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Seventy-seventh year

9017th meeting

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Dame Barbara Woodward	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil	Mr. Costa Filho
	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Gabon	Ms. Bongo
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	India	Mr. Asokan
	Ireland	Mr. Flynn
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. Ochoa Martínez
	Norway	Ms. Heimerback
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Mr. Grundberg is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Mr. Grundberg: At the start of this year, I told the Council that the military escalation was among the worst we had seen in Yemen for years (see S/PV.8946). Now, I am pleased to tell members that there is light at the end of the tunnel. After some three months of bilateral negotiations, the parties have agreed to a United Nations initiative for a two-month, nationwide, renewable truce — the first nationwide truce in six years.

The truce commenced with the start of the holy month of Ramadan and includes provisions to improve the freedom of movement of goods and civilian men, women and children. So far, the agreement is broadly holding. It offers a moment of respite for Yemenis and a moment of possibility for pursuing peace, but it requires continued commitment on the part of the parties and broad support from the region and the international community to make sure it holds and becomes a turning point towards peace.

Since the start of the truce, there have been encouraging signs that halting the cyclical patterns of escalation is possible. There has been a significant reduction in violence and civilian casualties. There have been no confirmed air strikes inside Yemen or cross-border attacks emanating from Yemen. There is more fuel flowing through Al-Hudaydah ports into the country. Preparations are under way for commercial

flights to depart from Sana'a airport for the first time since 2016. My Office is working to bring the parties together to open roads in Taiz and other governorates. The impact of that on Yemeni lives, as well as the symbolism, should not be underestimated.

Although the truce is broadly holding, reports of military operations, particularly around Ma'rib, are concerning and must be addressed urgently through the mechanisms established by the truce. Many Yemenis have told me they fear that the truce will be exploited and used to set the stage for a new escalation. This fear is understandable, given the lack of trust and past experience, and I want to remind the parties that the foundational principle of the truce is that the respite it offers should be used to make progress towards ending the war, and not to escalate it. The parties have publicly committed to de-escalation, and that is what the Yemeni people and the international community expect of them. My Office has established coordination mechanisms for all aspects of the truce, and I encourage the parties to engage seriously and meaningfully in those mechanisms.

I want to emphasize that easing restrictions on the movement of goods and civilian men, women and children is a priority for the truce. We have already seen a number of ships enter Al-Hudaydah ports, something that is having a positive impact on the lives of civilians. Flights to and from Sana'a airport need to resume, and we are working with partners to make that happen as quickly as possible. I also want to emphasize that reaching an agreement to open roads in Taiz and other areas is a priority. I know that the people of Taiz have waited too long for the moment when they can move freely into and out of the city. It is imperative that serious work be done in Taiz to open roads, allowing civilians on either side of the front lines, both in the city and the surrounding areas, to go to work and school and facilitate trade.

I want to thank the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah for showing the required leadership and making the necessary compromises to reach that agreement. I want to use this opportunity to encourage them to continue implementing all elements of the truce. I also want to recognize the crucial roles played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman in supporting the negotiations that got us here.

The members of the Security Council also played a critical role in backing the talks. I also want to express my gratitude to the Member States that are actively

working with us to set up some of the mechanisms relating to the parameters of the truce. I would also like to recognize the contributions of Yemeni peace actors. This truce builds on the long-standing and tireless efforts of Yemeni civic actors, youth groups and women peace activists to stop the war and improve the situation of civilians across the country. I will continue working with them to generate additional momentum for peace.

The truce is the result of the commitments of the parties, and it enjoys significant international support, but it is still fragile and temporary. We need to work collectively and intensively in these coming weeks to ensure that it does not unravel. I will continue engaging the parties to implement, strengthen and extend the truce. That was the focus of my recent visits to Muscat and Sana'a. I am grateful for the constructive conversations I had in Sana'a, during which I received reaffirmed commitment to all aspects of implementing the truce. I also discussed next steps on strengthening the truce and further steps beyond the two months.

There have been other positive signs of progress on confidence-building in recent weeks. We have been making headway on the exchange of detainees, and I urge the parties to expeditiously agree on details of the release so that Yemeni families may be reunited with their loved ones as soon as possible. My Office and the International Committee of the Red Cross, as co-chairs of the Supervisory Committee, will support them in that endeavour.

At the end of March and beginning of April, the Gulf Cooperation Council hosted consultations with hundreds of Yemenis in Riyadh in stated support of a peaceful solution to the conflict. Several conclusions emerged from those consultations, including the need to eschew military solutions and commit to political dialogue under United Nations auspices. It demonstrated the importance of regional organizations in supporting United Nations peace efforts.

On 7 April, President Hadi took the decision to delegate his full authorities to a newly-formed Presidential Leadership Council. In line with the Security Council, I welcome the creation of and the assumption of responsibilities by the Presidential Leadership Council of the Government of Yemen that reflects a broader array of political actors. The Security Council has expressed its expectation that the formation of the Presidential Leadership Council will form an important step towards stability and an inclusive Yemeni-led and -owned political settlement

under United Nations auspices. I look forward to engaging with the Presidential Leadership Council to continue to work towards that end.

I also welcome the economic package that has been announced by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The truce is a chance to steer Yemen in a new direction, but if we are to consolidate that path and prevent a slide back into fighting, there needs to be progress on the political front as well. Through dialogue, Yemenis need to determine and own a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

Looking ahead, I will continue to engage the parties to build upon the elements in the truce, both in order to sustain it and as part of my multi-track process. Those efforts will also be informed by my consultations. At the end of March, I completed the first round of consultations and discussions with diverse Yemeni men and women, including political parties, economic and security experts, civic actors and the wider Yemeni public. The aim was to understand their priorities for economic, security and political elements that will inform my framework for a multi-track process to reach a durable settlement. I will hold further consultations after Ramadan.

The main message that has emerged from the consultations so far is that Yemenis want the war to end. They want to live in safety and security, to be able to care for their families, to have access to public services and to exercise their rights. Yemenis across political and geographical divides have stressed the dire economic situation in the country, pointing to the need to resume salary payments and service delivery, address the rising cost of living; ensure the freedom of movement of people and goods, and bring together economic institutions.

Many Yemenis have pointed to the need for accountable and effective governance at all levels, including at the local level. Several groups from southern Yemen have stressed the need to address the southern question in a lasting manner. Different Yemenis have pointed to the need for security arrangements to include local security actors and civil society and be informed by the needs of the civilian population.

Women have participated actively in those consultations, and I am very encouraged by that. They have highlighted the disproportionate impact of the conflict and economic strains on them. They have also

called for their inclusion in peace talks and for protection for women and girls from all forms of violence.

Those priorities will shape next steps and my overall approach to reaching a sustainable solution. The truce offers a rare opportunity to pivot towards a peaceful future. The coming weeks will be a test of the parties' commitments to upholding their obligations. This is a time to build trust and confidence, which will not be easy after more than seven years of conflict. Yemen will need the international community's support as much as ever to maintain the momentum and move towards finding an inclusive, peaceful and sustainable end to the conflict. I will need the Council's redoubled efforts and support during this critical period.

The President: I thank Mr. Grundberg for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: As we have heard from Mr. Grundberg, after so many years of conflict and crisis, hope has become something of a scarce commodity in Yemen. However, today, I think we may well be hopeful that we are seeing the kinds of changes that could very possibly help pave the way towards a brighter future for the people of Yemen.

