



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8512th meeting
Monday, 15 April 2019, 10 a.m.
New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Heusgen (Germany)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Moriko
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
France	Mr. Delattre
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
South Africa	Mr. Ntsoane
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



The meeting was called to order at 10.05 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. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; Ms. Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; and Ms. Muna Luqman, Chairperson of Food for Humanity.

Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Lowcock are joining the meeting via video-teleconference from Amman and London, respectively.

Before I start the meeting, it is my pleasure, in my capacity as the Permanent Representative of Germany, to welcome the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bundestag, the German Parliament, Mr. Norbert Röttgen. In Germany, the legislative branch watches the executive branch very carefully. I thank you, Sir, for coming.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council. It has been almost exactly a year since I first had such a chance (see S/PV.8235). I said then, back in April of last year, that a political solution was available to resolve the conflict in Yemen, but I added that at any time war could take the chance of peace off the table. Both those propositions hold as true today as they did a year ago.

In addition, as I am sure Mark Lowcock will describe, the plight of the people of Yemen has, if anything, worsened during this period. The pursuit of peace, which is the task to which I contribute, is measured as much against the lives and livelihoods daily lost across the various governorates of Yemen.

That, I hope, explains my persistence in planning, hoping and pushing for a start of consultations leading to that political solution.

First, I will address the situation in Al-Hudaydah. Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard has been working without stop to secure agreement between the parties on the operational plans for redeployments in Al-Hudaydah, in line with what was agreed in December in Sweden. I hope we will hear more of that in a while.

It has been, as we all know, a long and difficult process. I am happy to announce to you, Mr. President, that both parties have now accepted the detailed redeployment plan prepared by Lieutenant General Lollesgaard for phase 1 of the redeployments in Al-Hudaydah. I am grateful, as I am sure we all are, to both parties and to Lieutenant General Lollesgaard for the constructive engagement that has allowed us finally to reach this point. We will now move with all speed towards resolving the final outstanding issues related to the operational plans for phase 2, redeployments and the status of local security forces, which is to be introduced in the coming days.

President Hadi Mansour has consistently approached this, as I have said to the Council recently, with the practicality of a former military man. As he has also told me on more than one occasion, he wants to see those redeployments happen and the city and ports of Al-Hudaydah, Ras Isa and Saleef returned to some kind of peace for its inhabitants. I am grateful to President Hadi for his patience and commitment.

I was in Sana'a a week ago exactly, where Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard and I met with Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, the leader of Ansar Allah. We were able to hear again his reconfirmation in clear terms — in detail as well as in general terms — of his support for the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement. Of course, that was important in the lead-up to the announcement that we have just heard today. I was glad to hear it confirmed so directly and I am grateful to him for the position he has taken on this and other issues.

Let us be clear that when these redeployments happen — and I hope it is “when”, not “if” — they will be the first voluntary withdrawals of forces in this long conflict. Making that happen is not an easy decision for the parties to take and of course it is taking longer than we had hoped, but the fact that it should happen

at all is extremely welcome. Al-Hudaydah is a test of many things, the principal among which is leadership. I like to hope that in the coming days we shall see the people's trust in that leadership vindicated in this test.

We should also not forget — and I am sure that Mr. Lowcock will remind us — that since the ceasefire came into force in the very early hours of 18 December 2018, levels of violence in Al-Hudaydah governorate, while not adequately or sufficiently reduced, have nonetheless fallen significantly. Civilian casualties are down and there are reports that, as our colleague in Sana'a Lise Grande often reminds us, those displaced by the war have begun to return to their homes. Much needs to be done to tighten and sustain the ceasefire, but the positive developments that we have seen and I hope will continue to see in Al-Hudaydah have already shown what can be achieved through dialogue and compromise. I hope that the parties recognize this and, with the Council's support, build on it.

Meanwhile, as I am again sure will be described by Mr. Lowcock, the economic situation in Yemen remains extremely fragile. Commercial ships face difficulties accessing Al-Hudaydah and fuel prices are on the rise. There have been some positive developments, such as the Government of Yemen's welcome decision to start paying public sector salaries in Al-Hudaydah and pensions throughout the country. I do not want to trespass on Mr. Lowcock's territory, but I mention this because these are measures that cross the line between the parties. Further action must be taken to reduce prices and ensure the availability of basic commodities, including fuel. I am grateful to be under the leadership of Mark Lowcock and Lise Grande in these matters.

I need to say very clearly that I accept that we all need to see tangible progress in Al-Hudaydah before moving to focus on the political solution. I have actually said that to the Council before. More importantly, perhaps, than my saying it, the leadership of both parties have said as much to me, including within the past 10 days. Yes, we must see progress in Al-Hudaydah. Perhaps today will be the first in that direction. We must see progress in Al-Hudaydah — full stop.

But I would be derelict in my duty if we were not also preparing the ground for political consultations, not least because the war in Yemen, again as Mr. Lowcock will tell us, shows no signs of abating. The tragedies of war particularly pain us all when children are the victims, as they have been, dramatically, of late. It

should be so that this is a pain we all feel, but it is also true that the larger battlefields should not be forgotten. In Hajour, there have been some devastating battles with all the human misery and civilian displacement naturally attendant upon events of that kind. That means that we must keep our focus, as the Council has urged me to do before, on reaching a political solution, and to do as fast as we can.

We all know the rough outlines of an agreement to end the war, precisely in line with the three references and the resolutions of the Council. None of us is freelancing. We need to work with the parties on the outlines of an eventual settlement in a way that fleshes out the framework that I have discussed with members of the Council before and that was on the table in those days in Sweden in December last year. We need, in a purposeful way, to seek their views on both the concepts and the details. We need to do that now, in advance of any formal return to process or political consultation. That would prepare the ground for an eventual serious consultation between the parties.

In preparing for that political road to peace, I make it my job to meet with as wide a section of society as possible. I was particularly lucky in that regard to be invited to attend a recent meeting here in Amman with more than 100 Yemeni women, organized by UN-Women. Many had travelled, courageously and with great difficulty, to get here and make their contributions to resolving the conflict. My pledge to them at that meeting was that we would make sure in the months to come that we would consult them and their networks on all the different issues that will be debated between the parties. As I will say before concluding these remarks, there is no doubt that we can all do a lot better when it comes to the inclusion of women and other sectors of civil society in the political process.

I will also continue to meet with as many representatives of the varied Yemeni political parties as possible who can contribute their thinking. Doing this will, of course, ensure that we benefit from their experience. But it is more than that. These are the people who will eventually return to their rightful positions in running the politics and Government of Yemen once the parties have agreed to resolve the conflict. If that is to happen, those politicians and political class will need to work together instead of competing with each other.

The engagement process that I have just been describing builds on the rich past experience of

negotiations, particularly the 100 days in Kuwait three years ago, concerning which I doff my hat to Ambassador Mansour. It is a process that, while led by the Office I am privileged to be a part of, is not done only by my Office. I have already mentioned the contribution of UN-Women. I will have further discussions with our own technical advisory group of women in Edinburgh next week. Track-II organizations, where I have my own background — including the Berghof Foundation, IDEA, VMI and others — building on their own extensive experience in Yemen over the years, are active and valued partners in this endeavour and have been centrally involved in the thinking and planning that we go through in my Office when we begin to hope that we may be able to engaged in the political process.

I am also grateful for the support and advice we receive from the Peace Track Initiative and the Women's Solidarity Network, which represents a large number of Yemeni women and women-led organizations. The Council will hear shortly from Ms. Muna Luqman, one of Yemen's leading peace activists. I am sure she will urge us to do better in our efforts to include women, both in the formal delegations that come to rounds of formal consultations and in the much more extensive consultations that will, between sessions, help us to refine the issues we put before the parties.

My primary responsibility in the next few months will be to winnow down the differences between the parties so that when they meet they can be asked to answer precise questions about the nature of the arrangements to end the war, in an equitable fashion and in accordance with the resolutions of the Council. I seek the support of the Council for this approach. Let us together require those who can help us towards peace be encouraged and the sceptics set aside while we work to make our case.

I cannot conclude without reminding everyone — and I am sure that Mr. Lowcock will do so in a much more sufficient way — that Yemen bleeds. Its people go hungry. Many of its children have not seen the inside of a classroom. In many ways, it is one of the world's most tragic places. That is the spur that encourages us to imagine, beyond Al-Hudaydah, that we could see progress towards that solution, which alone can bring back the hopes of Yemeni families and the control of Yemen under its political class.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

Mr. Lowcock: As Martin Griffiths just mentioned, while the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah has largely held, as he also indicated we have seen a pronounced escalation of violence in other parts of the country. In Hajjah, just north of Al-Hudaydah, the conflict has intensified in several areas. Fierce fighting in Kushar district displaced up to 50,000 people in February and March, and was marked by continuous reports of shelling and air strikes causing scores of civilian casualties. In the Bani Hassan area of Abs district, over the last two weeks fighting has forced nearly 100,000 more people from their homes. About half have fled to other areas in Abs, which is an extremely poor and water-scarce district and now hosts upwards of 300,000 displaced people. The active front lines are now just a few kilometres from Abs district's main water source, which serves about 200,000 people. If fighting damages or cuts off that facility, we could very quickly see a major catastrophe. If fighting moves south to the Al-Hudaydah border, up to 400,000 more people could be displaced. Fierce fighting in Taiz in March among different factions in a Government-controlled area resulted in numerous casualties. Conflict has also intensified on established front lines in Al-Dhale'e and along the northern border in Sa'ada and Al-Jawf, displacing thousands of more families.

