Statement by InterAction Member CEOs on the Third Anniversary of the Syrian Civil War

March 6, 2014

The undersigned, member CEOs of InterAction, the largest alliance of U.S.-based international relief and development organizations, wish to express our deep concern for the families of the Syrian Arab Republic as the war enters its fourth year with no end in sight. Our concern is mixed with horror and frustration – horror at the impact of brutal tactics on the lives of civilians and frustration at the inability of the peace process to bring the violence to a halt and allow for effective humanitarian action.

The scale of the Syria crisis continues to increase exponentially. Nine million Syrians, approaching half of the country’s pre-war population, have fled their homes. Six and a half million people are internally displaced. Of this number, three million are trapped in hard-to-reach or besieged areas; an estimated 250,000 have been cut off from assistance for over a year. The suffering of Syrian civilians is alarming and overwhelming, with women and children disproportionately vulnerable to the violence and the effects of the war.

In the face of this immense crisis, InterAction member agencies are working to relieve the suffering of the Syrian people, both inside the country and in neighboring ones, where nearly 2.5 million have fled. In close cooperation with heroic Syrian aid workers and affected people themselves, our community is feeding people and providing urgent medical care, while attempting to address long-term needs for education, jobs, and shelter. But the sheer scale of the crisis and the viciousness of the civil war inside the country make it impossible to come anywhere close to meeting the basic needs of vulnerable Syrians.

On this third anniversary of the Syrian civil war, we commit to doing everything we can to ensure that the people of Syria do not lose another year to bloodshed and suffering. We stand with the people of Syria, and people around the world, in calling for our leaders to make the same commitment. Specifically we call on:

1. All parties to the conflict in Syria to work with the United Nations and donor governments to immediately allow and facilitate unfettered humanitarian access throughout Syria in keeping with the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 2139.

2. Donor governments to meet the 2014 UN humanitarian funding appeal of $6.5 billion for the Syria crisis.

3. Donor governments to continue to support neighboring countries and host communities that are generously supporting refugees fleeing the conflict, including support for training programs and job opportunities that encourage self-reliance.

4. The international community to increase resettlement of refugees from Syria, particularly the most vulnerable, to third countries and ensure that resettlement and asylum is a component of the overall humanitarian response.
InterAction’s #WithSyria CEO Statement

Sara Pottscheidt Lisherness
Director
Presbyterian Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministry

Michel Gabaudan
President
Refugees International

Ann Koontz
Executive Director
Relief International

Susan W. Hayes
President and CEO
ReSurge International

Carolyn Miles
President and CEO
Save the Children

Jack Blanks
Executive Director
Seva Foundation

Emily Sperling
President
ShelterBox USA

Kathy Calvin
President and CEO
United Nations Foundation

Denise Honeycutt
Deputy General Secretary
United Methodist Committee on Relief

Lavinia Limón
President and CEO
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

Lynn Malooy
Chief Administrative Officer
Water for South Sudan

Rodney Ferguson
President and CEO
Winrock International

Jacinta Tegman
CEO
World Concern

Rick Leach
CEO
World Food Program USA

Melanie Macdonald
President and CEO
World Neighbors

Andrew Ryskamp
Director
World Renew

Richard Stearns
CEO
World Vision