The truce that Mr. Grundberg has just described is an incredibly important step forward. It is already having a positive impact on the humanitarian situation. Despite reports of limited clashes in a few areas, mainly in Ma'rib and Taiz, hostilities have dropped sharply across the country. Civilian casualties have fallen to their lowest level in months — a major improvement after weeks of escalating conflict earlier this year.

More fuel ships are now arriving in Al-Hudaydah, helping to ease severe fuel shortages. For months, those shortages have been driving up prices, depriving people of health care and other services. That, in turn, has exposed women and girls to more risks as they travelled further and further away to seek water or cooking gas.

The truce is also aimed at facilitating the movement of people, goods and humanitarian assistance by resuming commercial flights from Sana'a airport and working to reopen roads in Taiz and other areas, as we have heard. Communities living near front lines — including in Taiz, where residents have suffered for years as their city has been encircled by conflict and its roads have been blocked — would then become easier to reach. People who need to travel abroad from

Sana'a for medical care or other reasons would at long last be able to do so.

That is all good news, so long as the truce holds. Beyond the truce itself, there may be more good news on the horizon.

The \$3-billion economic support package announced at the recent Yemeni consultations convened by the Gulf Cooperation Council is extraordinarily welcome. That includes fuel support, development assistance and, crucially, a new \$2-billion deposit in Yemen's Central Bank — split between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which should be congratulated on that decision — to help stabilize the currency. The Yemeni rial has already recovered 25 per cent of its value since the announcement of the truce. That means that food and other essential goods, nearly all of which must be imported, should soon become more affordable for the people of Yemen.

Efforts to resolve the threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* tanker are also progressing. The new United Nations proposal to replace the *FSO SAFER* vessel and, in the meantime, move the oil into a temporary vessel has received strong support. I believe Mr. David Gressly was here in New York recently, briefing members of the Council informally on the matter. Work can begin in May, if we can raise the funds — approximately \$80 million is needed.

As we have heard from Mr. Grundberg, we are also hopeful that the new Presidential Leadership Council may help to resolve fragmentation which has, at times, created challenges for aid agencies. We join Mr. Grundberg in looking forward to the new council's engagement in efforts to find a peaceful, sustainable solution to the conflict. Our thoughts are with Mr. Rashad Al-Alimi in his new leadership role.

Further, I urge the parties to seize the many opportunities offered by the current moment. Like others, I call on the Security Council and other Member States to use all avenues to support those efforts.

However, despite the hope we have for tomorrow, the fact remains today that millions of people in Yemen still urgently need humanitarian assistance to stay alive. Our partners are doing everything they can to help. This year, aid agencies are seeking just shy of \$4.3 billion to assist 17.3 million people — a campaign we saw launched the other day. The pledging event raised \$1.3 billion in pledges, and we are glad to note that additional pledges have been announced

since then, including \$300 million from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. But we are still, obviously, short of money. I want to thank all our donors for stepping up, especially those who have significantly increased their pledges since last year, like some gathered here, the United States and the European Union.

Looking ahead, we will need more, and I will continue to ask for donations. Funding remains the biggest challenge to the response. There is a serious risk that core programmes across sectors, including food aid, water, health care and support for displaced people, will keep scaling down. We have heard that risk discussed here in previous briefings. If these programmes do not get the funds they need, they will eventually stop. Allowing the aid operation to collapse would run directly counter to the very positive momentum that we are right to honour and celebrate today. We will therefore do all we can on our side to work with donors in order to ensure that these life-saving programmes survive.

There is an inter-agency humanitarian evaluation for Yemen, which has been under way for the past eight months. It is a large undertaking and will be a major help in getting us all to understand the way in which humanitarian assistance is delivered and, to some extent, counter — or perhaps, confirm — some of the comments made today about the diversion of that aid. I am hoping that the report will be out in June, and it will be presented here. It will advise us how to do our business and strengthen the relationship we have with stakeholders.

We still continue to face serious access challenges and attempted interference. Last year, half of all people in need lived in areas affected by access constraints, primarily as a result of bureaucratic impediments, more than other factors. Many of those constraints particularly affect female humanitarian workers and certain types of programming that are essential for the well-being and safety of women and girls — always the most vulnerable and at the edge of any such impediments.

But there have also been some improvements in that regard. On the west coast, for example, a new agreement with local security forces is helping to facilitate humanitarian movements through the Dhubab checkpoint, which has been a long-standing objective. We will all become familiar with that. And this year's humanitarian-needs analysis is based on assessments that collected new data from all 333 districts across Yemen. We said that in the launch. The basis on which

humanitarian priorities are made is much more solid than in years gone by. I continue to call on the parties to do everything possible to facilitate access to people in need, in line with obligations under international humanitarian law.

At the same time, we must also address challenges to the safety and security of humanitarian workers. In that connection, five months after their arrest — if that is the right word — in Sana'a, two United Nations staff detained by the Houthi authorities remain in custody. We have discussed that here before. This is in contravention of United Nations privileges and immunities. Despite past promises to release them, they have not been released.

We are also continuing to make efforts to secure the release of five United Nations staff kidnapped by armed men in Abyan in February. I cannot imagine what it is like for them and their families. They have now held by their abductors for more than 60 days, in very grave conditions. We are therefore very concerned about news of recent kidnappings.

Nevertheless, I said at the beginning of my statement that I am hopeful, and I have often been accused of being too hopeful. But my optimism is well founded in this case. Mr. Grundberg described vividly the possibilities and hopes that we must now have and the opportunities that we must now seize.

It is an extraordinary moment. Like the Special Envoy, I pay tribute to those who decided to make this moment happen. I would like to assure the Yemeni people that we will stand in solidarity with them as they seek to make this truce a permanent feature.

The President: I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I would like to start by thanking Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their briefings and to congratulate Mr. Grundberg for his phenomenal efforts to broker a truce.

For the first time since 2016, Yemenis will feel what it is like to live in relative peace. The United Kingdom commends all the parties for putting forward proposals and engaging in confidence-building measures to sustain that truce. We now need to make quick headway on getting the free flow of fuel, goods and flights, and we need to pivot quickly to political negotiations.

The United Kingdom applauds, in particular, the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Government of Yemen to deliver serious consultations and significant political reform. The formation of the presidential leadership council is a vital step. We also commend President Hadi for facilitating the peaceful transfer of power. We expect the presidential leadership council to work seriously and quickly towards political negotiations with the Houthis, and we call on the Houthis to continue to engage with the Special Envoy. We therefore welcome the Special Envoy's visit to Sana'a this week — another step forward.

As Under-Secretary-General Griffiths so powerfully articulated, as we start to see progress on the political track, it is crucial that the international community help alleviate the humanitarian crisis. Sadly, the United Nations conference raised only around a third of the funding needed, as Mr. Griffiths pointed out. We therefore strongly welcome the Saudi-Emirati \$3 billion economic package designed to revive and support the Yemeni economy and the \$300 million in Saudi humanitarian aid. It is important that all donors disburse money quickly if we are to avoid agencies making further cuts to programmes.

Ultimately, the truce provides a window of opportunity to make the lives of many Yemenis better, and it must be seized. In that context, defusing the ticking time bomb of the *FSO Safer* oil tanker becomes even more pressing. We therefore strongly support David Gressly's efforts in that regard. The United Kingdom will contribute funding, and we urge the international community, including regional partners, who will be directly affected by any oil spill, to also contribute.

I resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now call on the other members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): I would like to thank our briefers, Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths. We rarely have the opportunity to hear positive news in the Security Council on the situation in Yemen. We therefore very much welcome what we heard in their briefings this morning.

I join others in welcoming the United Nations-brokered two-month truce, which presents a precious opportunity to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of Yemenis and to improve regional stability. We sincerely

hope that the parties will seize this opportunity to build trust and to move forward towards resuming an inclusive political process.