On 26 March, an air strike in Sa'ada landed close to a hospital supported by Save The Children, killing eight civilians, including five children. On 2 April, armed men broke into a hospital supported by Médecins Sans Frontières in Aden, kidnapped a patient and killed him outside the hospital. On 3 April, three women were reportedly killed and two children injured by an artillery shell that land near a school in Al-Hudaydah. On 7 April, large explosions at a warehouse in Sana'a killed 14 children attending school nearby. Sixteen more were critically injured. Most of them were not even 9-years old. As the international community continues to support the Stockholm Agreement, it is critical that we not lose sight of escalating violence elsewhere. In my briefing to the Council on 14 December 2018 (see S/PV.8424), I called for a cessation of hostilities across Yemen. I am reiterating that call today. All the men with the guns and the bombs need to stop the violence. We once again remind the parties that international humanitarian law binds them in all locations and at all times.

Humanitarian agencies are also confronting an alarming resurgence in the cholera epidemic, which we

had successfully rolled back last year. After two years and more than 1.5 million suspected cases, cholera has affected nearly every Yemeni family in some way. Two weeks ago, Dr. Mohammed Abdul-Mughni, a highly respected paediatrician treating cholera patients at a public hospital in Sana'a, died of the disease himself. He had just described the outbreak as "disastrous", telling journalists that, "We are working to the extremes of our strength".

So far in 2019, nearly 200,000 suspected cases of cholera have been reported. That is almost three times as many as in the same period last year. About a quarter of cases are children under five. That spike has come months before the usual increase during the main rainy season in August. That means that, if not brought under control, current trends could quickly result in mass morbidity and death. Early rains are partly responsible, but the major drivers remain forced displacement and conflict-induced collapse of public infrastructure, including the country's water and sanitation systems, and the public institutions that provide basic services.

We have seen the consequences of the destruction of the health system elsewhere too. More than 3,300 cases of diphtheria have been reported since 2018 — the first outbreak in Yemen since 1982. Earlier this year, new measles cases surged to nearly twice the levels reported at the same time in 2018 — itself a record-breaking year. As Mr. Griffiths just recalled, about 2 million school-age children remain out of school, and some 2,000 schools are unusable because they have been damaged, are hosting displaced people or have been occupied by armed groups. Overshadowing everything is the continuing and very real risk of famine. In the past four years, millions of families in Yemen have been reduced to paupers. They have little or no income, even as the prices of basic commodities that they need to survive increase relentlessly.

Humanitarian agencies are doing everything that they can to save lives and protect people across the country. Last year we reached an average of 8 million people a month, making Yemen the world's largest aid operation. This year, we are doing more. The World Food Programme has so far delivered emergency food assistance to more than 9 million people every month. It intends to increase that to 12 million people in the coming months. Thousands of humanitarian personnel are staffing approximately 1,500 cholera treatment facilities in 147 districts across the country. Emergency response teams are treating patients, distributing

hygiene kits, chlorinating water sources, sponsoring clean-up campaigns and educating the public. They are, as Dr. Mughni said, working tirelessly.

Humanitarian agencies have kept millions of people alive so far, but we still face two major challenges. The first is access. We still encounter far too many restrictions on humanitarian action. The Red Sea Mills in Al-Hudaydah, about which we have talked to the Council previously, are a compelling example. The Mills contain enough grain to feed 3.7 million people for a month, and they became inaccessible in September 2018, as coalition forces advanced into the city. Ever since then, we have faced serious challenges in accessing the Mills, which Mr. Griffiths and I both addressed in public statements in February (see S/PV.8464). A United Nations team was able to conduct a one-day visit — finally — on 26 February. That mission allowed us to establish that most of the grain could still be salvaged if it were immediately fumigated. Efforts have repeatedly been made since then to cross the front lines to bring in workers to do the fumigation and start milling the grain — a process that would take several weeks. We continue to work with all the parties to find the safest, most efficient way to get that food to millions of desperately hungry people who need it as soon as possible.

The litany of other problems involving access that we have reported to the Council before continue. Movement and customs clearances are withheld, visas are denied, project agreements are side-tracked and missions are delayed at checkpoints. Most of the restrictions that we are currently facing are imposed by Ansar Allah-affiliated authorities in the north. We appreciate their recent decision to grant additional visas, and we hope that that will lead to further improvements in the access situation. In Government-controlled areas, we also continue to engage the coalition with regard to requirements introduced in December 2018 at Al-Dhubab checkpoint, which have caused delays for agencies seeking to deliver aid in Government-controlled areas along the west coast. Commercial food imports through Al-Hudaydah and Saleef in the first quarter of the year were about 40 per cent lower than the previous quarter, and average food prices were more than twice the pre-crisis level. Commercial fuel imports are only 30 per cent of estimated requirements. Correspondingly, fuel prices have nearly quadrupled in some places in the past several weeks. People are

waiting for days to secure the very limited supplies of fuel that are available.

With huge numbers of desperately poor, hungry families being priced out of local food markets, decision makers on all sides need urgently to find ways to speed up the berthing of ships in Al-Hudaydah, ease credit requirements and facilitate in-country shipments of fuel. As I discussed with the new Governor of the Central Bank two days ago, we also need to see the exchange rate stabilized at a level that, as Mr. Griffiths alluded to, makes it affordable for ordinary people to buy food.

We are also increasingly concerned about the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, a floating storage and offloading facility about eight kilometres off the coast of Ras Issa terminal in the Red Sea. Used to store and export oil since 1998, the tanker currently has about 1.1 million barrels of oil on-board. It is in poor condition and has had no maintenance since 2015. Without maintenance, we fear that it will rupture, or even explode, unleashing an environmental disaster in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. We have been working with all parties to address the risk, supported by funding from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, starting with a technical assessment. Final approvals for the assessment have been pending since September. We hope that recent indications that a United Nations project will soon be able to begin work on this critical issue prove correct.

The second, potentially insuperable, challenge we face is funding. In February donors pledged \$2.6 billion for humanitarian action in Yemen this year, including a further \$1 billion joint pledge for the United Nations by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Last year's contribution from those two donors was channelled through the United Nations as a single, unearmarked grant early in the year, which I consider a best practice in humanitarian donorship. That was also a major factor in enabling us last year to counter the cholera outbreak, roll back food insecurity in half of the pre-famine districts and help us save more children suffering from complicated severe acute malnutrition — more children than we were able to save in any other comparable operation globally.

While we were encouraged by the pledges made in Geneva, I need to tell the Council that, nearly four months into the year, the United Nations Yemen humanitarian response plan has actually received in

cash only \$267 million. That is about 10 per cent of what was pledged, and 6 per cent of requirements. And it is 80 per cent less than what we had received in cash at this time last year. United Nations agencies are rapidly running out of money for essential relief activities. The World Health Organization projects that 60 per cent of diarrhoea treatment centres — the central approach we have to tackle the cholera outbreak — could close in the coming weeks, and services at 50 per cent of secondary-care facilities could be disrupted. The World Food Programme reports that its pipeline for food vouchers and the in-kind food pipeline will break in June, unless they immediately receive new money. Closing or scaling back such programmes — at a time when we are struggling to prevent widespread famine and roll back cholera and other killer diseases — would be catastrophic. And I therefore implore all our donors to convert their pledges — the promises they made in Geneva — into cash as quickly as possible.

We remain keenly aware that — as Mr. Griffiths said — a sustainable peace would be the most effective remedy for the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Without peace we will simply go on treating the symptoms of this crisis instead of addressing the cause.

Let me summarize. Violence has again increased. The relief operation is running out of money. Barring changes, the end is nigh.

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

Mark mentioned the suffering of the children in Yemen. In that connection, I now give the floor to Ms. Gamba.

Ms. Gamba: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the enduring and tragic impact of the conflict in Yemen on children.

As Council members know, the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict established through resolution 1612 (2005) enables the collection of information on the six grave violations against children in armed conflict, including on recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abductions, and denial of humanitarian access. The mechanism was formally established in Yemen 2013. As of today, there are six parties listed in the annexes to the annual report of the Secretary-

General on children and armed conflict for having perpetrated one or more grave violations against children in Yemen.

A country-specific report on Yemen will shortly be presented to the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, covering the period between April 2013 and the end of 2018. The figures for verified grave violations against children in Yemen during that period are staggering: more than 3,000 children were verified as recruited and used; more than 7,500 children were killed or maimed; and over 800 incidents of denial of humanitarian access to children were documented. In addition, over 350 attacks against schools and hospitals were verified. Unfortunately, due to difficulties in gathering information, sexual violence against children is chronically underreported in Yemen, and only a few cases could be verified in that period. In addition, due to the ongoing conflict, access restrictions, detention and threats against monitors, as well as intimidation of communities reporting on grave violations, the numbers I present to the Council today represent a mere fraction of violations committed against children in Yemen.

The impact of this conflict on children has been horrific. All parties to the conflict have acted and reacted militarily to events, resulting in the use and abuse of children in multiple ways. There have been exponential increases in violations throughout the years, as was the case at the end of 2014, when recruitment and use increased significantly, and in 2015, which was a devastating year for children, with over 900 children recruited and used, 2,400 killed or maimed and over 150 attacks against schools and hospitals.

As military surges occurred, children continued to take the brunt of them. At the end of 2017, during intensified fighting in Sa'ada, Al-Hudaydah and Hajjah, killing and maiming of children increased 25 per cent as compared to 2016. And last year, fighting and offensives in Al-Hudaydah alone resulted in the killing and maiming of more than 500 children. As the fundamental principles of international humanitarian and human rights law have been violated by all parties to the conflict, children have paid a high price. I would like to draw the attention of the Council to three persistent concerns in Yemen, notably the denial of humanitarian access for children, children's recruitment and use and their killing and maiming.

