"Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region"
Post-Brussels 2 conference financial tracking report – co-chairs’ statement

1. At the second "Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region" Conference hosted by the EU in Brussels on 24-25th April 2018, the international community and the governments of refugee hosting countries came together to reaffirm their commitment to support the millions of civilians affected by the conflict in Syria as well as the refugees and communities generously hosting them.

2. The international community pledged USD 4.3 billion in funding to support humanitarian, stabilisation and development activities in 2018 in Syria and the region, and a further USD 3.5 billion for 2019-20. International financial institutions and donors also announced almost USD 21.2 billion in loans. The EU, on behalf of the Brussels 2 conference co-chairs, has today published a report on progress against these pledges.

Financial tracking report findings

3. The report published today finds that, as of end of July 2018:
   - For 2018, donors have already contributed 95% (USD 4.1 billion) of the pledges made to provide funding in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.
   - For the period 2019-20, 25% of the pledges announced (USD 875 million) are already available.
   - Of the USD 21.2 billion worth of loans pledged for 2018-2020, USD 16.2 billion have been made available in refugee-hosting countries.

4. Five months after the conference, 14 of the 36 donors have fully delivered or exceeded the amounts pledged. Several donors are still to deliver on their full pledge or to make information on their contributions available.

5. Despite good progress against pledges made, the 2018 UN-coordinated interagency response plans for Syria and the region are only 38%-funded¹. Therefore, the humanitarian needs inside Syria and in the region remain unmet. In Syria, $311 million is urgently needed to ensure priority response and readiness activities outlined in a joint UN and partners operational plan for a possible escalation in hostilities in Idleb and the surrounding areas, noting that the humanitarian response is already ongoing.

Co-chairs urge all donors to deliver on their commitments for 2018 and step up their efforts to continue delivering live-saving and resilience support in the region.

6. This tracking mechanism focuses exclusively on tracking the pledges made by donors at the April 2018 Brussels 2 conference and does not include funding from all donors to the crisis. It is a tool to inform on funding spent in the region and to ensure donor accountability in delivering against pledges.

¹ According to information received by the UN OCHA Financial Tracking System (FTS) and UNHCR as of August 2018
Progress against Brussels conference policy commitments

7. **Inside Syria**, the overall scale and complexity of humanitarian needs of people in Syria remain staggering in their magnitude and severity. Amidst an intensification of hostilities in multiple locations, notably Afrin, East Ghouta, southern Damascus, northern rural Homs, parts of northeast Syria and Idleb, the first seven months of the year witnessed more than 1.3 million population movements. At the same time, some 6.2 million people remain in protracted displacement. Against the backdrop of relative stability in certain areas of the country, some 987,000 people spontaneously returned to their communities of origin, the majority of whom were IDPs.

Some 13 million people - more than 80 percent of the remaining population – remain in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. As in the previous seven years, violence, insecurity and shifting frontlines remain the principal drivers of civilian displacement, resulting in acute and protracted humanitarian needs. The needs of 1.5 million people in UN-declared hard to reach areas remain particularly severe.

The co-chairs are deeply alarmed by violations of IHL and human rights law, including sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by all parties to the conflict. All necessary measures must be taken to protect civilian lives, including those of humanitarian workers, and to ensure safe, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access through the most direct routes, including to areas that have changed control.

Looking ahead, the co-chairs remain deeply concerned about the safety and protection of some 3 million people in the de-escalation zone of Idleb and surrounding areas, many of whom are living in close proximity to a mix of various non-state armed groups. Of these, 2.1 million are in need of humanitarian assistance, including one million children. Close to half of this population – 1.4 million – are internally displaced persons (IDPs), having already fled violence at least once. A military offensive on Idleb would have a catastrophic impact on the lives of millions of already vulnerable civilians living in the area. This must be avoided at all cost and the co-chairs call on all relevant parties to the conflict, and those with influence over them to cease hostilities in the area and ensure there is no escalation.

8. **Neighbouring countries** continue to show extraordinary generosity in hosting more than 5.6 million Syrian refugees. At the Brussels 2 conference, donors and refugee-hosting countries reaffirmed their commitment to providing services, protection and assistance to refugees as well as to taking forward longer-term reform efforts for the benefit of hosting communities and refugees. Co-chairs agreed actions with the Governments of Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to support the necessary reforms to boost economic growth and job creation, to continue to expand education opportunities for Syrian refugees and their host communities, as well as to sustain protection efforts. Further progress has been made in these three countries on delivering on the commitments taken in past conferences in London and Brussels. Additional efforts will need to be made by donors and host countries to meet the ambitious jobs and education targets established at the 2016 London conference.