We also strongly welcome the commitment to allow the entry of fuel ships into the port of Al-Hudaydah and to resume commercial flights in and out of Sana'a, as well as to open important roads in several governorates. Now more than ever, as we grapple with increased food insecurity across the globe, the free movement of life-saving commodities and fuel into Yemen is essential.

The significant reduction in violence, as reported by the Special Envoy, is long overdue and will be welcomed by the many innocent Yemenis who have lost loved ones or whose lives have been uprooted by conflict. However, we share the concern expressed by the Special Envoy about reports of hostile military activities, even if at a lower intensity.

We urge all parties to continue to respect in full their commitments to the truce and to engage with the Special Envoy and his United Nations-led consultations process. The Special Envoy's first meeting with the Houthis in Sana'a earlier this week was another significant development that — we hope — signals the beginning of a period of increased engagement.

It is important that these de-escalation efforts are coupled with the pursuit of accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Ireland also welcomes the Yemeni-Yemeni talks hosted by the Gulf Cooperation Council, which began in Riyadh at the end of March and ended last week, in support of United Nations efforts. We welcome the participation of women in the talks and hope that future dialogues will have a minimum of 30 per cent participation by women.

We hope that the Presidential Leadership Council brings a new focus to collective efforts towards finding a truly inclusive solution to the conflict and building a peaceful, prosperous Yemen for future generations. It is, however, deeply regrettable that no women were included in that eight-member Council — another missed opportunity to ensure that Yemeni women have their rightful place at the negotiating table.

While we welcome the generosity of many donors at the Yemen high-level pledging conference last month, in which Ireland was pleased to participate,

and the additional pledges since, the total amount pledged falls short of what is needed. Against the backdrop of the most recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification hunger projection, that shortfall is troubling.

The economic assistance announced by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates is a welcome measure to stabilize the Yemeni economy. We hope that it will bolster efforts to implement the United Nations economic framework plan. We encourage all parties and the international financial institutions to engage constructively with that plan.

The *FSO SAFER* oil tanker has been a disaster waiting to happen for far too long. Ireland welcomes the progress made in efforts to address the grave humanitarian and ecological threat that it poses. A sustainable, long-term solution appears to finally be within reach. With the committed engagement of the parties, the support of Member States and the private sector, and the efforts of the United Nations on the ground, we have an opportunity to avert a catastrophe.

To conclude, the developments of recent weeks have marked a moment of hope and expectation for Yemenis, who have suffered more than seven years of gruelling conflict. While that deserves recognition, it is crucial, as our briefers said this morning, that momentum be sustained and the parties continue their engagement towards the realization of inclusive and sustainable peace in Yemen.

Mr. De Rivièrè (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Mr. Martin Griffiths for their briefings.

As the Special Envoy noted, there have been encouraging developments in Yemen over the past two weeks. In the area of security, France commends the announcement of a two-month-long truce. That is an important initial step to reduce the level of violence, alleviate the suffering of the people and lay the foundation for trust between the parties.

We welcome the progress made since 2 April, in particular regarding the easing of the restrictions to access the Al-Hudaydah port and Sana'a airport.

At the political level, important steps have been taken. France welcomes the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council and in particular those of Saudi Arabia, which have made it possible to establish a Presidential Leadership Council bringing together

a large number of Yemeni stakeholders. That is an important stage in the restoration of a State that is at the service of all Yemenis and committed to the political process. The Special Envoy's visit to Sana'a is also encouraging. France calls on the Houthis to also contribute constructively to the peace process.

However, despite those positive developments, the humanitarian situation remains critical, and serious human rights violations continue. The threat of famine is worsening, and the international context is contributing thereto. France is deeply concerned about the recent abduction of five United Nations staff members in the south and calls for their immediate and unconditional release. The protection of civilians remains an obligation for all. Full access to all persons in need must be guaranteed.

Regarding the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, France supports the United Nations coordinated response plan and wishes to see its implementation. France will step up to the plate during the donors conference planned for May in that respect. We also reiterated our commitment to supporting the Yemeni people on 16 March by announcing a contribution to the humanitarian response plan of \$16 million.

Yemen is now in a crucial phase. Conditions are in place to transform that truce into a long-lasting ceasefire coupled with a peace plan. France encourages all Yemeni and regional stakeholders to fully cooperate with the Special Envoy in order to achieve a lasting solution. We commend his efforts to foster dialogue between the parties, and we reiterate our full support to him. I wish also to recall that Yemeni women must be able to be fully involved in that historic stage of the political life of their country.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): Today's briefing gives a more hopeful outlook on the situation in Yemen, and we are grateful to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and the United Nations team for all the efforts that have been made in securing the two-month truce between the parties, as well as the facilitation being undertaken with regional partners to move forward the political processes required for stabilizing Yemen.

We nonetheless acknowledge the persisting humanitarian concerns in Yemen and thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his briefing on the humanitarian situation as well as on the actions being undertaken concerning the threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* tanker. I also acknowledge the presence

here today of the Permanent Representative of Yemen at this meeting.

Repeatedly, the Council has expressed concerns over the deteriorating security situation in Yemen and reaffirmed its conviction that there can be no military solution to the armed conflict, which threatens the existence of a unified Yemeni State. Over the past seven years, Yemenis have had to endure incessant violent clashes that have resulted in the killing of more than 400,000 people. Lives and livelihoods have been disrupted, and some 17 million people, mostly women and children, are on the brink of starvation as the country faces its worst-ever humanitarian crisis.

We therefore welcome the two-month nationwide truce agreed between the parties as a positive development that offers a much-needed respite from the gruelling war, eases the humanitarian burden and creates a conducive environment to bolster political processes for a solution to the conflict.

We urge the parties to respect the conditions of the truce and refrain from any escalatory actions that could potentially unravel the marginal progress being made towards peace, especially in the light of the recent skirmishes in Ma'rib governorate.

We encourage the Special Envoy's ongoing mediation and his engagement with broad sections of Yemeni society. We welcome the efforts to maintain open-channel communications to help the parties sustain their commitments to the truce, which we hope will extend beyond the two-month period.

The transfer of power by President Hadi Mansour to the newly created Presidential Leadership Council on 7 April is a positive and important act in the quest for a comprehensive and inclusive political solution that keeps all parts of Yemeni society together. We recognize the leadership responsibility that has been demonstrated in taking that step and thank the regional partners for their support in that regard.

We urge the political class of Yemen to leverage the prevailing momentum for a Yemeni-led, Yemeni-owned process, with the support of the United Nations. We believe that the window of opportunity provided by the truce is significant and must be purposefully utilized for the benefit of the people of Yemen, who desire nothing but peace and the chance to live a normal life.

My delegation remains concerned that Yemeni women have still not been provided a rightful place in

societal efforts to find a solution to the conflict. Yemeni women, who have been disproportionately affected by the conflict, have a role to play in deciding how it should be resolved. We remind the parties that the durability of any political settlement is dependent on the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of political negotiations and decision-making and urge them to commit to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

We welcome the decision to reopen the Sana'a airport and the Al-Hudaydah port for limited commercial flights, commercial imports and humanitarian aid and underscore its significance for the import-dependent economy of Yemen, especially in these moments of unprecedented global challenges involving the questions of food, energy and finance. In view of the growing humanitarian needs and the near-famine conditions of millions of Yemenis, we encourage the continued support of the international community and donors to raise the funds urgently needed to mitigate the humanitarian crisis. In this regard, welcome the economic package announced by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf Cooperation Council. In line with their humanitarian obligations, the Yemeni parties must protect access for the delivery of humanitarian aid and services to all parts of Yemen.

