

## High Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Response in Yemen Geneva, 25 April 2017

### Concept Note

*“Yemen is the largest humanitarian crisis in the world and the Yemeni people now face the spectre of famine. They urgently need our assistance.”*

*Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and  
Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien*

### Background:

Even before the current conflict escalated in mid-March 2015, Yemen faced enormous levels of humanitarian needs stemming from years of poverty, under-development, environmental decline, intermittent conflict, and weak rule of law. Nearly two years of war have exacerbated these chronic vulnerabilities, leaving 18.8 million people in need of humanitarian or protection assistance.

The war has led to the displacement of 3.3 million people and a breakdown in public services, particularly in health care. Less than half of the health centres are functional and medicine and equipment are limited. Access to safe water remains a challenge and the lack of proper sanitation increases the risk of communicable diseases. Already a cholera outbreak had to be contained in parts of the country. Currently, almost half a million children are severely food insecure. A child under the age of five now dies every 10 minutes of preventable causes.

Yemen is also the most food insecure country in the world – more than 17 million people are food insecure and a staggering 7 million people do not know where their next meal is coming from. Millions of Yemenis now also face the risk of a man-made famine.

As the situation worsens day by day for millions of vulnerable people in Yemen, we must act together to reduce the avoidable human suffering. The international community and parties to the conflict need to support the immediate scale up of humanitarian assistance, including the provision of much needed resources and facilitate unimpeded access to all parts of the country.

If we fail to act swiftly, assertively, and in a concerted effort, famine is a possible and a realistic scenario for 2017. Acute malnutrition will affect the development of a whole generation, millions of displaced will struggle to survive and civilians will continue to bear the brunt of the war.

For 2017, the United Nations and humanitarian partners launched an international appeal for US\$2.1 billion to provide neutral and impartial life-saving assistance and protection to millions of people in Yemen. Support to the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP), along with unearmarked core support to UN agencies and humanitarian partners, is the most effective and

efficient investment, as the plans are evidence-based, strategic and prioritized ensuring a coordinated and principled humanitarian response.

## The Event:

Against the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, the threat of famine and the urgent need for resources, the United Nations and the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland will convene a High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, in Geneva on 25 April.

## Co-Hosts:

Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency António Guterres  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Her Excellency Margot Wallström  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, His Excellency Didier Burkhalter

## Objectives:

- Raise awareness and advocate for the affected people by providing attention of the international community on the acute humanitarian needs in Yemen.
- Mobilise urgent resources in support of the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) as the most effective, efficient and strategic investment to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection.
- Promote respect for international humanitarian and human right law and advocate for protection of civilians; safe and unimpeded access and accountability.
- While not interfering with immediate, life-saving response, ensure that humanitarian and development engagement contributes to building resilience and reducing needs, risk and vulnerability, in line with the New Way of Working.
- Advocate for an urgent cessation of hostilities and a political solution for Yemen.

## Participation and level of representation

The event will be convened from 10h00–17h00. Registration is mandatory. All Member States are invited, as well as leaders of relevant regional organizations, development finance institutions, UN agencies, funds and programmes, and representatives from relevant humanitarian non-governmental organizations.

Member States are asked to participate at ministerial level. The maximum size of delegation is four (head of delegation +3). The co-hosts encourage participants to ensure gender balance in their delegations.

Member States are strongly encouraged to commit financial support ahead of the event in view of the urgency of the situation. Any contributions and pledges made as of 1 January 2017 will be counted towards the overall event announcement.

A substantive ministerial level working lunch will be organized by the Governments of Switzerland and Sweden. Additional details on the lunch will be shared in due course.

## Event format and Agenda

*Brief video presentation:* During the opening, a short film will be screened capturing the humanitarian issues in Yemen and highlighting the need for solidarity with those affected by the humanitarian crisis in the country.

*Opening statements:* will be presented by the co-hosts (the United Nations, Sweden, and Switzerland).

*Statements and announcements:* Statements/announcement of pledges by participating delegates **should be limited to 3 minutes maximum**. The chairs will give the floor for Minister-level delegates followed by other participants.

*Closing session:* Closing remarks by the Secretary-General.

## Contacts

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