8 June 2016 – With the Syrian conflict in its sixth year, many people with chronic diseases have limited access to regular treatment and are vulnerable to complications. More than one in 10 Syrians has diabetes and depends on insulin to stay alive. Without regular insulin shots, about 60% of insulin-dependent diabetics are at risk of hyperglycaemia (raised blood sugar), which can result in serious complications and even death.

Thanks to the Kuwaiti funding support which allowed WHO to provide urgently needed insulin for patients in need in Syria. 10-year-old Ahmad receives his monthly insulin supplies at Al-Hamdaneya primary health care centre in Aleppo. Hussam Hidaoui, 27 years of age, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes prior to the crisis. He accesses treatment with insulin shots at a WHO-supported hospital in Damascus. Ahmad and Hussam are 2 of the estimated 400 000 Syrians with diabetes and dependent on insulin for survival; many of whom are treated at various WHO-supported diabetic centres.

"The generous contribution of the Kuwaiti Government has allowed WHO to procure and distribute over 700 000 insulin vials and penfills in need across the country," said Elizabeth Hoff, the WHO Representative in Syria.

Before the conflict began, insulin was provided free of charge to all Syrians registered with the National Diabetes Programme. Unfortunately, Syria's only insulin production facility has been destroyed, and at present there is a shortage of this essential medicine.

More than half of insulin-dependent Syrians are at risk of complications due to limited supplies. With funding support from the Kuwaiti government, WHO is doing its best to provide the much needed insulin in the country, including to people in hard-to-reach areas through its network of 68 national nongovernmental organizations.

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