The growing risk of a major oil spill from the dilapidated *FSO Safer* tanker and its potential environmental, economic and humanitarian impacts have also been matters of great concern. We are therefore pleased by the signing of the memorandum of understanding with the authorities in Sana'a to permanently address the threat, including arrangements to offload the 1.1 million barrels of oil cargo to a temporary vessel within the next four months, pending the search for a replacement vessel. We thank all the countries that have supported that effort and those that are considering financial assistance in this regard. In addition to funding, which is crucial to the success of mitigating the environmental impact of the situation of the *FSO Safer*, we also urge the Houthis to continue in their cooperation with the United Nations to that end.

In conclusion, we recognize that finding a lasting solution to the conflict in Yemen interlocks with peace, stability and security in the broader Middle East. We therefore call for the collective engagement by the Council as we seize this opportune moment

in supporting the revitalization of the peace process in Yemen.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): I would like to begin by thanking Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their briefings. The insight that they bring to the Security Council is especially valuable in the light of the significant developments witnessed over the past few weeks.

First, congratulations are in order for Mr. Grundberg and his Office on brokering the truce announced two weeks ago. Halting the fighting, increasing fuel imports and resuming commercial flights from Sana'a are all measures that will have a positive impact on the humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen. As we have heard, there are already signs of a steep reduction in civilian casualties.

Not only should the truce be upheld, but the parties and the international community also owe it to the Yemeni people to renew the agreement and expand its terms, including by reopening roads in Taiz and further facilitating the movement of people and goods. Perhaps most importantly, the truce provides an opportunity to foster trust and build momentum towards a permanent ceasefire and a comprehensive and inclusive political solution. Therefore, we are gravely alarmed by reports of armed clashes around Marib and Taiz. This opportunity must not be squandered; this is not a time for brinkmanship or irresponsibility.

Brazil hopes that the creation of the Presidential Leadership Council will prove to be a positive step towards peace and welcomes the public assurances made by the Council's leadership in that regard. Mr. Grundberg's three-day visit to Sana'a is another element that indicates increasing openness to dialogue. We urge the Houthis to step up their engagement with the Special Envoy, both by observing and extending the truce and by committing to a political solution.

As we have just heard from Mr. Griffiths, the humanitarian situation remains dire, and we are still far from closing the funding gap for aid operations. It is worrisome that food and nutrition assistance is one of the most underfunded areas of the response. Brazil has sought to do its part, including by announcing new contributions at the pledging conference for Yemen held last month in Geneva.

Unless the causes of the humanitarian disaster are addressed, however, no amount of aid will suffice.

The positive developments that we have discussed today have the potential to revert to the previous trend towards economic disarray and fragmentation. Brazil commends, in this context, the Saudi and Emirati contributions towards economic stabilization, including the sizeable foreign reserve injection into the Yemeni Central Bank. Sustaining the exchange rate will have rippling effects on the well-being of Yemeni society.

Brazil also welcomes the progress being made by the United Nations Yemen country team, under Mr. David Gressly, with regard to *FSO Safer*. Brazil supports the implementation of the plan in its entirety, including the transfer of the *FSO Safer*'s contents to a temporary vessel as an emergency measure and the procurement of a replacement floating storage and offloading unit as a long-term solution.

Over the past few weeks, we have seen a number of significant developments with regard to Yemen, most of them positive and many of them unexpected. As we have learned over more than seven years of war, our hopes should be tempered with caution and vigilance and must be accompanied by sustained efforts to capitalize on the initial advances. We reiterate our full support for Mr. Grundberg and his Office in that regard. We also recall that ultimate responsibility for progressing on the path of peace falls to the parties on the ground. The Yemeni people do not deserve to have their hopes dashed yet again.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Mr. Martin Griffiths for their briefings.

We are pleased to see increased positive momentum and unprecedented consensus towards ending the war in Yemen and achieving peace, security and stability. Countless efforts have been made to that end, the most recent of which was the Yemeni-Yemeni consultations held under the auspices of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) from 29 March to 7 April. The consultations, which included the broad participation of a diverse array of political actors and civil society, concluded with a consensus on a road map that we hope will pave the way for a lasting and comprehensive political solution.

In that context, we express our appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat of the GCC to bridge the divide among the Yemeni parties and different points of view. We also reiterate the need to ensure the continued, meaningful and active participation of women in political consultations and processes.

The United Arab Emirates welcomes the decision of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi to form the Presidential Leadership Council to complete the implementation of the transitional phase and delegate full presidential powers to it. We hope that this step will contribute to reaching a lasting political solution among the Yemeni parties. We also emphasize the full support of my country for the Presidential Leadership Council and its supporting bodies to enable it to carry out its tasks, end the crisis, achieve security and stability in Yemen and realize the aspirations of the brotherly Yemeni people for development and prosperity. We stress the need for the Yemeni parties to pool their efforts and work collaboratively so that State institutions can resume their effectiveness and meet the needs of citizens.

We also welcome the call of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the Presidential Leadership Council to begin negotiations with the Houthis under the auspices of the United Nations in order to reach a comprehensive and lasting political solution. We also reiterate our strong condemnation of the Houthi terrorist cross-border attacks targeting civilian facilities in the Kingdom, the latest of which targeted an oil facility in the city of Jeddah, which the Security Council condemned in its press statement issued on 4 April (SC/14852).

We call on the Houthis to seize this valuable opportunity, stop manoeuvring and seriously engage in the ongoing efforts to end the war in Yemen.

We also stress the importance of the Houthis stopping all violations of the truce, in particular their continued bombing of sites in Ma'rib governorate. We urge all parties to work with the Special Envoy to achieve further progress in implementing confidence-building measures, including the exchange of prisoners, the opening of roads leading to the city of Taiz and work to transform the temporary truce into a permanent cessation of military and hostile actions.

While this delicate period brings renewed hope that an end to the war in Yemen is close, we urge all regional and international stakeholders to advance this opportunity by working positively with international and Gulf efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Yemen. We also urge them to refrain from exploiting the crisis to serve their own agendas or narrow interests, which could reverse the progress made thus far.

On the humanitarian front, the United Arab Emirates, along with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has

pledged \$2 billion to support the Central Bank of Yemen. As we have heard, as a result of that move, the value of the local currency has begun to increase considerably, which will help to alleviate the pressure on livelihoods and to meet growing humanitarian needs in the wake of rising global food prices and energy costs.

We reiterate our support for the efforts of the United Nations to address the situation of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. We call on the Houthis to meet their obligations under the agreement with the United Nations in order to avert a serious environmental disaster that could occur if the recent United Nations emergency plan is not implemented swiftly.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates reiterates its commitment to standing by the brotherly Yemeni people. We support their ambitions and aspirations, as part of our policy in support of the interests of the peoples in the region.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their briefings and ongoing efforts.

We are witnessing a moment of hope for Yemen — an opportunity to finally bring peace to a country and a people that have suffered for far too long. Today, I will outline the progress we are seeing on the ground and the work still ahead.

First, the United States applauds the parties' public endorsement of Special Envoy Grundberg's call for a two-month truce. That is a hopeful first step. Movement towards a comprehensive ceasefire will require concerted efforts by the parties and the support of the Council to hold the parties accountable. We are also encouraged by the Special Envoy's visit to Sana'a and hope that this is another example of the peace process moving forward. Crucially, there are indications that access to food and other supplies will increase, thanks to the movement of fuel ships into the Al-Hudaydah ports in preparation for resuming commercial flights to and from Sana'a airport. The parties should continue to negotiate in good faith to discuss opening key roads to Taiz and other locations. Easing the flow of goods and people will reduce the suffering of millions of Yemenis.