My first concern is about humanitarian access for and to children. The cumulative effects of years of war, compounded by the economic crisis, have taken a devastating toll on children, who have been dying of curable diseases such as cholera and starvation. Yet the fact that close to 70 per cent of districts in Yemen are currently at risk of famine cannot be explained by the raging conflict alone. The United Nations has verified more than 800 incidents of denial of humanitarian access since the establishment of the monitoring and reporting mechanism in Yemen. Most cases have involved restrictions on humanitarian movement, violence against humanitarian personnel or the destruction of their assets and facilities. Key civilian infrastructure, such as water reservoirs that are indispensable to the survival of surrounding communities, have also been attacked, and a recent air strike close to a hospital resulted in casualties among civilians, including children.

The consequences of each and every one of those cases are tragic, as 80 per cent of the Yemeni population is currently in need of humanitarian assistance and protection and 2 million children are acutely malnourished and fighting to stay alive. In a case in point, on 11 March, a mission delivering food, including to schools, in Saada governorate was cancelled owing to obstructions and checkpoints on the road. A large majority — more than 70 per cent — of the incidents of denial of humanitarian access were attributed to the Houthis, with almost 10 per cent attributed to the coalition and 7 per cent to Yemeni Government forces.

The recruitment and use of children remains a key concern. Between April 2013 and December 2018, more than 3,000 children were verified as recruited and used by the parties to the conflict in various roles — fighting on the front line, manning checkpoints, delivering supplies and assisting in intelligence-gathering. In 2018, almost 40 per cent of those children, 50 per cent of whom were under 15 years old, were used in active combat. In the same period, more than 200 children were killed or injured while being used by the parties to the conflict in Yemen. This recruitment and use continues unabated, with more than 500 children verified as recruited and used in the first three months of this year. Two thirds were recruited by the Houthis, followed by the Popular Resistance Committees, the Yemeni armed forces and the Security Belt Forces, as well as Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and the Salafist movement, to name only a few.

The raging conflict has fuelled that trend, which is exacerbated by the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Joining a party to the conflict has increasingly become a coping mechanism for families on the brink of survival, and the children recruited are often among the poorest. Many children have explained how they felt that they had no choice but to join in order to sustain their families. As the war continues, I fear that this push factor will only get stronger. The ideological indoctrination of children to defend their communities against a perceived enemy has also been an important factor in inciting children to join a party to the conflict. Children have reportedly been forcibly recruited from schools, orphanages and communities. While the vast majority are boys between the ages of 15 and 17, for the first time cases of the recruitment of girls were verified in 2018. The girls were used to pressure their peers to send male members of their families to the battlefields, and they were threatened with expulsion from school if they refused to comply.

The level of the killing and wounding of children are unsettling. Between April 2013 and January of this year, the United Nations verified the killing and maiming of more than 7,500 children, one third of them girls, making it the most prevalent type of violation in Yemen. Almost half of those casualties were caused by air strikes, for which the coalition bears the main responsibility. As for fighting on the ground, which has caused 40 per cent of the casualties among children, the shelling of urban areas and the use of mortars and small arms were the predominant causes of child casualties. The Houthis were responsible for the majority of child casualties as a result of ground fighting, followed by the Yemeni Government forces, among others. Landmines and unexploded ordnance have also been a major source of danger for children, causing more than 700 casualties between 2013 and now.

During this time I have consistently engaged with the parties to the conflict in urging them to end and prevent grave violations, which is at the very core of my mandate in support of United Nations efforts on the ground. To that effect, in December 2018, the Yemeni Government endorsed a road map aimed at revitalizing and expediting the implementation of the action plan signed in 2014 to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children. The road map lays out measures to ensure the release, reintegration and prevention of child recruitment. In October 2018 the Government of Yemen also endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, which is

an important first step to improving the protection of schools, education personnel and children. We now look to the Government to swiftly implement the road map and prioritize the development of standard operating procedures for releasing and reintegrating children associated with armed forces and groups.

In March, following engagements with the coalition since 2017, I signed a memorandum of understanding on strengthening the protection of children affected by the armed conflict in Yemen. It includes provisions on building the capacity of the child protection unit established at the coalition's headquarters in September 2017, as well as on accountability and the revision of the standard operating procedures for the handover of children intercepted during military operations. Most importantly, however, it stipulates that a work plan containing concrete measures to strengthen the protection of children will be developed in the next few weeks and months.

In conclusion, the violence that Yemeni children have been subjected to, and are still being subjected to, is simply unacceptable. I urge the parties to the conflict to take immediate measures to ensure that their military operations are conducted in full compliance with international law, including by respecting the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. Today thousands of children and their families are in dire need of assistance and support, from basic aid to reintegration assistance. I reiterate my call to the parties to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of the delivery of life-saving assistance to children and families in need. I also call on the international community to prioritize funding for Yemen, or the disbursement of funds that have already been pledged, in order to give children a chance to survive, learn and build the Yemen of the future.

There is no alternative to peace. To end the suffering, the Stockholm Agreement late last year provided hope. Yet, as fighting continues and intensifies in parts of the country, I urge the parties to swiftly implement the commitments made. The tragedy of Yemeni children and their role in the Yemen of tomorrow serves to underscore the need to put them at the heart of the peace process.

Provisions related to the unconditional release, handover and reintegration of children associated with parties to conflict should be given priority, and children deprived of liberty for their alleged association

with opposing parties should be treated primarily as victims and with dignity. Importantly, perpetrators of grave violations should be held to account for their acts before the relevant jurisdictions. This is why I urge the Security Council to heed my call and ensure that child protection is central to efforts for peace in Yemen going forward.

The President: I thank Ms. Gamba for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Luqman.

Ms. Luqman: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on behalf of Food for Humanity and the Women Solidarity Network.

I am a survivor of the devastating war in Yemen. I was in Taiz, the third-largest city, and vividly recall the terrifying air bombardment and indiscriminate shelling there, as well as the siege of the city and the horrors perpetrated by all parties in complete disregard of international humanitarian law. My own home in Taiz was partially destroyed by an air strike by the Saudi-led coalition that targeted a nearby school being used by the Houthis as a military warehouse and prison. I woke up to what seemed to be a volcanic eruption lighting up the sky, followed by what felt like an earthquake. Our neighbours — a family of five — perished under the rubble.

I also experienced the siege of Taiz. As the Houthis tightened their grip on the city, they deprived civilians of food, water and basic living necessities. The siege started three years ago and has continued to this day. The Houthis and armed-resistance groups loyal to President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour are engaged in vicious hostilities in populated areas. I mediated the evacuation of children from an orphanage that had been stormed by Houthis seeking to position snipers. After the children were successfully evacuated, a Saudi-led-coalition air strike hit a nearby building and terrified the children, many of whom sustained injuries from shattered windows. I visited families trapped in the crossfire, brought them food and supplies and facilitated their evacuation, thereby mitigating the risks of being targeted by snipers or stepping on mines. Escaping death in Yemen is becoming increasingly difficult.

The Stockholm peace consultations successfully brought parties together, but they excluded women and led to an agreement that is blind to gender. The establishment of the United Nations Mission to Support the Al-Hudaydah agreement reflected the seriousness

of the Council to bring peace to Yemen. However, we have yet to see the Stockholm Agreement enforced. Four months after the Stockholm Agreement, our team members in Al-Hudaydah report to us that armed clashes continue and that more families are being displaced every day. People are collectively being punished and deprived of basic necessities, including food, medicine, fuel and electricity. Roads leading to downtown Al-Hudaydah, where the main hospital is located, are blocked. Many have lost their lives trying to get there.

New fronts have opened in Hajjah, leading to a catastrophic humanitarian-displacement crisis and famine. Government forces continue to liberate locations, while the Houthis attack opposing tribes, persecute tribal leaders and their families and destroy their homes. The Saudi-led coalition air strikes continue to target civilian areas, including in Saada. A week ago, a devastating explosion near a girls school in Sana'a led to the death of 14 children, mostly girls, and injured dozens of civilians. The parties to the conflict blame each other for that horrific crime, and the victims will see their right to justice denied if no independent investigation takes place.

Humanitarian access remains restricted due to the overall blockade imposed by the Saudi-led coalition, and the Houthis have resorted to laying siege to areas where they deny delivery of humanitarian aid to areas under their control. More recently, they prevented the delivery of badly needed cholera vaccines. Hunger is still used as a weapon of war. Thousands of Yemenis cannot afford to buy food because their salaries have been suspended or diverted, cutting off people's livelihoods. Girls are married off for dowry money, and boys continue to be forced into becoming fighters.

The prisoner-exchange agreement signed prior to Stockholm has yet to be implemented. The Association of Mothers of Abductees shared concerns that arbitrarily detained civilians are being tortured, badly treated and denied fair trials. The Stockholm Agreement converts their status to that of prisoners of war and proposes exiling released detainees to other governorates, thereby separating them from their families. In addition, women human rights defenders, journalists and religious minorities such as Baha'is are detained and have no representatives in the current peace consultations who can negotiate their release.

Space for civil society organizations is becoming increasingly restricted, especially in areas under Houthi control. Women peacemakers are arbitrarily detained and forced to abandon their work in peacebuilding and promoting women's and human rights. Beyond physical threats against women human rights defenders to deter their activism, accusations of immoral acts and defamation are another tool used against women.

Women are not passive victims of this war. With limited resources, they have been leading efforts to bring peace to Yemen and hold communities together. In tribal areas, women can contribute to mediation efforts because they are respected and trusted. The patriarchal society in Yemen had already been challenged when women went into the streets to demand change and secured their 30 per cent representation in the National Dialogue.

