

**Joint Statement Brazil and Switzerland**  
**Security Council meeting on Syria, 28 February 2023**

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

Let me also first thank Special Envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, Under Secretary General and Emergency Response Coordinator, Martin Griffiths as well as Syria Response Director for Save the Children, Rasha Muhrez for their briefings, their hard work, and the Secretary-General for his report.

We would like to express our heartfelt condolences to all victims of the earthquakes, to all those affected in Türkiye and in Syria. Our gratitude also goes to all humanitarian actors for their tireless efforts on the ground, for ensuring that aid is reaching those in need, while having been impacted by this tragedy themselves as we heard from Rasha Muhrez.

Three weeks into the earthquakes and their many aftershocks, humanitarian needs in Syria are greater than ever. People in the regions directly affected are surviving with insufficient food supply, unsafe housing, inadequate medical support, and high exposure to a multitude of protection risks. Among them are the millions of Syrians who had been internally displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict.

The need for food, shelter, heating, drinking water, medicines, fuel and broader gender-responsive protection services is high across all regions of Syria. The earthquakes have exacerbated already existing vulnerabilities and inequalities across the country. These relate to age, gender and health conditions. It is therefore crucial that the humanitarian response ensures that the distinct needs of different groups of people are met. Sexual and gender-based violence risks are particularly high in this context of destruction and displacement.

We commend the efforts made by so many countries in order to enable humanitarian assistance in Türkiye and Syria.

We are encouraged to hear that UN convoys have been able to deliver aid through the three border crossings of Bab al-Hawa, Bab al-Salam and Al Ra'ee since the February 13 understanding between Syria and the U.N.

According to OCHA, as we have just heard, over 400 trucks have done so within three weeks. We hope that the number of trucks loaded with humanitarian assistance will increase in the near future, if more funding is provided for the response. The necessary conditions for the swift, unhindered delivery of aid and essential services to take place in a sustained and predictable way must be ensured and maintained.

Furthermore, we welcome the fact that four cross-border UN interagency missions could be conducted so far to the area affected by the earthquakes. Such missions are important in order to get assessments of the situation on the ground and to respond accordingly, and we hope that they can continue.

It is important that aid continue to be distributed without major security incidents on the ground. We urge all parties to further allow and facilitate rapid, safe, unhindered and sustainable

humanitarian access in all regions of Syria. In this regard all modalities of aid – including cross-border and cross-line – need to be available to humanitarian actors in order to ensure rapid, unhindered and sustainable humanitarian access.. We call on all parties to protect the work of humanitarian actors by respecting international humanitarian law, and by ceasing hostilities as they only add suffering to the civilian population.

Madam President,

As co-penholders, we remain guided by the humanitarian imperative and by the needs of the people in Syria. The consequences of such a devastating natural disaster cannot be subject to politicization.

We encourage all UN member states to increase their support to the urgent humanitarian appeals in response to the earthquakes as well as the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2022-2023 including the Pooled Funds. This should ensure the expeditious provision of life-saving aid as well as the continuity of already existing programmes and projects, such as those of early-recovery.

The humanitarian situation in Syria was already worse than ever before this earthquake. Over a decade of ongoing hostilities have left long-term consequences, and 15.3 million Syrians throughout the country were expected to need assistance this year.

This number will now further increase. It is our duty to help them.

Thank you Madam President.