The United States also welcomes the announcement of the formation of the Government of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council and of its support for the United Nations negotiated truce and broader peace efforts. We support the Yemeni people's aspirations for

an effective, democratic and transparent Government that includes diverse political and civil society voices, including those of women and other marginalized groups. We appreciate the recent talks hosted by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which provided an opportunity for Yemeni-Yemeni dialogue. This has brought diverse members of Yemeni society together to discuss reforms and other initiatives that can strengthen governance, stabilize the economy and improve the lives of Yemenis, and in doing so, the GCC-hosted talks can also help bolster the United Nations-led peace process.

This truce opens a window of opportunity for long-term and sustainable peace — peace that the people of Yemen desperately need. The party should turn their efforts to securing a lasting end to fighting and to participating in an inclusive, United Nations-led political process. We urge the parties to adhere to their agreement to halt all offensive military operations inside Yemen and across its borders and to freeze their positions on the ground.

Already, we are aware of troubling reports of continued ground fighting. We call for restraint and for the parties to work through the United Nations to address their concerns, rather than resorting to accusations in the media. A durable end to the conflict will require all parties to engage in order to reach a compromise and choose dialogue over violence. That is the task ahead.

While there is cause for optimism, millions of Yemenis still suffer from the ravages of war. Putin's war of choice in Ukraine has made an already precarious food insecurity situation in Yemen even worse. The World Food Programme's March report identified Yemen as one of the country's most affected by wheat price increases and lack of imports from Ukraine. That is just another grim example of the ripple effect Russia's unprovoked, unjust and unconscionable war is having on the world's most vulnerable.

Tragically, the World Food Programme has already had to reduce rations for some of the 8 million Yemenis who are food insecure. This is a moment for the world to step up. We welcome the Saudi announcement of a \$300-million contribution to the United Nations humanitarian response plan, and the United States was pleased to announce a \$585-million contribution just last month. Still, more help is needed as food shortages grow and prices rise. The United Nations appeal remains less than 40 per cent funded. The United States urges all countries to contribute more before it is too late.

We also applaud Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for contributing \$1 billion each to support the Central Bank of Yemen and an additional \$1 billion in Saudi support for fuel imports and development projects. It is imperative that those funds be disbursed promptly to help stabilize the economy and facilitate the implementation of projects that will benefit the people of Yemen. But let us make no mistake — economic support is not a substitute for humanitarian support, and they are both essential to Yemen's prosperity.

Finally, now is the time to defuse the ticking time bomb that is the *FSO SAFER*. We are optimistic about the United Nations-coordinated effort to address the situation, but the need for funding and regional cooperation is urgent. We welcome last month's signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Houthis, which provides for the transfer of *FSO SAFER*'s oil to a sound vessel, on an urgent basis, while a replacement export capacity is identified.

In advance of a pledging conference in May, our Special Envoy for Yemen, Tim Lenderking, is traveling in the region with United Nations Resident Coordinator in Yemen, David Gressly, to encourage financial and in-kind support for emergency efforts to avert a spill from the vessel.

We have not had this much momentum in Yemen in a long time. It is critical that we continue to help the parties seize this hopeful moment, preserve the gains being made and lock in steps that can prevent a return to fighting. There is no military solution to this terrible conflict. There is only a political and diplomatic settlement, and the Yemeni people are counting on our support to achieve success.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for the briefings. I welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to today's meeting. I would like to say Ramadan Mubarak to all our Muslim friends, and I wish them a peaceful and tranquil month of Ramadan.

After seven years of war, at long last the light of hope is dawning for Yemen. The past month has seen important progress on the ground, with the parties to the conflict entering into a two-month truce, starting from 2 April. This is the first Ramadan free of fighting for the Yemeni people in seven years. China welcomes that development and commends the efforts of Special Envoy Grundberg, the Yemeni parties and regional

countries, including Saudi Arabia and Oman. Peace and stability are the common wish of the Yemeni people. It is in no one's interest to resume hostilities. The current hard-won and fragile ceasefire must be cherished with greater care by all parties. We call on all parties in Yemen to make every effort to ensure that the ceasefire holds and to do their utmost to prolong its momentum.

The Yemen conflict should ultimately be resolved through a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process. Recently, under the aegis of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Yemeni consultations took place successfully in Riyadh. On 7 April, the Yemeni Government announced the formation of the Presidential Leadership Council. On 11 April, Special Envoy Grundberg visited Sana'a for the first time. All those factors gave the Yemeni political process new impetus. We hope that all parties in Yemen will take the current rare opportunity and continue to move in the same direction under the good offices of the Special Envoy so as to set reasonable expectations and kickstart and continue the dialogue. Countries of the region with influence should continue to contribute positively and constructively to that end.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen remains one of the worst in the world, with more than 23 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and some 12 million facing severe starvation. As Yemen relies on imports for 90 per cent of its food and nearly all its fuel, the soaring global food and energy prices have exacerbated the plight of the Yemeni people.

China welcomes the high-level pledging conference on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, co-hosted by the United Nations, Switzerland and Sweden last month. Adequate funding is crucial to sustaining United Nations humanitarian programmes in Yemen. Some goods recently started to enter the Al-Hudaydah port. The truce agreement allows commercial flights to depart from and land at Sana'a airport twice a week. We encourage all parties to work jointly for the agreement's implementation. That will help to ease Yemen's humanitarian situation. We applaud Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for offering economic support to Yemen, and we welcome the continued financial and material assistance from the international community.

The United Nations operational plan regarding the *FSO SAFER* tanker issue is supported by the Houthis. That is a positive development. From the economic, humanitarian, security and environmental perspectives, the potential risks of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker must

be eliminated without further delay. We hope that all parties concerned will actively cooperate with the United Nations in implementing the operational plan to ward off a potential disaster.

Mr. Asokan (India): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their briefings.

India welcomes the two-month truce agreed by all parties in Yemen, beginning with the holy month of Ramadan. We applaud the efforts of the Special Envoy and commend the role played by the countries of the region in facilitating the temporary ceasefire. India support all efforts towards consolidating the truce into a more comprehensive and durable ceasefire.

At the same time, we strongly condemn the cross-border terror attacks, using missiles and drones, against Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, including the one that was carried out on Saudi Arabia three weeks ago. Those attacks resulted in the death and injury of innocent civilians, including Indian nationals. We hope that the announced ceasefire will also put an end to such cross-border attacks.

The ceasefire announcement could be a first step towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Yemen. The final goal must be the permanent cessation of all violence and hostilities. To that end, it is important to resume an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process that addresses the legitimate aspirations of all Yemenis at the earliest. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women in that process is vital.

We also welcome the announcement of additional steps accompanying the truce declaration, including permitting a specified number of fuel ships into Al-Hudaydah port and a limited number of commercial flights a week in and out of Sana'a. That was agreed between the parties. The full implementation of those steps will help in alleviating the humanitarian suffering of all Yemenis. There is a need to strengthen such steps and take further concrete confidence-building measures, such as the exchange of prisoners and detainees.

I reiterate India's demand for the immediate release of the crew members of the vessel *RWABEE*, whose onboard crew also includes seven Indian nationals. Resolution 2624 (2022) also unequivocally demands that. The crew has been unlawfully detained. Regular access to them and updates on their safety and well-

being must be ensured by Ansar Allah until they are eventually released.

