

**Joint Statement Brazil and Switzerland
Security Council Briefing on Syria
29 June 2023**

Madam President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of Brazil and Switzerland, as co-penholders of the Syrian humanitarian file.

Let me first thank Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, Ms. Najat Rochdi, and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Martin Griffith, for their briefings, as well as the Secretary-General for his reports.

As we have heard from Under Secretary-General and Emergency Response Coordinator Martin Griffiths, the humanitarian situation in Syria is worse than ever in its 12-year history of conflict. The earthquakes in February have compounded the already dire circumstances and 70% of the population is in need of humanitarian aid and protection, for the first time in every district in Syria.

Amidst the disheartening statistics presented by OCHA, we are confronted with the stark situation of children in Syria, who are affected disproportionately by the drivers of the crisis.

According to UNICEF, the education system has been devastated by the conflict, with over 7,000 damaged or destroyed schools. The earthquakes have further impaired educational facilities, limiting children's access to education. Over two million children are out of school and another 1.6 million children at risk of dropping out. The recruitment and use of children in this conflict is also an increasingly worrying trend.

We must do everything we can to stop this situation. It is crucial that the funding pledges made by donor countries at the Brussels conference lead to an increased funding of the Humanitarian Response Plan.

For aid to reach those in need in the most direct and effective manner, all modalities, including cross-line and cross-border, need to be available for the humanitarian actors.

According to the Secretary-General's special report, the authorization by Syria for the United Nations to use Bab al-Salam and Al-Ra'ee has allowed for more direct and efficient access to affected populations in northern Aleppo. It is important that this access remains available for as long as it is needed.

We urge all parties to eliminate impediments to humanitarian deliveries across Syria, and to allow and facilitate rapid, safe, sustainable and unhindered access to all civilians in need.

We commend the UN's constant efforts to enable crossline deliveries as well as the assistance that reached those in need through last week's convoy, the first since the earthquake. But much more is needed. As the Secretary-General indicates in his special report, cross-line operations remain essential, although they currently cannot replace the size or scope of the UN's cross border mechanism.

Madam President,

The members of this Security Council will soon be called to decide over the continuation of the cross-border mechanism, which continues to be a crucial lifeline for millions of children, women and men in Syria. Even more so after the earthquakes earlier this year.

As co-penholders, Brazil and Switzerland are guided solely by the objective of ensuring that assistance continues to reach all those in need.

The Secretary-General, his Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, the Special Envoy for Syria as well as all humanitarian actors operating on the ground keep underlining that a 12 months timeline is needed for ensuring rapid, safe, sustainable and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to all civilians in need. This timeline is also necessary to facilitate the further expansion of early recovery activities.

It is our shared responsibility to stand in solidarity with the people of Syria. We call on all Council members to work constructively over the coming days to live up to our collective responsibility to the Syrian people.