

## **European Humanitarian Forum 2023: Statement by Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Tobias Billström**

Brussels, 20 March 2023

*As delivered*

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, we have heard this morning, that we meet in a time of unprecedented humanitarian needs. In just three years, the number of people relying on humanitarian assistance to survive has more than doubled.

Since last year, Russia's illegal war and unprovoked full-scale invasion has left 18 million Ukrainians urgently needing humanitarian aid. Continuing our support to Ukraine in every way, including through extensive humanitarian assistance, remains an absolute priority for Sweden.

While doing so, we must also continue to support the hundreds of millions of people in desperate need in other parts of the world. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, a breadbasket of the world, has significantly worsened global food insecurity for those who already had the least.

Sweden is proud to be a top humanitarian donor, and the second largest donor out of the EU Member States. In response to this global humanitarian emergency, Sweden will increase its humanitarian contribution this year. Today, I am pleased to announce an initial contribution of over 800 million euros in humanitarian funding for 2023.

But our humanitarian commitment is not only financial. Sweden continues to work actively to ensure effective delivery of life-saving aid. We call for full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access – always and everywhere – and we urge all parties to conflict to fulfil their obligations under International Humanitarian Law.

We are too often brutally reminded of the extraordinary risks that front-line aid workers face, all over the world. Let me close by expressing my personal gratitude and profound admiration for all humanitarian workers working tirelessly to save lives on the ground. Let us take this opportunity to jointly pledge our support to their indispensable work.

Thank you very much.