to cope far into the future if we don't take a more holistic approach now.

Today we are calling for US\$2.9 billion to provide protection, life-saving assistance and early recovery for the 12.2 million people in desperate need inside Syria. Nearly half of all Syrians, 10.8 million people, are displaced, many of them multiple times. I spoke to a woman in Suruç in Turkey who had fled from Kobane. She said that before that, she had fled from Homs. She broke down in tears.

Among the displaced are half of the 560,000 Palestinians refugees who were living in Syria. And 9.8 million Syrians will go hungry this winter. More than half of Syria's hospitals and a quarter of Syria's schools have been destroyed, badly damaged or militarized in clear violation of international humanitarian law.

Children are particularly vulnerable: They have been injured and killed in direct and targeted attacks and up to 2.4 million children are out of school. Worryingly, increasing numbers of children are being recruited to fight.

But given all of this, and despite the difficult situation on the ground - including routine attacks on aid convoys, deliberate targeting of humanitarian workers and the painstaking negotiations required to overcome bureaucratic obstacles - aid groups are managing to reach millions of people each month across the front lines of conflict in Syria and across borders from neighbouring countries.

National and international NGOs are at the forefront of these efforts. For example in November, our NGO colleagues supported the World Food Programme to provide food rations to more than 4.1 million Syrians; they helped UNICEF deliver school supplies to over half a million children; and they worked with UNHCR to distribute shelter materials and other relief items to over 400,000 people.

Last year, donors gave us over a billion dollars for humanitarian response inside Syria. Despite their generosity, it was less than half of what we had asked for. Without the funding, we cannot do more. The World Food Programme faced a crisis this month. We managed to avert it. Individuals, companies, governments and the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques provided the funding required. But we cannot continue like that. Raising the alarm and hoping our call will be heard.

We need your sustained support, your continued commitment. Thank you for your generosity to date. Please help us to continue to give ordinary Syrians some hope of survival.