

Parameters and Principles of UN assistance in Syria

(October 2017)

The following initial parameters and principles shall apply to all UN actors operating in Syria in order to ensure support and assistance is provided to those in need in all areas of Syria. Note that these parameters and principles are to be developed further and would also require setting a due-diligence process to ensure implementation. These principles and parameters, including any further revisions, must also be consistent with the **principles of the Charter of the UN and relevant Security Council resolutions**.

PARAMETERS:

- Life-saving humanitarian needs remain enormous in Syria and assistance delivery through the most direct routes remains critical. **Humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence apply to life-saving humanitarian assistance as well as early recovery and resilience activities with humanitarian objectives.** The UN, with the active engagement of the Secretary-General, will endeavour to secure the maximum possible flow of humanitarian assistance into Syria, including through the most direct route, ensuring non-interference with its operations, to sustain operations envisaged in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).
- The HRP must remain humanitarian in order to ensure the United Nations can deliver on essential humanitarian activities to save lives and ensure the basic needs for people. Development or reconstruction activities that are outside this will need to be reflected in other frameworks that are by nature a longer negotiation with governments. This is essential given the complex legal and political issues involved.
- Early recovery and resilience activities in Syria, as currently outlined in the HRP, offer an opportunity to go beyond immediate life-saving assistance and offer **minimum living conditions** for local affected communities.
- The UN will advocate for the full range of durable solutions for IDPs and refugees, in the whole of Syria, support host communities and promote rights-based approaches in accordance with international law and standards. The UN will not promote the return of refugees and IDP, but will support returnees with a view to ensuring the safe, dignified, informed, voluntary and sustainable nature of return and reintegration, as well as the right of Syrians to seek and enjoy asylum.
- **Only once there is a genuine and inclusive political transition negotiated by the parties, would the UN be ready to facilitate reconstruction.**

PRINCIPLES

- The aforementioned activities are delivered under the following principles:
 - Principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence in mind and keeping with basic principles of **human rights-based approach** to programming, including participation, empowerment, local ownership, and sustainability.
 - Assistance must be **prioritized based on the needs of the population** (rather than government driven) with a particular focus on the needs of vulnerable groups and individuals, in a manner that protects human rights as an outcome.

- It must be delivered in a fair, equitable, non-discriminatory and non-politicized manner.
 - The UN shall work directly with communities and households, such that United Nations assistance is delivered with uniformity throughout Syria, regardless of zones of influence.
 - The UN shall consider carefully human rights and protection implications, especially with regard to where and how assistance is provided. UN assistance must not assist parties who have allegedly committed war crimes or crimes against humanity.
- UN assistance shall be determined consciously and explicitly without prejudice to the goals of accountability for serious human rights violations, and the goals of legitimate, equitable, and sustainable political settlement.
 - The specific needs and vulnerabilities of women shall be at the forefront of UN response planning and implementation.

Implementation and next steps

- A multi-disciplinary working group under the auspices of the UN Syria Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) will monitor adherence to the principles and parameters agreed by the UN system in this strategy, including political, legal, and human rights as well as humanitarian and development dimensions, and will report on this to the Secretary-General.
- UN agencies, funds and programmes should strengthen internal control, monitoring and tracking systems for the implementation of UN and partner programmes in Syria, with a view of taking all reasonable steps to avoid the diversion of or interference with aid assistance.
- A consultative needs assessment would be required that takes account of both needs and principles, including future expectations. Rigorous standards of due diligence should apply, drawing from the principles of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.
- The UN shall apply the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights in all areas of its work in Syria, including in its post-agreement planning.
- UN funding modalities should be independent of both government and donors, to the extent possible. In this context, the UN, with the active engagement and advocacy of the Secretary-General, will endeavour to ensure sufficient donor support.
- These agreed parameters shall form the basis of common positions and coordinated advocacy with key member states and donors.