

## Joint Statement Brazil-Switzerland 24 July 2023

Madam President,

I speak on behalf of Brazil and Switzerland, co-penholders of the Syrian humanitarian file. I will after speak in my national capacity.

We welcome Syria's, Türkiye's and Iran's participation in today's meeting. We thank Special Envoy Geir Pedersen and Mr Ramesh Rajasingham for their briefings.

On July 13, the Permanent Mission of Syria informed of its government's decision to open the Bab al-Hawa border crossing for the UN's use for six months. We appreciate the increasing cooperation between the Syrian government and OCHA for the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people.

While the decision by the Syrian government can be a basis for the UN to lawfully conduct cross-border humanitarian operations through Bab al-Hawa, we have listened very carefully to OCHA's concerns about the 13 July Note Verbale. We have also heard various other stakeholders, both governmental and nongovernmental, in this regard. We welcome the willingness of both, OCHA and the Syrian government, to discuss the terms under which humanitarian operations through Bab al-Hawa could continue.

We reiterate that whatever solution is found to continue alleviating the plight of Syrians must fully comply with international humanitarian law and be fully consistent with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. This means that aid must reach all those in need without any discrimination. According to international humanitarian law, parties are under the obligation to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief to civilians in need.

Financing instruments and monitoring are key issues to take into consideration in any continued cross-border operation by the UN. We recall that all access modalities – including cross-line aid deliveries – remain a crucial part of the whole of Syria approach.

Madam President,

As we know, Bab Al-Hawa has been the primary hub for UN humanitarian operations into Northwest Syria, handling 85% of deliveries.

It is, therefore, with concern that we note that no UN aid has entered through that location since the cross-border mechanism expired almost two weeks ago. This only adds to the anxiety of the millions of people in need in Northwest Syria who do not know if they will receive lifesaving aid. We must not forget the human price attached to this kind of uncertainty.

We remain hopeful that an understanding can be reached to resume its use by the UN and, as co-penholders, stand ready for any necessary support.

Madam President,

We remain concerned about the very low funding for the humanitarian response plan. The UN and its partners require increased support to address growing needs in Syria, particularly after the February earthquakes. We echo the calls for more humanitarian funding, including for early recovery and livelihood programs in all areas of Syria. At the same time we recognize that donor countries need predictability of humanitarian activities and trust in the implementability and continuation of agreements for continued funding. Monitoring and reporting on the delivery of humanitarian aid plays a crucial part in building this assurance.

As co-penholders, Switzerland and Brazil have been guided solely by the humanitarian imperative. We remain committed to working with Council Members, OCHA, Syria and other interested stakeholders, as well as the humanitarian actors. We have been doing so from the start; we have kept doing it since Tuesday 11th; and we will keep doing it to ensure that the ultimate goal of assisting the Syrian population is fully met and our role as co-penholders is fulfilled at its best.