Damascus, Syria – On 7 April 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) celebrates the 75th anniversary of its establishment, coinciding with the annual observance of World Health Day. This day highlights WHO's unwavering commitment to improving global health and recognizes the invaluable contributions of health care workers who tirelessly provide essential health services to communities worldwide, even under challenging circumstances.

WHO Representative in Syria a.i. Dr Iman Shankiti and H.E. Minister of Health Dr Hassan al-Ghabbash visited a polyclinic in Damascus to mark the day and express their appreciation for the selfless efforts of health care professionals in Syria who have been delivering vital services to the Syrian people despite the protracted crisis. This visit serves as a powerful reminder of the critical role that health workers play in ensuring that everyone has access to quality health care, particularly in times of hardship.

Access to health care is a fundamental human right that should be available to all individuals without any financial barriers. Despite ongoing conflicts, socioeconomic crises, insecurity, sanctions, disease outbreaks, the recent earthquakes, and lack of access to some areas, WHO in Syria is supporting the Ministry of Health to lead the health response. WHO is playing a crucial role in empowering and enhancing the Ministry's capacity to provide essential health care and ensuring the provision of life-saving and life-sustaining services to the people of Syria.

"This year's World Health Day theme, "Health for All", highlights the importance of ensuring that everyone has access to quality health services. WHO and the Ministry of Health are working closely together to move towards universal health coverage by adapting the health care system to be resilient, accessible, and of good quality. They are also working to protect people from

emergencies by strengthening national and subnational preparedness and response, including for humanitarian response, outbreak response, and the International Health Regulations," Dr Shankiti said.

On this World Health Day, WHO is calling on the international community to do more to achieve health for all in Syria and other countries affected by conflict and crisis. This means investing in health systems, ensuring access to essential medicines and vaccines, and supporting the mental health and well-being of affected populations.

Join us on this 7 April in celebrating World Health Day and WHO's 75th anniversary by taking action to achieve health for all. Together, we can create a world where everyone can attain their full health potential.

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