

KEY MESSAGES

SUPPORTING SYRIA & THE REGION
LONDON, 4 FEBRUARY 2016

- 1** Almost five years after it began, the Syria conflict is reaching new levels of destructiveness and horror – and children especially are paying a terrible price. Apart from the unrelenting violence, the lack of food and clean water, and the increased risk of disease, malnutrition and exploitation, children are losing their hopes of an education and a future.
- 2** Syria is the world's biggest and most urgent humanitarian crisis – and the international community has a responsibility to help the millions of Syrians who have fled their homes in fear of violence – and who are displaced inside the country or are now refugees living outside.
- 3** The conflict has displaced 6.5 million people inside the country and forced over four million others to become refugees. No wonder so many families from Syria are among the desperate refugees arriving in Europe over the past year--- and among the many who tragically perished in the attempt.
- 4** This brutal war is crippling the hopes and prospects of an entire generation of children. More than 5,000 schools (close to one third) can no longer be used; some have suffered direct attack. Teachers and students have been targeted and killed.
- 5** Today there are 2.8 million Syrian children aged 5-17 yrs who are out of school, whether inside Syria or living as refugees in five host countries. With no end in sight to the conflict, this huge number will continue to grow. These children are becoming a “lost generation”. We must do all we can to stop that happening.
- 6** Inside Syria, more than two million children are out of school (aged 5-17) and an estimated 1.4 million others are at risk of dropping out. At least 20% of children have to cross active lines of fire just to take their examinations. That shows how much education means to those children and their families.
- 7** The forces that are crushing individual lives are destroying the prospects for the whole region, beyond Syria. Young minds distorted by hatred and fear will need extraordinary support to contribute fully to the development of their societies. But with education and other opportunities, the same children can contribute to rebuilding their country when peace eventually returns.
- 8** Since 2013, the No Lost Generation Initiative has brought together partners from the UN, NGOs and international donors. Its broad objective is to get children back into learning, expand learning space and provide a protective environment for children and young people, whether in Syria or in neighbouring countries.
- 9** The NLG partners believe that providing some four million Syrian and other vulnerable children in the region with the chance to learn must be a top priority for donors in London later this week. In total, in 2016-17, US\$1.4 billion is needed to ensure that they are all provided with education opportunities that will bring children back to learning; protect those who are at risk of dropping out; expand safe and inclusive learning environments; recruit and train more teachers; improve the quality of education, and support the development of technical, vocational and life-skills opportunities for youth and adolescents.
- 10** At the same time, the governments attending the London conference must put much more pressure on parties to the conflict inside Syria, those who support them, and all those engaged in military action in Syria to immediately end attacks on schools and education facilities in accordance with International Humanitarian Law.