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**Executive Committee of the  
High Commissioner's Programme  
Sixty-fourth session**  
Geneva, 30 September - 4 October 2013  
Item 3 of the provisional agenda  
**High-Level Segment on Solidarity and Burden-Sharing  
with Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees**

**Concept paper**

**Introduction**

1. Over the past two and a half years, the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic has resulted in immeasurable human suffering and has expanded from one of the worst humanitarian crises in decades to become a serious threat to peace and security in the Middle East and beyond. Since the beginning, neighbouring countries – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey – have generously provided safety, assistance and shelter to Syrians seeking refuge. As of 3 September 2013, some two million Syrians have approached governments and UNHCR for registration across the Middle East and North Africa. Among them are more than one million refugee children.
2. While demonstrating continuing generosity, the host countries are facing tremendous economic, social and political pressures. Capacities of host countries and communities have been stretched to the limit. In recent months, this has led several governments to manage their borders more strictly, affecting refugees' access to safety.
3. Given the profound impact on Syrian refugees and host communities and the worrying security implications for the entire Middle East region, the international community cannot continue to treat the human consequences of the Syria situation on neighbouring countries solely as a humanitarian emergency. Instead, a multifaceted approach is required – offering refugee-hosting countries robust humanitarian and development assistance, through bilateral and multilateral channels.
4. With this in mind, the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme includes – as an integral part of its agenda – a humanitarian and non-political High-Level Segment on Solidarity and Burden-Sharing with Countries Hosting Syrian Refugees, to be held at the ministerial level.

**Objectives of the High-Level Segment**

5. The High-Level Segment has the following broad objectives:
  - Seizing the attention of the international community to the heavy burden borne by the host countries as they continue to receive and host millions of Syrian refugees.

- Securing commitments to a multifaceted response based on international responsibility-sharing that will:
  - safeguard access to protection for those fleeing the conflict and ensure freedom of movement, in the region and further afield, consistent with international refugee law;
  - deliver material assistance for refugees and host communities, including immediate solutions to the pressing humanitarian problems of the most vulnerable;
  - mobilize additional financial support to meet community development needs in host countries;
  - alleviate the burden on refugee-hosting countries, including the increased development and other challenges this entails;
  - ensure complementarity between humanitarian and development actors in addressing emergency economic, social and environmental challenges; and
  - enhance resettlement, other forms of humanitarian admission or transfers to third countries, including opportunities for family reunification, for Syrians having fled the country.

### **Organizational details and speakers list**

6. The High-Level Segment is being convened at the ministerial level. Invitations to the sixty-fourth session of the Executive Committee have been extended to all United Nations Member States and observers, including UN agencies, specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, ICRC and IFRC. General information on practical arrangements for the sixty-fourth session is provided in the Information Note which accompanied the invitation and is available on the website: [www.unhcr.org/excom](http://www.unhcr.org/excom).

7. The sixty-fourth session of the Executive Committee opens on Monday, 30 September at 10:00 am. The High-Level Segment is the third item on the agenda, following the opening and adoption of the agenda, and is expected to continue through Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning. Delegations wishing to sign up in advance for a speaking slot during the High-Level Segment should contact the Secretariat by email ([hqhls@unhcr.org](mailto:hqhls@unhcr.org)).

8. A background conference room paper for the High-Level Segment will be made available to all participants in advance of the session.

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