



In 2013, WHO with the generous support from its donor partners successfully reached 6 million beneficiaries alone in Syria²⁶ January 2014 - WHO requires a total of US\$ 246 million in 2014 to continue providing life-saving health services to the growing number of increasingly vulnerable Syrians across the Region.

As the Syrian conflict enters its fourth year, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, with an estimated 9.3 million people in need of assistance, including 6.5 million internally displaced persons.

Syria's health system remains severely disrupted, impeding the provision of primary and secondary health care, the referral of sick and injured patients, treatment of chronic diseases, delivery of maternal and child health services and the provision of mental health care. Almost 64% of hospitals in Syria have been affected by the crisis, with 40% out of service; the health workforce has been depleted and there is 70% reduction in locally produced medicines.

With the increasing cost of medicines, insufficient access to clean water and sanitation services, and cramped living conditions, the imperative for measures to prevent and contain epidemics that could have catastrophic consequences across the Region is greater than ever. A clear demonstration of the consequences of the deteriorating health indicators and living conditions among Syrians is the Middle East polio outbreak, which has required multicountry, regionally-coordinated surveillance and multiple rounds of mass vaccinations.

The ongoing crisis has also caused mass displacement on a regional level. In countries neighbouring Syria, the increasing number of refugees, expected to reach 4.1 million by the end of 2014, has placed an immense strain on the hosting communities in terms of infrastructure

and resources. In addition to the Syrian refugees needing assistance, so do an estimated 2.7 million of affected neighbouring countries' populations.

In 2013, WHO with the generous support from its donor partners successfully reached 6 million beneficiaries alone in Syria. Drawing on lessons learned to optimize the impact of interventions, to effectively target critical areas and the most vulnerable, WHO's programme for 2014 would permit 9 million to receive essential health care. In order to protect children from polio; provide diabetics with life-saving insulin; enable those injured to receive care and those suffering psychological distress to be given mental health services, US\$ 178 309 652 is needed for the next 12 months.

In mid-January, a high-level WHO delegation attended the second pledging conference for Syria in Kuwait City to advocate for the urgency of addressing the health needs of populations affected by the crisis. At the event, 39 Member States pledged more than US\$ 2.4 billion to support the basic humanitarian needs of affected people in 2014.

Parallel to WHO's Executive Board session in Geneva in January, Director General Dr Margaret Chan hosted a meeting for the international donor community at WHO's headquarters, with the participation of Regional Directors of the Eastern Mediterranean and European regions. Ambassadors representing Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey provided an overview of the current health situation of Syrian refugees in their respective countries, and highlighted challenges and key health needs.

"WHO has responded to the crisis within Syria with one of the largest, most complex and expensive emergency relief operations in the history of this Organization," Director General Dr Chan told donors. "With the support of you – our partners – we have been able to reach millions of beneficiaries, but there is much more we must do there."

"When the smoke of the conflict will dissipate, the international community will discover the extent of the damage to public health, which we will have to deal with for decades to come," said WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Dr Ala Alwan.

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