We have consulted the only woman member in the Government delegation to the peace consultations, Ms. Rana Ghanem, who proposed increasing the number of seats for women within delegations — seats that must remain vacant if no women are selected. We have also approached Houthi women who express their readiness to participate in peace negotiations. It is not impossible to envisage including Houthi women in the peace process, because the Houthis had women representatives in the National Dialogue. There is no longer any excuse for continuing to exclude women, but that is the effective result of a poorly designed peace process.

Among other groups excluded in the peace process are the southerners, who continue to demand a just solution for the southern issue. Continuing to delay addressing their demands constitutes a ticking time bomb for another layer of conflict that could be just around the corner.

Today, almost five years into the devastating war in Yemen, we members of the Women Solidarity Network have been working hard to fill the gap left by the State, providing internally displaced persons with food and life-saving necessities, diverting youth away from fighting towards peacebuilding, mediating for the release of detainees, and ending armed conflicts over water and land resources. We are disappointed that all national, regional and international parties have yet to take bold action to end the war and the suffering of the Yemeni people. We are frustrated because, despite our continuous calls for the inclusion of women, the role of

women in peacebuilding continues to be ridiculed, and women — who are the real peacemakers — continue to be excluded in the ceasefire and peace process. I invite Council members to take a serious stand with us and adopt a bold new approach to addressing the following.

The Security Council should act to end this devastating conflict and facilitate an immediate comprehensive ceasefire that includes the Saudi-led coalition air bombardment campaign and the Houthi missile and drone attacks, both within Yemen and across our borders. The Council should enforce the Stockholm and prisoner exchange agreements, unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained civilians and hold all parties to account, especially spoilers. It should establish mechanisms to implement the previous resolutions focusing on aspects related to the disarmament and demobilization of Houthis, as well as humanitarian access, starting with operationalizing medical evacuations through Sana'a airport and, ultimately, lifting the aerial, naval and land blockades.

It should continue to adopt an approach to deconstruct the conflict and localize the peace process by creating local peace agreements in conflict areas, including in Taiz, which entails opening humanitarian corridors, as well as the withdrawal of fighters from the city and civilian institutions and ensuring that they are not redeployed to other fronts.

Starting with liberated areas, the Council should support the restoration of Government institutions to full functionality, including institutions that deliver services, such as the social welfare fund, and assist the Government in addressing core conflict issues and grievances in areas under its control. It should demand serious efforts to demilitarize liberated cities, ensuring the relocation of military depots and camps away from populated areas, and facilitate the development of professional security forces that are well trained, including in human rights. It should urge for the disbursement of civil servants' salaries in Houthi-controlled areas by ensuring the Government's commitments based on the 2014 civil servant lists.

The Council should demand that the negotiating parties include no less than 50 per cent of women in their delegations and that the United Nations Special Envoy and the Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee consult regularly with women and ensure women's meaningful inclusion in all peace processes, as well as the use of stronger language in its legally

binding texts that call for an inclusive peace process, emphasizing the inclusion of women, young people, southerners and other marginalized social groups.

We hope that our recommendations will inform the Council's decisions and lead to firm and decisive actions towards peace spoilers, as well as contribute to ending this unnecessary suffering of millions of Yemenis.

The President: I thank Ms. Luqman for her briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank all the briefers. I will divide my remarks between what we heard from Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and what we heard from Ms. Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and Ms. Luqman, Chairperson, Food for Humanity. They all made compelling points. I thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock, Mr. Griffiths and Lieutenant General Lollesgaard, Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, who we will hear from later, for their tireless efforts to push the implementation of the agreements reached in Stockholm.

The testimony of Ms. Luqman was very powerful, but we know that the United Nations has been working very hard for implementation. I believe that I speak for everyone in the Council in saying that it really wants to stay united behind the Special Envoy in pushing for that. As he said, the fact that agreements on the concept of operations for phase 1 have been achieved is helpful. I do not think that we underestimate the scale of the task. The Special Envoy referred to the fact that it would be the first time that there have been voluntary withdrawals in the Yemeni context. We appreciate the scale of the task. But, at the same time, we want the parties to be aware that the lack of implementation is very worrying, and we urge them all to put in place whatever steps need to be taken to achieve the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. We also look to the parties to remove all impediments to the United Nations ability to operate effectively in Al-Hudaydah. We will have a couple of questions to follow up on when we go into closed consultations.

I wanted to turn to what Under-Secretary-General Lowcock said. I think that it is shocking that we cannot get access to the Red Sea Mills after all this time. After the last briefing (see S/PV.8464) we were very hopeful but it is very disappointing to hear that those

obstacles still continue. I just want to echo Mark's call that if it is possible for the grain to be salvaged, even at this late stage, we should look to the parties to redouble their efforts to work with the United Nations to ensure that can happen. Clearly, the contrast between the figures that he provided regarding the 80-per-cent drop in humanitarian assistance and what we know is already the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world is extremely alarming. I am running out of superlatives to echo how worrying that is.

There have been some very welcome pledges from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. They have just announced dispersing \$200 million of the pledges that they have made. But there is still a \$1.5 billion-dollar funding gap in the humanitarian response plan. For our part, we have pledged \$300 million and we have brought forward our disbursement so that we can support the United Nations. But I would like to encourage all donors today to disburse their funds rapidly and to pledge additional funds throughout the year.

Turning to the very powerful testimonies that we heard from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Ms. Luqman, I thank them for placing the focus on children. Today is a very good moment to reflect how desperate the plight of children is in Yemen. I would also like to pay tribute to the Permanent Representative of Belgium and his Mission for all the work that they have done regarding children in the Yemeni conflict. We need to consider very carefully what he told us. We heard a very graphic account from Ms. Luqman of what the continuing conflict means for individuals. I think she is quite right to hold the Council to account and to ask us to work with the United Nations to do more. We will take that very seriously and will do what we can.

Finally, I wanted to end by returning to the Stockholm Agreement. It was designed to build confidence and to prepare the road for a comprehensive political process to end the conflict. That is a very important goal. The stakes are too high for us to let that fail. In our view, the Council should be ready to take stronger measures if there is no progress by our next meeting. I would like to follow that up in today's consultations.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to thank all the briefers. In my statement I will focus on two main topics: the status of implementing the Stockholm Agreement and the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

With regard to the status of implementing the Stockholm Agreement, notwithstanding the first phase of redeployment, which is at a stalemate, in addition to the ongoing impediments facing the work of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) due to deliberately hampering the activities of its Chair and personnel, frequently affecting their freedom of movement and obstructing the implementation of their mandate under the relevant Security Council resolutions, we welcome what Mr. Griffiths said in his briefing today on reaching a detailed agreement among the parties concerned to implement that phase.

As Special Envoy Mr. Griffiths said, the political will of the two parties is an extremely important matter in order to achieve the desired progress. However, we reiterate that it is of the utmost importance to demonstrate goodwill and to translate words into action by fully implementing all aspects of the Stockholm Agreement, including the Al-Hudaydah and the prisoner exchange agreements, in addition to the memorandum of understanding on Taiz, as the best approach towards resuming the next round of consultations, which will focus on cross-cutting issues to end the crisis, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, as well as the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference.

We reiterate our full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, as well as the Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Al-Hudaydah Agreement and the Chair of the RCC. We are cognizant of the fact that there can be no military solution to this prolonged crisis, and we do not want the conflict in Al-Hudaydah to go back to square one. We should therefore immediately begin the implementation of resolution 2452 (2019), which requested the Secretary-General to report on instances of non-compliance.

On the humanitarian situation, we have repeatedly stressed at previous meetings the importance of the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement as a gateway to a political settlement. The Agreement has a humanitarian dimension whose ultimate purpose is to alleviate the suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people. This includes the opening of safe corridors to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all affected and to the areas most in need, while enabling the United Nations and its relevant agencies to reach the Red Sea

Mills, where there are vast grain stocks that could feed 3.7 million people for 30 days, as noted by Mr. Lowcock in his briefing.

Despite the positive cooperation on the part of the Yemeni Government in the form of announcing its willingness to ensure safe access to roads and to open routes for humanitarian delivery, access to the Mills remains stalled. The impediments placed before the RCC in reaching the Mills could cause the stocks to spoil.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen has seen a significant reaction from the international community, as clearly reflected in the magnitude of the response to the United Nations response plan for 2019, which was commensurate with the scope of the crisis. Kuwait has pledged \$250 million. Since 2015 we have provided a total of \$600 million, in addition to the generous donations by major donors such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Germany, the European Union and other countries. This underscores the need to address this difficult aspect of the crisis that has afflicted Yemen since September 2014.

Regarding the humanitarian concerns about the recruitment of children, and taking into account what was said by Ms. Gamba in her briefing, two thirds of those children were recruited by the Houthis. We note also that the joint command of the coalition has set up a child-specialized unit in order to protect and receive recruited children, rehabilitate them by providing them with medical and psychological support and ensure their handover to their families with the help of international specialized agencies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross. The unit has handed over 120 children to date and has defined rules of engagement so as to ensure that military operations are carried out in accordance with international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call on the Yemeni parties to fully implement the Stockholm Agreement on Al-Hudaydah and its three ports, the prisoner exchange agreement and the statement of understanding on Taiz, in order to complement the efforts of the Special Envoy to bring about a political solution underpinned by the three agreed terms of reference: the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism; the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference; and the relevant Security Council

resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). That would end the crisis and ensure the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen as well as prevent any interference in its domestic affairs.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the briefings delivered today by the main briefers and listened closely to the information provided us on the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement as well as to the detailed and alarming briefing on the humanitarian situation. Last year the whole world welcomed the news of the signing of the Stockholm Agreement as the path towards peace in Yemen. The parties must maintain the same spirit of commitment shown in December and translate words into tangible action on the ground by demonstrating the political will required to resolve the conflict.

Protecting the civilian population and civilian infrastructure are basic principles under international humanitarian law. That is why we view with concern the attacks carried out in the past few weeks across the country, in contravention of the rules of war. Civilians are often denied the protection to which they are entitled and once again are paying the highest price for the conflict in Yemen. It is for that reason that we call on the parties and on States to support civilians through greater focus on their protection during the planning and implementation phases of military action.

We have already heard here that almost 80 per cent of Yemen's total population — 24 million people — require some type of humanitarian assistance and protection. Ten million people are but a step away from starvation, and 7 million are undernourished. These are catastrophic levels and require a response commensurate with the situation. In a food-disaster situation such as the one being experienced in Yemen, it is unacceptable that so far humanitarian workers have not been ensured access to the Mills in Al-Hudaydah. We call for this situation to be resolved as soon as possible.

Ms. Luqman brought to the table perhaps one of the most critically important elements of today's discussion. In a humanitarian context of unprecedented scale, the role of Yemeni women as negotiators of humanitarian access, confidence-builders in affected areas and even as care providers is absolutely essential. That is why we must focus on them and on local women's organizations a large part of humanitarian action in Yemen, from

the planning stage to the implementation of relief operations, along with the necessary financing.

It is crucial that, given the progress made towards peace in Yemen, we continue to do everything possible to pursue a political solution that would include the significant participation of women and young people in the process of resolving the conflict there.

Apart from the appalling humanitarian food crisis, which is for the most part man-made, there is another equally important factor: access to safe drinking water. In Yemen, the lack of sanitation has led to an increase in waterborne diseases. Hundreds of thousands of persons were affected by cholera in 2018. As Mr. Lowcock quite rightly pointed out, since the beginning of 2019 that rate has increased, with more than 120,000 potential new cases of cholera. We therefore believe that there must be a robust response in this sector as a critical element in improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable Yemenis, especially children.

We have not seen any appreciable change in the lives of children since the signing of the Stockholm Agreement. Children are the ones who are continuing to pay the high price of war in Yemen. Parents have to watch their children die in their arms, and vehicles transporting food are being attacked. The children of Yemen have been robbed of their right to life, health and education. How many more children will have to be affected before we put an end to the conflict? We ask the parties to prioritize the protection of children at all times. That must go hand in hand with the identification and punishment of the perpetrators. The international community must lend its expertise to develop the tools necessary to ensure that victims of human rights violations find justice — justice that is impartial, respectful of due process and safe.

The Dominican Republic reaffirms its commitment to contributing, through the Council, to efforts to implement the Stockholm Agreement, as well as the Redeployment Coordination Committee and the United Nations Mission to Support the Al-Hudaydah Agreement. The lives of millions of Yemenis have become unsustainable. The resurgence of violence perpetrated by both parties in some areas of the country as led to more displacements. The safety and well-being of hundreds of thousands of war-weary Yemenis continue to be compromised as we enter the fifth year of the conflict.

Finally, the Security Council maintains its unity in its pursuit of a political solution to the conflict in Yemen, and we would like to reiterate our delegation's strong support for Mr. Griffith's tireless efforts to find a solution. We call on the parties to participate in those negotiations in good faith and to maintain their commitments in the same spirit they demonstrated in Stockholm in December, 2018.

We do not want to end without highlighting the heroic work being undertaken on the ground by the personnel of the United Nations and its agencies, together with non-governmental organizations, who tirelessly face the human dimension of that conflict every day to ensure the survival of millions of victims of that humanitarian catastrophe. They need to know that their work will not go unnoticed. The Security Council is with them.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I warmly thank our four briefers for their enlightening interventions. I would also like to welcome the presence of Mr. Norbert Röttgen, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Parliament. I would like to make three points today.

First of all, I would like to strongly reaffirm France's support for the tireless efforts of the Special Envoy and of Lieutenant General Løllesgaard, the latter within the Redeployment Coordination Committee and as Head of the United Nations Mission in Support of the Al-Hudaydah Agreement. We must stress that only a political solution can put an end to the conflict in Yemen. We are sending that message to all our interlocutors, including regional interlocutors.

The Special Envoy has told us, and we share his analysis, that the window of opportunity to put an end to the conflict is still open and must urgently be taken advantage of by the parties. We also support the proposals submitted to the Yemeni Government and the Houthis to facilitate the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement. We call on both parties to respect their commitments and start redeployment operations without delay or seeking to exploit any redeployments that may be carried out by the other party. Achieving results in Al-Hudaydah must indeed enable us to recreate a virtuous cycle for a political solution and forge bonds of trust between the parties, which is an absolute must. The military solution is less of an option than ever.

Secondly, we remain very concerned about the situation on the ground. The relative holding of the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah is a positive development, which should be welcomed. Nonetheless, the intensity of hostilities has increased throughout the rest of the country and the humanitarian situation remains extremely worrisome. The parties must therefore maintain their commitment to the Special Envoy and General Løllesgaard and play a responsible and constructive role in order to avoid jeopardizing the process. Against that backdrop, the role played by the United Nations Mission in Support of the Al-Hudaydah Agreement, deployed in January, and the strengthening of the United Nations presence on the ground are essential. It is important that the remaining observers provided for in the Mission's mandate be able to arrive as soon as possible. We expect the parties, in accordance with their commitments, to ensure the security and free movement of United Nations personnel.

The parties must also do everything necessary to ensure that humanitarian actors can work safely and have the required access. Bureaucratic impediments, threats, harassment, arrests and defamation campaigns, in particular in Sana'a, must stop. Infrastructure — especially hospitals, which have been damaged by hostilities in Taiz and Saada — and schools, where children are particularly vulnerable, must also be protected.

I would like to draw the Council's attention in particular to the situation of children in Yemen. Children are among the first victims of the conflict and are widely recruited and used. The Secretary-General's next report on that subject should shed light on that unacceptable situation. In Yemen, as in other conflict situations, every effort must be made to put an end to serious violations against children in particular.

After the hope created by the Stockholm agreements, the impact on the people of a further failure of the political process would be catastrophic and would push us into unknown territory. It is therefore urgent to make progress in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement in order to create the necessary confidence to resume discussions with a view to a comprehensive political agreement. But the political process cannot be conditioned on the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement alone; the two processes must move forward in parallel in order to fuel genuine momentum. Resuming the discussions on a comprehensive and inclusive political agreement that takes into account

the diversity of Yemen's political and civil society actors is the only real prospect for putting an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people. The Special Envoy's attention to the role of Yemeni women is essential in that regard. Strengthening women's participation in peace discussions, in Yemen as it is elsewhere, is an essential condition for success.

The Council, after unanimously adopting resolutions 2451 (2018) and 2452 (2018), must at all costs avoid the trap of letting the hope generated in Stockholm die. We simply cannot allow it. Our collective efforts are needed now more than ever, and the Council's unity on the arduous path towards peace in Yemen is our greatest asset. That is not the case, as we know, in all crises, to put it diplomatically. Therefore, let us leverage that unity in order to put the full weight of the Security Council behind seeking a political solution, which today, despite the magnitude of the challenges, is within our grasp.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to convey my appreciation for the briefings by Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Virginia Gamba, as well as Ms. Muna Luqman's statement. China commends the efforts of the United Nations and the relevant humanitarian agencies to advance the political process and ease the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

At present, the ceasefire is generally holding in Al-Hudaydah and surrounding areas, but the security situation is fragile and there has been limited progress in the implementation of the agreements. The conflict in Yemen has been going on for many years, and the security landscape gives us no cause for optimism. The humanitarian situation is dire, and the country is confronted with multiple economic and social challenges. However, the desire remains for all the Yemeni parties to promote the implementation of the agreements in search of a political solution. The United Nations mediation efforts have not let up for one moment, thereby achieving a measure of success over the past several months. It is incumbent upon the international community to remain seized of the issue of Yemen with greater input. Continued patience is needed, and we must not lose confidence. In China's view, work should be focused on the following areas on the path ahead.

First, we must continue to push for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, which did not come about easily. It is an important starting point for Yemen's journey from conflict to peace. The Yemeni parties must implement it in earnest. With regard to the issue of redeployment in particular, they should step up cooperation with the United Nations, resolve differences through dialogue and operationalize concrete arrangements. Consultations should continue on prisoner exchanges and the issue of Taiz, and efforts should be made to reach a workable arrangement as soon as possible, while continuously enhancing mutual trust. The process of deploying the United Nations Mission to Support the Al-Hudaydah agreement in Yemen should continue, with guarantees for the safety and security of United Nations personnel to support and supervise the implementation of the agreements.

Secondly, the Yemeni parties must be encouraged to maintain effective political dialogue and negotiations. The various parties in Yemen are currently sharply divided. The foundation for establishing mutual trust remains far from solid. The road ahead leading towards a political settlement remains long. In the long-term, resuming political peace talks remains imperative to finding a holistic solution to the issue of Yemen. The United Nations should continue to work as the main mediator. The Security Council should remain united, fully consider and respect the views of the countries concerned and of those in the region, continue to provide political support for dialogue and negotiations among the Yemeni parties and urge the countries of the region to maintain their constructive assistance to that end.

Thirdly, robust efforts must be made to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The international community should increase humanitarian assistance to Yemen, honour its pledges and provide targeted financial and in-kind support, including food and medicine, to help the country respond to famine, the cholera outbreak, displacement and other challenges. The work of the United Nations humanitarian agencies on the ground should be supported with humanitarian access, while ensuring the safety of humanitarian workers. The humanitarian needs of women, children and other vulnerable groups should figure prominently on the agenda, and support should be provided to Yemen to improve its economy so that it can meet the basic needs of its people.

The Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) recently visited countries in the region to engage meaningfully with the countries concerned. That was a positive exercise that helped deepen our understanding of the positions of the various parties and aligned the 2140 Committee's agenda with the overarching goal of a political settlement of the Yemeni issue. China was represented on the Committee's mission to support strengthened dialogue between the Committee and the parties concerned. In order to settle the Yemeni issue, there is no alternative to a political solution. The parties concerned should uphold Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, and support a broadly inclusive political solution, to be achieved through dialogue and negotiations, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, its Implementation Mechanism and the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference. The role of the international community is to create a favourable environment in which the Yemeni parties will be able to implement agreements and reach a political solution.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting and thank the briefers for their briefings. We commend and support the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen to end the conflict in the country, which is the best way to protect the suffering population.

Peru notes with deep concern the lack of tangible progress in the implementation of the important agreements reached in Sweden and the escalation of violence in various areas of the country in recent weeks. We believe that it is essential to act quickly and firmly to maintain the gains made during the meeting held in Sweden and implement the Stockholm Agreement, especially with regard to the agreement concerning the port of Al-Hudaydah as a necessary step towards reaching a political settlement to the conflict. In that regard, we welcome the commitment, flexibility and patience demonstrated by the Government of President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour. We are looking forward to a similar approach on the part of Ansar Allah, in line with the expectations of the international community. Accordingly, we are encouraged by the information provided by Martin Griffiths on the agreement reached on the implementation of the first phase. We urge that this window of opportunity, based

on the assurance that the Council will ensure the parties' strict compliance to their commitments, not be missed. We also urge them to honour their commitments concerning the exchange of prisoners. To that end, we must emphasize that any difficulty encountered in the process cannot be interpreted as justification for resuming a military course of action, as that would only aggravate what is already considered to be the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world today.

We also stress importance of those countries with influence over the warring parties being able to help them comply with the Stockholm Agreement, refrain from confrontational rhetoric and reciprocal accusations and address all differences through diplomatic channels. We must also recall the obligation of all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. We deplore the deaths of children and the many other fatalities and injuries that resulted from the recent air strike near schools in Sana'a. We hope that those reprehensible and other previous acts will be the subject of exhaustive investigations that duly identify and punish those responsible. We emphasize the importance of concurrently addressing the humanitarian situation, which appears to be worsening on the ground. We are particularly concerned about the alarming levels of food insecurity and worsening economic indicators, resulting in the increased suffering of the population.

We also note the urgent need to contain the new and worrisome outbreak of cholera with the approach of the rainy season. To that end, special focus must be placed on the repair and maintenance of water and sewage systems to prevent its spread from reaching devastating levels, as was the case last year. Furthermore, as Ms. Gamba mentioned, we believe that priority attention should be given to the tragic situation involving women, and especially children, given their greater level of vulnerability to acts of psychological, physical and sexual violence. We must therefore welcome the 25 March signing in Riyadh of the memorandum of understanding to strengthen the protection of children affected by armed conflict in Yemen signed with the coalition to support legitimacy in Yemen. Moreover, we commend the efforts of the Government of Yemen to arrange for the payment of salaries to public officials, including those of Al-Hudaydah, and we urge the Government to refrain from adopting negative trade measures that could worsen the dire humanitarian situation in the north

of the country. We note that achieving sustainable peace will require broad consensus based on a shared vision for the future. As Ms. Luqman highlighted, all sectors of the Yemeni population should be adequately represented, including the meaningful participation of women and young people in political processes.

In conclusion, I express my gratitude to the authorities of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, Jordan and Oman for having recently received the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), which I have the honour to chair. We especially appreciated the high level of our interlocutors, the breadth of the discussions and the unanimous support for the political solution advocated for by the United Nations. We extend our gratitude to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Head of United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement, the Resident Coordinator in Yemen and other United Nations officials for the valuable information provided to the Committee and the dedicated work they carry out under very difficult conditions. We believe that that visit, while carrying out on-site verification of the implementation of the sanctions regime, was useful in sending a strong political signal that the Security Council and its respective subsidiary body are prioritizing the situation in Yemen and closely following developments on the ground. We will provide a more detailed report to the Council in the near future.

Lastly, I reaffirm Peru's commitment to achieving sustainable peace in Yemen that will end the humanitarian catastrophe and foster regional stability.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank our briefers today.

We share the frustration over the delay in implementing the agreement on Al-Hudaydah redeployment plan. Given the humanitarian emergency, it must not fail. We therefore welcomed this morning's announcement of an agreement on the first phase of redeployment, and we call on all parties to implement it as soon as possible. We also call on all the parties to fully respect the ceasefire and to implement the agreement in good faith generally. In that regard, we reiterate our full support for the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Lieutenant General Michael Lollersgaard.

Secondly, efforts to improve the catastrophic humanitarian situation continue to be crucial. I would like to echo the call made by Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock regarding humanitarian access,

particularly access to the Red Sea Mills. We also heard his call to disburse our pledges as soon as possible. Belgium's contribution to the Yemen Humanitarian Fund will be available in May, and we call on other contributors to do the same.

Thirdly, we are particularly concerned about the situation of children in Yemen. They are the main victims of this conflict, as Special Representative Virginia Gamba has just described. Children have been recruited, killed and even mutilated by all the parties. Air strikes are still hitting schools and hospitals even though the coalition was censured for this violation last year. Sexual violence is a major issue, and child marriage has increased dramatically. There have been several cases of denial of access to humanitarian aid for children. We therefore call on all the parties to respect international humanitarian law and take effective and urgent measures to end all such violations. In that context, we welcome the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Special Representative and the coalition, and we look forward to the development of a programme of activities for implementing it in a concrete and meaningful way. We ask Mr. Griffiths to ensure that child-protection measures are at the heart of the peace process.

Finally, Ms. Muna Luqman's courageous testimony reflects the importance of civil society in Yemen. Her experience as a mediator in Taiz shows the importance of involving women in peace processes and in the implementation of agreements.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank all the briefers for their informative, if alarming, interventions. I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and express our appreciation for the work of all United Nations agencies in Yemen.

Despite the efforts to translate the outcomes of the consultations in Stockholm into tangible results on the ground, progress on the redeployment of forces from Al-Hudaydah has so far been very limited. We note the compromise reached by the parties on the first redeployment phase and urge them to start the withdrawal process without further delays. At the same time, it is vital that the ceasefire be upheld and the parties respect the Stockholm Agreement by renouncing violence and showing restraint. Although the Council continues to consider progress on Al-Hudaydah very important, we remain mindful of developments in other

parts of Yemen. We are deeply concerned about the threat of violence across various governorates and by the impact of the ongoing atrocities on civilians. We are particularly shocked by the suffering of Yemeni children, who continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. The loss of civilian lives is not only contrary to international humanitarian law and international human rights law; it is also morally abhorrent. I want to reiterate that all parties must fully comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. All cases of violations should be investigated and those responsible held accountable.

Poland is also deeply concerned about the deepening humanitarian crisis. Currently, more than 20 million Yemenis are food insecure, and nearly 240,000 are starving to death. The recent outbreak of cholera has further exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situation. As the humanitarian needs continue to rise, we welcome the outcomes of the high-level pledging event in Geneva and the generosity of the donors, whom we join by pledging our contribution. The effectiveness of the financial support, however, will remain limited unless all the impediments to humanitarian access and commercial deliveries are lifted. The parties must allow and facilitate the flow into Yemen of humanitarian and commercial imports, including fuel, and ensure safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance and personnel, including by lifting all bureaucratic restrictions and ensuring the timely issuance of visas. We also expect them to prioritize the opening of humanitarian corridors and allow access to all humanitarian facilities without further delay. The delivery of humanitarian assistance into Yemen must not be politicized by any of the stakeholders.

The situation in Yemen requires swift and decisive action. The developments on the ground show how pressing it is to relaunch the political process and find a comprehensive political solution to the crisis. The resumption of an intra-Yemeni political dialogue with the meaningful participation of all groups of Yemeni society, including women and young people, is a prerequisite to bringing an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people and should happen as soon as possible.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank today's briefers, and especially the United Nations teams on the ground in Yemen, for their tireless efforts in exceptionally difficult conditions.

Since December, the Council has urged the parties to demonstrate their commitment to a political settlement by redeploying from Al-Hudaydah in line with the terms of the Stockholm Agreement. While we should not minimize the importance of the Al-Hudaydah ceasefire, which is narrowly holding, continued violence risks jeopardizing the Stockholm Agreement. But the ceasefire is not an end in and of itself. Now is the time to seize on the momentum of the ceasefire and on the agreement on the concept of operations for the first phase of the withdrawal. We need to move to further talks to end the conflict.

The Yemeni Government has been working with the United Nations Special Envoy for more than a month to identify redeployment terms that it can accept. We thank President Hadi Mansour and the Yemeni Government for their support for the Redeployment Coordination Committee. We appreciate the fact that the Houthis have finally agreed to the phase one withdrawal concept of operations, and we will be watching closely to see if they make good on that agreement. The Yemeni Government has demonstrated a clear commitment to the United Nations-led process. It is now time for the Houthis to show the international community that they too are serious about the United Nations process and the agreements that they themselves reached in Stockholm.

For the past three months we have also expressed our strong concerns about continued postponement of the World Food Programme's mission to rehabilitate and reopen the Red Sea Mills. But today, as we heard from Mark Lowcock and a number of other speakers, the Mills are still closed and the food stocks within may be rotting. At this point, only the Houthis are blocking access to them, and they alone will be to blame if the food spoils.