9. **Jordan** has continued to provide the conditions for access by Syrians to **formal job opportunities**. Around 110,000 work permits have been issued to Syrians since January 2016, of which 4% are for women and around 42,000 are currently active. The Government’s decision to exempt Syrian refugees from the national programme aimed at regulating migrant workers enabled Syrians to continue accessing formal employment, notably in the manufacturing sector. These efforts could be further boosted, in particular by creating a framework for the set-up of joint ventures between Syrians and Jordanians, and for the authorisation to operate home-based businesses. In an effort to re-boot long-term, sustainable and inclusive **economic growth**, the Government has focussed on measures to improve the business environment and facilitate investment, which would increase fiscal space and financial inclusion. The EU-Jordan decision to relax the rules of origin regime is in its third year of implementation. The EU is evaluating a request by Jordan to modify the decision to increase its impact on Jordan's exports to Europe. Positive results can be
reported in the education sector. Starting from school year 2018-2019, the Government, with continuous support from donors, reconfirmed its commitment to provide quality public education to all children regardless of their status or nationality. In the area of protection, the campaign to regularise undocumented and unregistered refugees is currently being implemented. We express concern about cases of forced return to camps as well as the deteriorating conditions of the 50,000 Syrians stranded at the berm, with limited access to health services. We welcome the Government of Jordan’s reaffirmation that the return of Syrian refugees to Syria should be voluntary.

10. In Lebanon, the presence of Syrian refugees has become increasingly debated in domestic politics, with calls for the large scale return of refugees to Syria. Despite earlier progress in some areas, structural and sectoral reforms reaffirmed at the CEDRE conference and in Brussels are still pending, in the absence of a new government after May 6th parliamentary elections. The commitment to streamline procedures for approval and implementation of externally-funded projects is not yet met, with a number of projects still awaiting parliamentary approval. On education, substantial efforts have been made to increase the number of Syrian refugee children enrolled in public schools (from 216,611 in public education in 17/18 to 250,000 targeted for 18/19). Despite important multi-annual education funding from key donors such as the EU, there are still critical financing gaps for enrolment, and other pillars of the Reaching All Children in Education (RACE-2) Strategy. Efforts to analyse and address the barriers to access education for the remaining out of school children, as well as the issue of drop-outs, need to be maintained and stepped up. While the health sector remains underfunded and vulnerable population segments remain underserved, new initiatives have been introduced that support capacity building and system strengthening. Concerning protection, positive measures were adopted by the government prior to the Brussels Conference, such as including the waiver of residency fees for some categories of registered Syrian refugees, legal residency for refugee youth and the facilitation of birth and marriage registration. Against a backdrop of increasing vulnerability and shrinking protection space, the co-chairs encourage the resumption of UNHCR registration for Syrian refugees, ensuring refugees’ access to protection and livelihoods opportunities, as well as the expansion of the residency fee waiver to all categories of refugee. Such measures would contribute to preparations for the safe, dignified and non-coercive return of Syrian refugees to their country of origin, in accordance with international law and the principle of non-refoulement, once conditions are met.

11. Turkey hosts approximately 3.5 million registered Syrians under Temporary Protection and over 350,000 other nationals as international protection applicants. Currently, there are approximately 197 000 refugees living in Temporary Accommodation Centres located in 10 provinces. Considerable efforts have been made at national and local levels to respond to refugee needs, including the provision of free medical care and access to education. On education, of 1 million Syrians of school age, more than 600,000 have access to primary and secondary education. Given the scale of the crisis, other national and international partners are helping the Turkish authorities improve their capacity where needed, while also filling gaps by providing direct services to refugees and host communities. Steps have been taken to facilitate access to formal employment by passing the necessary legislation to obtain work permits and to start small businesses. However, it is widely acknowledged that a significant number of Syrian refugees are engaged in the informal sector rather than in formal employment.

12. The protection of civilians (including IDPs and refugees) remains a central pillar in the humanitarian response and in the commitments taken by refugee-hosting countries. In this context, we acknowledge that the return of Syrian refugees from neighbouring countries to Syria should only occur once conditions allow and on a voluntary, dignified and safe basis, in accordance with applicable norms of international law and in particular the principle of non-refoulement. Creating these conditions is essential, in close coordination with UNHCR.
Way forward

13. The crisis in Syria continues to have a devastating humanitarian toll on the population. We reiterate the urgent need for parties to the conflict and those with influence over them to come to a genuine and inclusive Syrian owned and led political settlement to the conflict in Syria and prevent the further suffering of civilians, as outlined in relevant UNSCRs, including UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communique. The co-chairs will keep working to maintain international engagement; encourage further support for the vulnerable populations inside Syria (inclusive of the refugees), and for refugees in the region and their host communities; and contribute to bringing an end to this crisis. We all want peace in Syria for Syrians and for the overall region.