The recently concluded Yemeni-Yemeni consultations in Riyadh represent a significant development. We recognize the key role played by the Gulf Cooperation Council in facilitating that dialogue, which complements the Special Envoy's consultations with all Yemeni parties. We hope that the recommendations contained in the final declaration of the consultations will be implemented in a timely manner.

We welcome President Hadi Mansour's irreversible transfer of powers to the new Presidential Leadership Council. The announcement of the economic package by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to support Yemen's economy will also help to address the immediate humanitarian and economic challenges facing the country.

We appreciate the United Nations efforts in finding an early resolution to the environmental, humanitarian and maritime threat posed by the current condition of the *FSO SAFER* tanker. The operational plan prepared by the United Nations adopts a more pragmatic approach to resolving the problem. We hope that that is taken forward for its early implementation with adequate funding.

In line with its centuries-old relations with Yemen and in keeping with its strong people-to-people ties, India extended humanitarian help to Yemen in the past, and we remain committed to doing so. India has welcomed the people of Yemen, even during the trying times of the coronavirus disease pandemic. Our hospitals receive thousands of Yemenis for medical treatment every year and several thousand Yemeni students continue to pursue their studies in India.

Let me conclude by reaffirming India's strong commitment to Yemen's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The recent events in Yemen have created a window of opportunity to end the violence and suffering of the people of Yemen. I urge all Yemeni parties to seize that opportunity and engage constructively with each other and with the Special Envoy to reach a comprehensive negotiated settlement to end the conflict in Yemen.

Ms. Bongo (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their enlightening

briefings. I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in this meeting.

Since our previous meeting (see S/PV.8995), there have been significant developments in the security situation and the political climate in Yemen that give hope for the path to peace.

The current truce, which came into force on 2 April for a renewable period of two months, negotiated with each of the parties under the aegis of the United Nations, represents a good step towards the ceasefire desired by the international community and awaited by the Yemeni civilian population.

The lifting of restrictions on the movement of women and children, as well as on fuel, for the duration of the truce represents key steps, the latter authorizing access for oil tankers to the port of Al-Hudaydah, thereby enabling a better supply of fuel throughout the country. In the same vein, the improvement in the exchange rate, the significant pledges made and the reopening of Sana'a airport, with the imminent resumption of commercial flights, are positive elements that will help revive the country's economy.

The agreement of the parties to meet under the auspices of Special Envoy Grundberg, open the roads to Taiz and other Yemeni governorates is also an encouraging development, as is the visit of the Special Envoy to Sana'a on 11 April. All this should further facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the action by humanitarian personnel in a country where the food and health needs of the civilian population are exacerbated by the coronavirus disease pandemic.

We encourage all the actors to capitalize on this momentum to establish an effective and lasting truce that is followed, in the long term, by a permanent ceasefire that can promote the peacebuilding process and national reconciliation. We therefore call on all parties to engage in good faith in an inclusive dialogue, adopting a holistic approach, in order to achieve a political settlement of the Yemeni issue and a lasting peace.

We note with interest the transfer of executive power to an eight-member Presidential Leadership Council, equally divided between northerners and southerners, bringing together the main political forces in Yemen. This is an important milestone in the revitalization of the political process that should lead to the restoration of the State's authority over the whole of Yemen as well as the country's stabilization and its security. We also

welcome the support given by the Gulf Cooperation Council to the negotiations held in Riyadh, as well as the financial support announced for Yemen and its institutions. We encourage these regional dynamics, which are in line with the move towards de-escalation.

However, it is important to remain vigilant, particularly with regard to the persistent risk of famine amplified by the diminishing supplies of wheat. It is also important to remain engaged in protecting humanitarian workers and for the United Nations staff abducted several months ago to be released without conditions. Finally, while we welcome the signing of the agreement between the United Nations and the Houthis aimed at resolving the environmental and humanitarian threats posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, we remain attentive as to the modalities of the implementation of the agreement.

In conclusion, Gabon reiterates its full support to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and his team for all their work to resolve the conflict in Yemen.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I also thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their briefings and their efforts.

Let me begin by welcoming the nationwide renewable truce in Yemen. It gives hope that the parties are engaging in a truce for the first time in six years, and it comes at a critical time after months of military escalation with multiple cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia and air strikes inside Yemen. We sincerely thank the Special Envoy and other stakeholders for their extensive efforts aimed at making this happen.

The situation is fragile, but this truce is a crucial step in the right direction. We hope the parties will seize the opportunity to build trust, and we encourage all efforts aimed at supporting and upholding the truce.

The humanitarian measures of the agreement are vital. Relief for the crisis-affected Yemeni people is much needed in this dire situation. Almost three quarters of the civilian population rely on humanitarian assistance, including four out of five children.

We join others in welcoming the recent entry of fuel ships in the port of Al-Hudaydah. This will hopefully help to alleviate the fuel crisis in the north of Yemen, which is important for the Yemenis as well as for the humanitarian organizations working on their behalf. We hope to see more results for the Yemeni people during the two months of truce, such as opening

the roads to Taiz, the protection of civilians, including children, and the resumption of commercial flights in and out of Sana'a.

A political settlement is the only way to create a sustainable solution. Norway commends the Special Envoy's continued consultations this past month on the framework for an inclusive multitrack process, and we encourage all parties to engage in the United Nations-led efforts to end the conflict. We are therefore pleased that Special Envoy Grundberg visited Sana'a, and we thank him for his updates on these conversations. We also welcome the recent discussions and aspirations expressed by the participants in Riyadh and the outcome of the Gulf Cooperation Council conference.

The resignation of President Hadi marks a shift in Yemeni politics, and we welcome the new Presidential Leadership Council. We encourage the Council to engage in bringing about an inclusive political process and a lasting peace. There is overwhelming evidence that an inclusive process in which women, youth and victims of conflict are meaningfully represented offers the best hope for a sustainable solution. We regret that there are no women in the newly appointed Presidential Council, and we continue to encourage efforts aimed at bolstering women's direct full, equal and meaningful participation.

Finally, we welcome the progress made on the *FSO SAFER* oil-tanker issue, the new plan to address this threat, and the planned pledging conference in this regard.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): It has been a long time since we had good news from Yemen, to the point that the name of the country itself had become synonymous with despair. We welcome the first serious truce between the parties in years and all the positive measures associated with and resulting from it. We welcome the cessation of hostilities and military operations and cross-border attacks.

Let me join colleagues in praising Special Envoy Grundberg's sincere efforts to successfully broker this truce. We hope it will be fully respected by all sides and that the sides will continue to remain constructively engaged in its full implementation.

We reiterate our firm position: a comprehensive nationwide ceasefire remains a priority. We have long stated that there is no military solution to the conflict. The goodwill expressed by all sides needs to

be translated into long-term commitment and avoiding unnecessary rhetoric and truce breaches.

Now that guns have been silenced, we believe it is the right time to start thinking that Yemen, peace and development can go together and that it is possible to work and achieve a lasting solution to the conflict. Viable solutions to long and protracted conflicts require an inclusive political process, and we reiterate our call for the full engagement of all the parties with the Special Envoy. In this regard, the political participation of women remains of paramount importance. We take note of the visit of a Special Envoy to Sana'a and the exchanges with the leadership of the Houthis, with the objective of moving the political process forward.

All the foregoing important developments would not have been achieved without the bold commitment of the Gulf Cooperation Council in hosting the Yemeni-Yemeni consultations. The Presidential Leadership Council must bring a new focus, and we encourage it to address the urgent humanitarian and economic needs of the Yemeni people. The positive momentum created by the \$3 billion economic-support package announced by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates should be fully embraced, and it calls for concrete action and reforms.