Our support for Martin Griffiths and Lieutenant General Lollesgaard remains steadfast. They, their staffs and the international humanitarian community are doing what they can to help the parties reach a resolution to the conflict and save Yemeni lives. We applaud the Yemeni Government for joining them in that effort, and we call on the Houthis to do the same without further delay.

Mr. Ntsoane (South Africa): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We would also like to thank the briefers for their remarks. My delegation would like to address three points today — the implementation

of the Stockholm Agreement, the humanitarian situation and the impact of the conflict in Yemen on women and especially on children.

First, with respect to the Stockholm Agreement, South Africa is encouraged that the Agreement continues to hold despite its many challenges. We urge the parties to fully implement it, as it remains the only hope for bringing peace and stability to Yemen. We also welcome this morning's announcement that both parties have accepted the redeployment plan. We are sorry to have to note the recent clashes around Al-Hudaydah, which are the most intense that we have seen since the signing of the Stockholm Agreement. We urge all the parties to refrain from further escalation and call for a resumption of the exchange of prisoners and the statement of understanding on Taiz, as the Stockholm Agreement requires, and other confidence-building measures. It is also vital that all parties redeploy their forces from Al-Hudaydah. That requires a political solution with compromises on the part of all the parties concerned. We are encouraged that neither side has sought to seize new territory in Al-Hudaydah so far. We are also encouraged by the positive developments on the ground, including the recent session of Yemen's House of Representatives, the first in more than four years to convene more than 130 parliamentarians.

Secondly, it is clear that the humanitarian situation remains dire. South Africa continues to call on all the parties to respect international humanitarian law and protect the safety and security of humanitarian workers in order to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid. Where there have been reported violations, we call for independent investigations. Furthermore, we call on all the parties to the conflict to take tangible steps to address the country's humanitarian crisis, particularly the risks of famine and another cholera outbreak. We further appeal to the donors to work urgently to disburse pledges made to the humanitarian response plan in order to address the humanitarian situation on the ground.

Thirdly and importantly, on the issue of the safety of women and children, we welcome the signing of a memorandum of understanding to develop a programme of activities in the next two months to strengthen the protection of children. South Africa is encouraged by those positive steps and looks forward to seeing further steps to strengthen child protection. It is also important that the memorandum of understanding be fully implemented to ensure the safety and security of

vulnerable groups. Despite that positive commitment, we were appalled at the reports of the killing of civilians, including four children, on 26 March in an explosion near two schools in Sana'a, and again on 7 April, in which 14 children died. Schools should be places of learning and should never be targeted during a conflict. Children are among the most vulnerable members of society. Our collective conscience cannot allow us to condone such acts and we therefore condemn these attacks on children. We call on all the parties to the conflict to put in place measures to ensure that such incidents are never repeated in future. South Africa also calls for the perpetrators to be listed accurately in the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict, in line with United Nations practices.

In conclusion, my delegation continues to call for a peaceful, Yemeni-led solution to the conflict. It is our hope that the sum of the positive momentum gained with the discussions in Stockholm and the signing of the Agreement will lead to further progress on the political front. The differences in Yemen cannot be solved militarily and will only be further exacerbated as this avoidable conflict continues. The current talks are hampered by the continued fighting, which is not conducive to building trust, the first step in creating a negotiated settlement. If the status quo remains, the international community will have failed the people, particularly the children, of Yemen.

Mr. Moriko (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation commends Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their detailed briefings on developments in Yemen. We also thank Ms. Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and Ms. Muna Luqman, Chairperson of the Food for Humanity, for their briefings and their strong commitment to the peace process in Yemen.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the adoption of resolutions 2451 (2018), 2452 (2019) and 2456 (2019), which respectively established the Redeployment Coordination Committee and the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) and renewed the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) and the mandate of the Panel of Experts. However, we note with regret that despite the progress that has been made, including the conclusion of the Stockholm Agreement, providing for a ceasefire

and the withdrawal of forces, there have been more than 3,000 cases of violations of the truce. Since 2015, the continuing hostilities have forced Yemen to endure the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, according to the United Nations. It has affected nearly 22 million Yemenis, 14 million of whom are acutely food insecure and exposed to endemic diseases that are difficult to eradicate. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire remains particularly concerned about the resurgence of the problem of child soldiers in the Yemeni crisis.

We are also deeply concerned about the extent of the dropout rate affecting children in Yemen. According to the United Nations, more than 2 million of the 7 million children of school age are not in school. According to several non-governmental human rights organizations, that situation is the result of the non-payment of teachers' salaries and the destruction of school buildings. We condemn the attacks on schools and call on all the parties to the conflict to implement the United Nations action plan to end the use of child soldiers in Yemen and respect the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. In that regard, my delegation would like to commend UNICEF for all its efforts in support of education in Yemen and encourage it to continue its programme for paying the salaries of approximately 100,000 teachers in arrears. We welcomed the holding on 26 February of a pledging conference in Geneva at which donors raised the significant amount of \$2.6 billion for financing the United Nations humanitarian response plan in 2019. My country also urges the warring parties to respect their commitments and calls on them to observe the ceasefire, which is an essential condition for the safe and unhindered delivery of food, aid and basic necessities to populations in distress.

In conclusion, my country urges the actors in the Yemeni conflict to prioritize dialogue with a view to reaching a political settlement of the crisis, respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and refrain from any unilateral action that could undermine the peace process. We affirm our support to Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Lowcock for their commitment to a definitive and lasting resolution of the crisis in Yemen, as well as to the Redeployment Coordination Committee and UNMHA observation teams for their determination to bring the peace process to a successful conclusion. We once again commend Ms. Gamba for her commitment to taking action to combat the systematic

use of child soldiers in the crisis in Yemen and urge Ms. Luqman to continue her efforts as part of a more inclusive peace process.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank all of today's briefers for their comprehensive overview of the situation on the political, military and humanitarian fronts in Yemen.

Russia and Yemen are linked by a tradition of decades of friendly relations imbued with mutual trust and multifaceted ties in many areas. We are deeply pained by what is happening in Yemen today. We have been compelled to acknowledge that the situation in Yemen is still tragic. Despite the efforts being made both through the United Nations and bilateral channels, the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, including the redeployment of armed forces in Al-Hudaydah, the exchange of prisoners and de-escalation in Taiz, has stalled. The opposing parties are blaming one another. That must stop. We call on all Yemenis to abandon unilateral steps, which undermine the prospects for launching a full-fledged political process and make the United Nations mediation efforts very difficult. We are awaiting the implementation of the first phase of redeployment.

While the fragile ceasefire regime in Al-Hudaydah is holding, we are concerned about the intensification of hostilities in other parts of the country. The growing tension is complicating the efforts to begin redeployment. All the parties to the conflict in Yemen should refrain from aggressive rhetoric and unilateral action and show restraint. The principle of country first and foremost, rather than individual narrow interests, should define the attitude of all the parties.

We want to emphasize that the chances do exist of making progress in Al-Hudaydah and transitioning to discussing the parameters for a settlement, which is what Martin Griffiths is working on. The international community should collectively support his efforts. Coordinating the work of all stakeholders will enable us to unblock the other aspects of the Stockholm Agreement. Attempts to marginalize individual parties to the conflict are counterproductive. We have to understand that the package of accords developed and agreed on in Sweden is a unique opportunity to break out of the closed circle of the tragedy in Yemen. We commend the selflessness and professionalism of the work of Martin Griffiths, Michael Lollesgaard and our colleagues on the humanitarian front in getting the

Yemeni parties to implement the agreements reached in Stockholm.

Russia will continue to support United Nations mediation efforts in Yemen in its national capacity, cooperating with regional and international partners while making use of its contacts with all the parties. If they are to succeed, the United Nations mediation efforts must be based on the cooperation of the parties to the conflict themselves as well as on regional and international assistance. There can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. Everyone has to acknowledge that and collaborate with the United Nations on that basis. We are certain that the further deployment of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement will facilitate the disengagement process of the opposing forces and will also help to stabilize the situation in Yemen as a whole.

The people of Yemen desperately need peace. We urge all the parties to de-escalate. We demand that they put aside all their differences immediately, cooperate with the United Nations and start working in earnest to improve the disastrous humanitarian situation in the country, the scale of which Mr. Lowcock spoke about today. A majority of the Yemeni population is starving and in need of one or another kind of assistance — and this is the twenty-first century. The country is once again on the brink of a cholera epidemic, and children are suffering the most, as Ms. Gamba reported. We all have to assume that even if the conflict ends in the near future, the people of Yemen will be dependent on outside help for a long time. The civil and economic infrastructure is in ruins and the cost of rebuilding it is rising steadily every day. We urge the donor community to recognize the extent of the problem and respond to the Emergency Relief Coordinator's appeal. Bringing emergency humanitarian assistance to the people of Yemen is a priority. Like many other States Members of the United Nations, including Yemen's neighbours, we will continue helping to assist the country's long-suffering people.

Another important point is that humanitarian assistance to Yemen from abroad should be distributed in a non-discriminatory manner among the entire population in all parts of the country, regardless of who controls which parts of it, and that is exactly Russia's approach. We want to draw the Council's attention to the importance of complying strictly with the provisions of international humanitarian law and ensuring unimpeded access for humanitarian workers.

The indiscriminate use of force, including strikes on civilian targets, is unacceptable.

