

**Joint Statement Brazil and Switzerland Security Council Briefing on Syria,
30 May 2023**

Madam President,

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

The humanitarian situation in Syria remains dire. Severe challenges are felt across various facets of life: food insecurity, limited access to water, inadequate sanitation, overcrowding in shelters, and displacement. Inequitable access to health services, coupled with the economic strain, significantly elevate the risk of disease outbreaks. The recurring displacement as result of the protracted conflict further compounds the hardships of internally displaced persons, impeding their access to basic services.

We welcome that the UN can continue delivering much needed humanitarian assistance through the border crossings of Bab al-Salam and al-Ra'ee, as recently reauthorized by the Syrian government for another three months. The expanded access, which has allowed well over 2000 trucks to cross to Northwest Syria since the earthquakes, is having a positive impact on the efforts to support Syrian people. Yet, in view of the high levels of humanitarian needs, predictability remains key.

All aspects of resolution 2672 (2023) must continue to be implemented. We recall that all aid modalities, including cross-line and cross-border, should be used. We urge all parties to eliminate barriers to cross-line and cross-border humanitarian deliveries across Syria, ensuring unobstructed access for aid workers. Moreover, early recovery projects remain crucial for restoring basic services.

In last week's annual Council open debate on the protection of civilians, the importance of compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) was emphasized as a means to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of armed conflicts and lay groundwork for sustainable peace, stability, and prosperity.

Respecting IHL is not optional; it is a legal obligation. Protecting civilians and civilian infrastructure during armed conflict is vital. Deliberate attacks on and destruction of objects indispensable for the survival of the civilian population, such as health centers and schools, are prohibited and detrimentally impact health and livelihood, thereby undermining protection, especially of women, children and persons with disabilities.

Food insecurity was also addressed during the annual open debate. Armed conflicts impair social and economic networks, erode resilience, and disrupt market and supply chains, intensifying long-term food insecurity. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), over half of Syria's population, 12.1 million people, suffer from food insecurity. Roughly, 5.6 million receive monthly WFP food assistance. It is deeply

regrettable that due to a severe lack of funding and supply chain disruptions, WFP will most likely have to stop supporting 2 million Syrians with food assistance from July onwards, which corresponds to 40% of its caseload

To address Syria's huge humanitarian needs, the UN and its partners require adequate funding for the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan and all components of the plan should be financed. This is important for the survival of the Syrian population and a sustainable recovery, to enhance livelihoods and expand access to basic services.

Madam President,

The earthquakes have exacerbated the pre-existing considerable protection needs. It is essential that these concerns are recognized and adequately considered in the humanitarian response. They include issues of legal identity, housing, land and property rights, and the safeguarding of vulnerable individuals such as those with disabilities, at risk of sexual and gender-based violence, and children.

It is important not to overlook the specific needs and vulnerabilities faced by women and the perilous coping mechanisms they are sometimes forced to resort to. It is crucial to address these risks, integrating women's specific needs into humanitarian response strategies, striving for their empowerment and protection, and recognizing their significant role in peacebuilding. At the same time, and once again, women in Syria have taken over the role of first responders. It is time that their efforts and capacities are being acknowledged enabling them to actively participate in humanitarian programming, negotiation and decision-making processes.

In conclusion, we highlight the importance of keeping the humanitarian imperative at the center of our debates. Our shared responsibility is to provide the Syrian people with the chance to escape this cycle of suffering and build a better future.