We also welcome the Saudi Arabia pledge of \$300 million to fund the United Nations humanitarian response plan, especially in the circumstances where the military aggression in Ukraine is greatly affecting or exacerbating food security in other conflict areas. We know, as it was said in this Chamber, Yemen is one of the most exposed countries to threats to food security, given its dependence on imports.

While we applaud — and rightfully so — this moment of hope, let us not forget that serious challenges persist, and we must remain prudent. The humanitarian situation is still dramatic, and access must be improved. The detained United Nations personnel must be released. The human rights situation remains sobering. The truce is fragile, and everything must be done to maintain and possibly extend it.

Pessimism can be pervasive, but the Yemenis must not indulge in it. Rather, they should fully grasp this momentum and offer themselves the prospect of a future different from the past. We look forward to concrete steps towards a sustained political process, and we strongly support Special Envoy Grundberg in his efforts in this respect.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank the United Nations Special Envoy, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Martin Griffiths, on their briefings on developments in the political and humanitarian situation in the Republic of Yemen.

We are hopeful with regard to the progress achieved by the Yemeni parties in resolving the years-long military and political crisis in Yemen, with the mediation of the United Nations. We welcome the establishment of the long-awaited two-month truce, which provides for a cessation of all hostilities, including air strikes within and outside Yemen, and the partial reopening of the Sana'a International Airport and the seaports in Al-Hudaydah province.

In that regard, we pay particular tribute to the role of Special Envoy Grundberg, whose efforts greatly facilitated the negotiation and implementation of the ceasefire. We hope that the ceasefire can be extended and expanded beyond its stipulated timeframe. We believe that such positive steps will contribute to restoring mutual trust.

We strongly urge all parties to the Yemeni conflict to strictly comply with the agreements reached and to reject unilateral, provocative acts. We continue to believe that the long-awaited peace in Yemen can be restored only through widespread national dialogue by taking into account the interests and concerns of all leading political forces and religious and regional groups in the country.

In that context, we note the establishment in Yemen of a new collegial authority, the Presidential Leadership Council, consisting of representatives of several political and social forces in the country. The Council is tasked with governing the State in the political, economic and military spheres during the transition period, as well as addressing the security situation. That important event for the Yemeni people was also the result of the political and diplomatic efforts of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council. We trust that the members of the Presidential Leadership Council will do their utmost to stabilize the situation in Yemen and restore peace in the country. We are convinced that such a goal can be achieved only through constructive dialogue with the Ansar Allah movement, which controls the north of the country.

In that connection, we welcome the first visit of the Special Envoy to Sana'a since he assumed his post and the resumption of direct dialogue with the movement's leadership. We also welcome Mr. Grundberg's willingness to cooperate with the Ambassadors of the five permanent members of the Security Council in Yemen. For our part, we will further actively encourage the new Yemeni authorities and the Houthis to engage in dialogue.

We call on all parties to the internal conflict in Yemen to return to the negotiating table in order to establish a lasting comprehensive political settlement, under the auspices of the United Nations, which is key to normalizing the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which remains a source of major concern. We note the renewed access to the Al-Hudaydah ports and the unloading of food and fuel from tankers. We would like to stress once again, however, the need to completely lift restrictions on the supply of medicines and basic necessities to all parts of the country without discrimination. In that context, we underscore the efforts of regional States that are prepared to continue to provide financial, humanitarian and mediation assistance to resolve the political and military crisis in Yemen.

We also note the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding between the Ansar Allah movement and United Nations agencies to resolve the situation involving the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker.

We again recall resolution 598 (1987) and other initiatives aimed at subregional stabilization, including the renewed Russian collective security concept.

Lastly, I would like to say that we are not surprised that today we heard renewed allegations on the part of a number of countries that the looming global food crisis is caused solely by the actions of Russia in Ukraine. We understand that it is more convenient for our Western partners to make such accusations than to actually recognize their own responsibility for the volatility and pessimism in the food, energy and financial markets. The situation did not arise overnight and took years to evolve. Indeed, it is the result of the excessive subsidizing of Western economies, trade wars, protectionism and unilateral illegal sanctions that affect two-thirds of the planet's population to varying degrees.

Another negative aspect is the expedited energy transition that Western countries are implementing with the main goal of protecting and promoting their

technologies. All of this had caused spikes of prices on food and energy before 2022 even started. The main factor driving instability and the source of the problem today is not the Russian special military operation in Ukraine, but the sanctions imposed on our country, seeking to undermine the logistical chains and financial patterns used to make payments for any incoming deliveries from Russia, except for energy products that the West is interested in.

For that reason, if Council members really want to save the world from a food crisis, they should lift the sanctions of choice that they themselves have imposed and poor countries will immediately feel the difference. If Council members are not prepared to do that, they should not engage in empty rhetoric or try to mislead people.

Mr. Ochoa Martínez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to begin by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their briefings.

Today, I will focus my statement on three points: the truce, the political process and the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. On these three issues, we are seeing some progress for the first time in many months.

First of all, Mexico commends the efforts led by the Special Envoy for the truce that began on 2 April, and we congratulate him on them. That initial step, while fragile and not without its challenges, is an important basis for the reconciliation and pacification of the country. We hope that the suspension of hostilities can be extended beyond the two-month period and will eventually become a lasting national ceasefire.

We note that there have been no air strikes or cross-border attacks in a little over a week. However, there have been reports of clashes in some places, such as Ma'rib and Taiz. We urge the parties to exercise utmost restraint and refrain from provocations in order to maintain the truce. Clearly, the conflict will not be resolved through military means, but through dialogue and negotiation. The truce offers an opportunity to that end.

Secondly, with respect to the political process, we welcome the facilitation of the Gulf Cooperation Council in organizing the recent intra-Yemeni consultations. Mexico notes the transfer of powers and the formation of the Presidential Leadership Council, which includes the participation of representatives of various factions. We hope that it will contribute to

the success of the political process facilitated by the Special Envoy. However, like other delegations, we insist on the importance of the full, fair and substantive participation of women in that process.

As we have heard this morning, the armed conflict is one of the main reasons for the serious humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The needs continue to grow and, unfortunately, only a little more than one-third of the resources are available to meet the most basic demands of millions of Yemenis. We welcome the contributions announced by various donors, including Gulf countries. We also welcome the contributions made by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to help the economy and the revaluation of the rial.

The recent delivery of fuel through the port of Al-Hudaydah is a positive development. However, the rising prices for fuel and food are of great concern. That increase is particularly serious for a country where the vast majority of its population is living in conditions of food insecurity and some even in famine-like conditions.

My delegation welcomes the efforts to resume commercial flights from Sana'a and to open the roads and access to Taiz. Those measures will provide an impetus to revive the economy and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Additionally, we welcome the meetings between the head of Ansar Allah and the Special Envoy in Muscat, particularly as this was the first time since the beginning of his mandate in Sana'a. We call for channels of contact and communication with the United Nations Special Envoy to be kept open.

Thirdly, Mexico recognizes the progress made in relation to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker issue. We commend the efforts of the Resident Coordinator and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as well as the Netherlands, to address the pressing situation surrounding the vessel. We call on the Ansar Allah leadership to collaborate constructively in the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed in March. We also call for international solidarity in order to raise the necessary funds to finalize that operation.

In conclusion, my delegation stresses the need to take advantage of the opening window of opportunity to establish a permanent ceasefire and advance the political process in order to achieve peace and thus

put an end to the grave humanitarian situation being endured by the Yemeni people.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their briefings and welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in this meeting.

