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Secretary-General

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SECRETARY-GENERAL SAYS \$2.4 BILLION IN PLEDGES AT KUWAIT CONFERENCE PROVES SYRIANS

'NOT FORGOTTEN', ASSURES NEIGHBOURS THEY WILL NOT HAVE TO SHOULDER BURDEN ALONE

Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's remarks at the closing of the second International Humanitarian Pledging Conference on Syria, in Kuwait City, 15 January:

I thank His Highness Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait, for hosting this successful Second International Humanitarian Pledging Conference on Syria.

I am especially grateful for his outstanding and generous contribution of \$500 million. Truly, this has inspired all participants. His leadership is a shining example of human solidarity and constructive engagement for the collective future of this region and our world. I applaud the Government and people of Kuwait and offer my and our most sincere appreciation.

I thank the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union and the United States and many other donor countries. I also offer my heartfelt gratitude to all of the humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and other partners helping those affected by the Syrian conflict. I thank all participants for your commitment and support.

Today, more than \$2.4 billion were pledged by delegations and I really thank you for all your strong support. More precise figures will be announced shortly. Seven new countries pledged this year that did not pledge last year. Twenty donors increased their pledges in comparison to 2013 pledges.

Your pledges prove that the people devastated by this conflict are not forgotten. You are also sending a strong signal to the neighbouring countries — that you appreciate their generosity, and that they will not be left to shoulder the burden alone.

This Conference has succeeded in raising support for the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan and the Refugee Response Plan over the next six months. This money will allow humanitarian agencies and their partners to fund urgent priorities.

We will be able to send emergency food supplies to hungry people inside Syria. We will provide medicines and equipment to treat the trauma that has affected so many civilians. We will conduct vaccination campaigns for children. And we will furnish more clean drinking water. Across the region, we will provide emergency shelter to refugees. We will put more children in better classes. We will increase the distribution of cash vouchers that help build local economies. And we will take many more measures to stem the tide of suffering caused by this devastating conflict.

I hope that the international community will build on these pledges throughout the year. To ensure proper follow-up, we will form a top donors group of those who pledged large amounts. It will be convened

by Dr. Abdullah al-Matouq, my Humanitarian Envoy for Kuwait, and Valerie Amos, my Emergency Relief Coordinator. I have asked them to organize regular meetings on coordinating relief and disbursing funds.

We need progress on these all three dimensions of this conflict — humanitarian, disarmament and political.

The world was repulsed by the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The Joint OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons)-UN Mission is working to meet tight timelines for the destruction of Syria's chemical arsenal. I also count on Member States to provide political support to end this conflict.

There is no military solution. That is why we will convene the second International Conference on Syria a week from today in Geneva. We must launch a political process, move to a transitional governing body and stop the violence.

I again call on the parties to immediately halt their attacks; protect civilians; and allow humanitarian aid to reach all those who need it. The parties must respond to the generosity we have seen today by letting relief aid reach all of the besieged areas.

At the outset of our meeting, we saw a moving film featuring a young Syrian girl. She said: "When I grow up, I want to be a doctor, so I can help children. If they [...] don't have any money, I will give them medicine so they can get better."

This girl's name is Safaa. I met her yesterday while visiting a refugee camp in Iraq, in Erbil. She has been through a terrible ordeal but she has not lost her smile. Safaa said: "It's sad, but it is not going to stop me." This beautiful and hopeful child deserves the best from us.

Safaa — and millions of others like her — are the future of Syria. We are here to help them today — so that they can contribute to our world tomorrow.

Let us be proud of the solidarity we have demonstrated at this important Pledging Conference. And let us do even more to ensure that Syria and its people receive the support they need as we work for a more peaceful and stable future for the country and region. I thank you for your strong support and leadership and commitment.

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