

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I also welcome the German initiative to convene us all. Denmark shares the ambition that this conference can act as a framework for continued partnerships.

First of all, I would like to directly address the countries neighbouring Syria as well as Egypt. Your hospitality and generosity has provided victims of the conflict in Syria with safety, shelter and relief. You have saved the lives of many Syrians. You should take pride in this, which also commands international respect. However, I realize that pride and respect is insufficient when confronted with the monumental challenges that the presence of refugees pose.

The challenges will only be effectively solved with a political solution in Syria creating the preconditions for voluntary return of refugees. But the light at the end of the tunnel is dim.

Until peace in Syria is a reality, the continued effort to ensure protection for refugees is imperative. The challenges demand joint efforts and alignment of national and international aid response as well as the integration of humanitarian and development programmes.

Denmark therefore supports the preparation of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan. However, it is crucial that regional

prioritization is based on common needs and in line with national plans. For that purpose, the UN should as soon as possible redeploy an empowered regional humanitarian coordinator covering both the humanitarian and development dimensions.

Honoured colleagues,

We need to avoid that hospitality is leading to hostility. Therefore, Denmark has taken lead in a 3-year Regional Development and Protection Programme in support of refugees and affected local communities in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. The implementation has just kicked off. The objective is to improve the protection of refugees and support socio-economic development in host countries through generation of employment in line with national plans. So far, this initiative is also supported by the European Commission, Ireland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and the Czech Republic.

It is crucial also to fund the response plan for Syria in order to reduce the refugee outflow. Yesterday, Denmark provided 10 mio. USD split between WFP's and ICRC's regional response, the new Humanitarian Pooled Fund for cross-border activities in Syria and the new pooled fund for Lebanon. This brings our total humanitarian support to 150 million USD since the start of the

conflict. We intend to stand by the Syrian refugees and the countries in the region until a durable solution has been reached.

I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak.