

7 April 2017 – The World Health Organization welcomes the support shown by countries and donors participating in the “Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region” conference in Brussels on 4-6 April, during which more than US\$ 6 billion was pledged to provide humanitarian aid to people affected by the Syrian crisis for 2017.

“Six years of war have witnessed an unprecedented assault on health and health care. Syria is now a gigantic waiting room of a hospital unable to operate, and there are 13 million people waiting for health care there,” said Dr Michel Thieren, WHO Regional Emergencies Director. In neighbouring countries, the situation also remains serious, with refugees and host communities placing an enormous strain on public health infrastructure of host countries.

“The amount pledged at this year’s conference is only 40% of that pledged in the London conference in February 2016. With 1.4 million additional people in need of humanitarian health services in 2017 compared to last year, the crisis is far from over, and we are still far from any stage of normalized public health in Syria. A restored public health is a pre-condition to reconstruction. No society can fully progress while increasingly exposed to risk of disease and ill health,” said Dr Thieren.

In 2017, WHO and health partners requires US\$ 459 million for their response operations inside Syria and US\$ 373 million to support refugees’ access to health services in Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq. To date, however, health is only 6% funded, leaving millions at risk.

“With only a fraction of the funding received this year, the health sector is limited in its capacity to respond to the health needs of the Syrian people. Despite this, we will remain engaged at the bedside of millions of people counting on our help,” added Dr Thieren.

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