Aleppo, Syria, 27 March, 2015 – Ahead of next week's third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria in Kuwait, the World Health Organization (WHO) appeals for US$ 124 million to continue its support to health services in the Syrian Arab Republic.

"Scenes of severely injured children and civilians are yet another stark reminder of the immense and continuous suffering of the Syrian people" says Ms. Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Syria, who visited Al Razy hospital in Aleppo shortly after scores of war wounded people were brought in on 23 March.

It is estimated that there are more than 1.3 million people in need of health assistance in Aleppo. Last year, WHO delivered almost 3 million medical treatments to the Governorate, of which 1.2 million treatments reached opposition-controlled and besieged areas.

Only four out of eleven public hospitals remain operational in Aleppo and all health facilities are overcrowded and experiencing critical shortages of medical supplies.

**Worsening situation across the country**

Across the Syrian Arab Republic, 57% of public hospitals are only partially functioning or completely out of service.

Local production of medicines has been reduced by 70% and many life-saving treatments are not available.

The number of available health professionals has fallen to approximately 45% of 2011 levels and there are severe shortages of surgeons, anaesthesiologists, laboratory professionals, and female health professionals.

The water supply infrastructure has been destroyed and the current availability of safe water inside the Syrian Arab Republic is now at one third of pre-crisis levels.

"As weather temperatures become warmer, There is an increased risk of waterborne diseases. Therefore, improving hygiene conditions and practices is essential to protecting the population," says Ms Hoff.

In 2014, WHO supported the delivery of an increased number of medical treatments which rose to more than 13.8 million treatments compared to 6.1 million in 2013. Almost one third of WHO's supplies and equipment were delivered to hard-to-reach and opposition-controlled areas

So far In 2015, almost 4.7 million beneficiaries were reached with health assistance.

## Increased funding urgently needed

However for 2015, WHO has received virtually no new funds for its humanitarian operations in Syria and in neighbouring countries.

“We are unable to sustain our operations as the funding gap increases at an alarming rate. We call upon donors to continue to support our efforts to provide basic health services to the Syrian people” says Ms Hoff.

“The Kuwait pledging conference comes at a crucial moment to show the world`s commitment to assisting those affected by the crisis,” she adds.

More than 16.million Syrians and Syrian refugees are in need of humanitarian health support in 2015, for which WHO and its health partners require US$ 687 million.