After seven years of devastating armed conflict, the positive developments over the past few weeks are encouraging. I commend all the parties for agreeing to a two-month truce and appreciate the pivotal role of the Special Envoy and the United Nations team in that regard.

The truce symbolizes the mutual desire of the parties for a political solution to the conflict. More importantly, it opens up an opportunity for them to engage meaningfully and constructively in efforts towards a comprehensive ceasefire and, ultimately, the desired political settlement. We therefore encourage the parties to stay true to the terms of the truce. I also commend the Gulf Cooperation Council for their efforts aimed at uniting the various political stakeholders with a view to driving Yemen's peace aspirations forward.

Kenya acknowledges the decision of President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour to peacefully hand over authority and wishes the Presidential Leadership Council every success as it embarks on unifying the people of Yemen while ensuring equitable service distribution. Even as we celebrate this moment of reprieve, the parties must be conscious of the fact that difficult decisions and compromises have to be made to attain the much-needed sustained peace.

We regret that, in the past few years, humanitarian funding for the millions of Yemeni people in need has gradually decreased while the humanitarian situation has been worsening. Indeed, the approximately \$2.7 billion shortfall in the humanitarian funding appeal has left humanitarian programmes struggling to operate under extremely difficult conditions.

In that regard, we welcome the timely intervention by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to provide \$2 billion in economic support to the Central Bank of Yemen, as well as \$1 billion towards development projects and fuel. The regional initiative should serve as encouragement for the international community to also renew their support to the Yemen funding appeal. Addressing that challenge will also require the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other humanitarian agencies

to recalibrate their approaches aimed at attracting sustainable support.

Our region, the Horn of Africa, is alive to the threat posed by the deteriorating *FSO SAFER* tanker. An oil spill would destroy not only the fragile ecosystem, but also the livelihoods of those who depend on the blue economy. In that regard, we welcome the agreed operation plan as a positive step and call on all stakeholders to urgently contribute to its funding so as to commence without delay.

To conclude, I wish all our Muslim brothers and sisters continued peace during the holy month of Ramadan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council this month and to wish you and your friendly delegation every success in your work. I thank also our sisterly country, the United Arab Emirates, for a successful presidency last month. I thank as well Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Grundberg for their briefings.

There is no path towards peace as peace is the path itself. The Yemeni Government has chosen peace as the path to stop the conflict and achieve the security, justice, equality and the rule of law to which the Yemeni people aspire. While that path has been obstructed with challenges by the Houthi militias, the Yemeni Government has made many concessions to alleviate human suffering and put an end to the war imposed by the terrorist Houthi militias.

The Yemeni wisdom on the path of peace was illustrated by the historic decision taken on 7 April by His Excellency former President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour to form a Presidential Leadership Council and to confer his full powers upon it. The new Council has been made far more representative of all the civic-oriented Yemeni political strata, with the aim of restoring State authority. This reaffirms that the Yemeni Government functions in a comprehensive environment based on pluralism, dialogue and consensus for Yemen's present and future, as well as for achieving just and lasting peace through the peace process led by the United Nations and its Special Envoy, Mr. Grundberg. That process is based on the agreed political terms of reference: the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Initiative and its implementation

mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, foremost among which is resolution 2216 (2015).

In that connection, I commend from this rostrum the historic decision by His Excellency former Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour to form the sovereign Presidential Leadership Council and to confer his full powers upon it, and who shouldered his past responsibilities amid very complex and challenging historic circumstances.

I also take this opportunity to express the appreciation of the Yemeni Government for the efforts made by the GCC in hosting the intra-Yemeni consultations and creating all the conditions conducive to ensuring that those consultations were successful. That was a historic turning point in the Yemeni crisis, and it proved the commitment of our brothers in the GCC to unite the Yemeni people with one voice, including the Houthi militias, which were also invited to participate in the consultations at the last minute. However, the Houthi militias rejected all invitations for engaging all dialogue, stopping bloodshed and achieving peace. The Houthi militias have chosen to pursue war, not peace, to realize their goals and they insist on remaining a tool in the hands of Iran.

His Excellency the leader of the Presidential Leadership Council, Mr. Rashad Al-Alimi, has stressed that the Council will end the war and establish peace and that it is a council for peace but also a council of defence and unity to defend the country's sovereignty and protect its citizens.

Early this month, the Security Council gave its blessing to the truce declaration announced by the Special Envoy. The Government supports it and is committed to respecting its provisions, despite flagrant violations by the Houthis. The governorates of Ma'rib, Al-Jawf, Sa'dah, Hajjah, Al-Hudaydah, Taiz and Dhale were subjected to persistent attacks by the Houthis, who have used ballistic missiles that kill innocent people and destroy civilian infrastructure, thereby forcibly displacing more people, further complicating the humanitarian situation and undermining the efforts of the United Nations and relief agencies.

The Yemeni Government is committed from the outset to all the truce provisions, be it allowing access to ships transporting fuel through Al-Hudaydah ports or taking all measures necessary to operate direct flights

via Sana'a International Airport. Our Government has even communicated directly with the countries noted in the truce agreement to receive those flights and designated its representatives on the Taiz committee with a view to lifting the siege on the city, whose residents have been suffering from an unprecedented siege amid silence from the international community.

We call on the Security Council to first assume its moral responsibilities and then exert more pressure on the militias to stop their aggression and respect the truce. They must lift the siege on Taiz, release those captives, in accordance with the principle of all for all, and engage in the peace process led by the United Nations to end the war.

The Yemeni Government is prepared to do everything it can to meet the aspirations of our people for peace, security and prosperity. However, that will not be possible if the Houthi militias do not opt for peace and make genuine concessions for a better future for Yemen and its people.

The Yemeni Government appreciates the generous support provided by sisterly and friendly countries, either directly or through the humanitarian response plan, to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. Nonetheless, humanitarian operations do not have access to all those who need assistance, due either to a lack of funding for the rescue projects or to obstacles imposed by the Houthi militias, which are diverting humanitarian aid away from those who deserve it. We once again urge the international community to maintain Yemen as a top priority and provide more support to end the humanitarian crisis, especially in the context of current international circumstances and the spike in the price of food and fuel. We call on the Security Council once again to use all possible means to stop the Houthi militias' manipulation of the humanitarian dossier.

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs has repeatedly warned the Security Council of the deteriorating economic situation in Yemen,

which is one of the most important factors leading to a dangerously deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country. Peace cannot be achieved in Yemen without development. That is why the Yemeni Government is sparing no effort to implement many reform and development projects to stabilize the economy and to control inflation and the exchange rate, thereby improving the humanitarian situation for all Yemenis.

The Yemeni Government highly commends the generous support of \$3 billion pledged by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to promote the economy and development. Nevertheless, we reiterate our call on the international community to enhance its support and help the Yemeni Government to implement recovery programmes and promote sources of income as a pivotal means to address the humanitarian crisis, instead of relying on relief aid.

In conclusion, the Yemeni Government supports all efforts to address the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker and avoid an imminent disaster, with serious potential humanitarian, economic and environment consequences for Yemen, countries of the region and the world. As the Government facilitates the United Nations efforts in this regard, we warn against the manipulation by the Houthi militias of this particular dossier, because they may well shift their position for the purpose of political blackmailing, as they have done over the past three years. We therefore reiterate our appeal for support and financing for the United Nations plan to avert a disaster. We call on the Council once again to continue exerting pressure on those militias to eliminate the danger posed by the oil tanker.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion on the subject in closed consultations.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.