We want to point out, however, that despite the importance of providing humanitarian assistance, the answer to Yemen's challenges lies in reaching a sustainable and comprehensive political settlement. That is the framework in which the violence can be stopped, functioning Government bodies established, the army restored and economic recovery begun. An all-important issue in Yemen is combating terrorism, which is exploiting the current state of chaos. We would like to emphasize that establishing the political process in Yemen would contribute significantly to stabilizing the situation in the entire region to a similar degree. Launching a process of security- and confidence-building measures in the Persian Gulf, and ultimately throughout the Middle East, in line with the well-known Russian initiative in that regard, would help to resolve some crisis situations, including the conflict in Yemen. Once again, we urge our friends in the region to respond positively to Russia's proposal and the international community to support efforts in that direction. Threats and confrontations should give way to dialogue and cooperation in which every one of the States of the region should participate, including Iran and the other countries of the Persian Gulf. We have to work together urgently to improve the atmosphere, which will enable all of us to focus on settling the conflicts in the region under the auspices of the United Nations.

I would like to once again remind the Council of resolution 598 (1987), which requested the Secretary-General, together with the States of the region, to develop a security architecture. The conditions for starting that work have long been ripe and are very much needed.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank your delegation, Mr. President, for scheduling today's important meeting during your presidency. I would also like to thank all the briefers for the informative and detailed reports that they have just presented to us on the most recent developments in Yemen.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea has been closely following the sad events that continue to trouble the people of Yemen. In the past few weeks a significant delegation from the Security Council that included my country had the opportunity to visit parts of this region,

where we met informally with some of the parties to the conflict, who updated us on the current situation and expressed their concern about the persistence of the conflict.

Since the Stockholm Agreement was signed more than 100 days ago, to date it has not been possible to implement phase 1 of the redeployment of forces. We welcome with satisfaction the news that both parties to the conflict have agreed to implement the redeployment of their forces in Al-Hudaydah in line with the plan established by Lieutenant General Lollesgaard to improve the situation, as provided for in phase 1 of the Stockholm Agreement. We hope to see such acceptance by both parties followed by the effective realization of that redeployment.

We recognize the efforts of the parties to improve the situation but we would like to ask them for a deeper commitment without preconditions or any attempt to delay the implementation of the Agreement so as to put an end to the suffering of millions of Yemenis. We are facing a blockade that is causing difficulties due to the lack of humanitarian access. On the one hand, there is a delay in implementing important elements of the Stockholm Agreement, such as the exchange of prisoners and the memorandum of understanding on the port of Taiz, which would facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid, and, on the other, the impasse regarding the city of Al-Hudaydah, preventing access to the Red Sea Mills, which contain enough grain to feed 3.7 million people for a month.

We would also like to echo the statements of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, on the human rights situation in Yemen. She emphasized that the grave human rights situation deserves attention and called for the lifting of restrictions on humanitarian supplies.

The security of both the Yemeni people and the staff of humanitarian agencies providing assistance in Yemen is also of the utmost concern to my delegation. In that regard, we urge the parties to respect international humanitarian law and human rights by protecting the lives, health and dignity of the population in general, as well as the assets for their development. Despite the ongoing difficulties, we acknowledge and commend the efforts made by the Government to pay salaries to some civil servants and teachers.

The time that has passed since the beginning of this conflict has shown us that the military option cannot

restore peace to the Yemenis. We would therefore call on the parties to facilitate a lasting political solution to ensure peace and stability throughout Yemen by means of a frank and inclusive dialogue, with the mediation and good offices of Mr. Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a climate of confidence-building, respecting international law and the Security Council resolutions. To that end, we cannot ignore the risk of instability expressed by the leaders of the Southern Transitional Council if they do not participate in the ongoing peace talks.

We were pleased that the Houthis and Mr. Mohamed Ali al-Houthi agreed to take part in the negotiations with the Government that took place in Stockholm. We also particularly appeal to them to contribute to the effective and comprehensive implementation of the peace agreement that resulted from those negotiations. Without that, the Yemeni people, in particular women, children and the elderly, will continue to experience the enormous suffering reflected by the alarming figures. According to Save the Children, since the beginning of the conflict, more than 85,000 children under the age of five have died from extreme hunger or disease and more than 8 million children do not have adequate access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. In addition, more than 24 million people, that is, 80 per cent of the population, need assistance and 20 million suffer from food insecurity, with approximately 10 million at risk of starvation.

It is very sad to learn that there have been recent clashes in Abs in Hajjah and in other areas, causing the displacement of 100,000 people. As if all that were not enough, the incidence of cholera cases has tripled this year as compared to the first quarter of 2018 and the value of the rial has greatly depreciated against the dollar, which strongly affects the purchasing power of the people. Do those devastating figures regarding the level of suffering of the Yemenis not tell them that it is time to definitively resolve the conflict, which the journalist Cesar Chelala has described as a massacre, not a war?

Finally, I would like to reiterate the sincere support of Equatorial Guinea for the Yemeni people by calling on the Council, the United Nations system and the international community to continue to support the mediation efforts of Mr. Martin Griffiths and all those working on the ground, with the sole aim of saving the victims and finding a peaceful and sustainable solution

to this conflict and the massacre of children, women and elderly, in short, the civilian population in Yemen.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): At the outset, I would like to thank all the briefers for providing us with comprehensive and valuable information on the situation in Yemen.

My delegation's very first statement on this issue in January (see S/PV.8441) was full of hope, optimistic and projected that in the following three months, we would hear a better story for the people of Yemen. However, from what we heard from the briefers today, that seems not to be the case. The calls made in resolution 2451 (2018), which the Council adopted on 21 December 2018, have not been met. That said, and in response to the briefings, Indonesia would like to underscore three points.

First, parties must honour their commitments and push for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, in particular the Al-Hudaydah agreement. The Houthis must increase their efforts to redeploy troops from the ports of Al-Hudaydah and to the city of Al-Hudaydah and to allow the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement to operate fully and monitor the implementation of the Agreement.

Humanitarian corridors must be established without further delay to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The exchange of prisoners must urgently take place, as it is approaching the holy month of Ramadan. They should have been united with their families during this month. Before the second dialogue planned by the Special Envoy starts, the discussion on the city of Taiz should begin and make progress and the joint committee should have been established.

Secondly, parties must honour international humanitarian law and human rights law. Indonesia is concerned about the information provided by Ms. Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, related to the use and unlawful recruitment of children in armed conflict. According to last year's report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2018/465), in relation to the Yemeni conflict the United Nations verified that there had been 842 cases of the recruitment and use of boys as young as 11 years old. Of those cases, 534 were attributed to the Houthis.

We are also concerned over the recent attack that killed at least 14 people, including children, and injured

others. In that connection, all parties must honour the rules of engagement and not target schools or medical facilities. Indonesia also calls on all parties to abide by their obligation under international law to protect children from all forms of violence. The protection of civilians should also be a priority, as tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, are reported to have been killed in the conflict since 2015.

Thirdly, continuous efforts should be made to hold a second dialogue and to find a comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict and crisis in Yemen. As the Security Council is in the business of making peace, such negotiation and dialogue should be at the centre of our work; results should not be achieved through military pressure. Indonesia therefore fully supports the Special Envoy's efforts to ensure the holding of a second dialogue. A continuing and inclusive dialogue involving women will allow the various sides in Yemen to come together, and it is hoped that in this way the confidence-building measures under way will continue to develop.

As Ramadan — the holy month for the Muslim sisterhood and brotherhood — will be starting soon, we hope that the Yemeni people will be able to feel a difference compared with Ramadan in previous years. The Yemeni people should start to feel the breeze of peace and keep their hopes high for a lasting peace and the reconstruction of their country.

The international community stands with the Yemeni people, and we are intensifying our efforts to see progress in the agreement reached last year.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Germany.

Having listened to all the statements and appeals around the table, I think that we all sound a bit like broken records. Since we last spoke (see S/PV.8469), neither the humanitarian situation nor the human rights situation has improved. International humanitarian law is being violated. We hear about new attacks on schools and hospitals; famine is worse; and cholera is spreading. It is very, very frustrating. The only one of the only positive things is what our French colleague mentioned and the fact that the Security Council is united.

Again, having listened to all speakers, I think that we all agree that there can be no military solution to this conflict. We have to do everything possible to

ensure that a political solution is found, and I think that the voice of the Security Council must be heard.

Like others, we fully support Martin Griffiths. We are extremely encouraged by the fact that he never gives up but starts again and again. I offer him congratulations on the agreement that he has achieved on the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. Of course, the proof of the pudding will be in the eating.

We believe that it is also important to think about the next steps and to work towards a framework agreement with respect to the transitional phase. Germany is ready to host a possible next meeting and supports the work of the United Nations Mission to Support the Al-Hudaydah Agreement on the ground; we are ready to support up to 10 monitors to assist in the work there. We are also ready to work with our Berghof Foundation, which he mentioned, behind the scenes on the second track, because we believe that this track is important and that it is important to speak to all parties in the region in order to make progress.

On the peace process, we deem vitally important, and here I would echo what Ms. Luqman said, that we have to include women in the peace process. It cannot be like it was in Stockholm; I think there was only one woman sitting at the table. The next round must have more women around the table, not only because women are those most affected, but because they are half of the population, and experience shows that when women are involved in peace negotiations, we can actually achieve progress.

The inclusion of youth is also key, and here I want to thank Ms. Gamba for her report, which was devastating. I can only echo what she said in her statement: children have to be given a chance to survive. I can only encourage her to continue to raise her voice and speak out on the fate of children that are being dragged into war and are suffering. Anatolio gave some terrible figures in this respect. I also encourage her to go to the Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict to report on the situation in Yemen. We also support what she and others said with regard to accountability. It cannot be that those committing serious crimes are not punished.

Lastly, concerning the humanitarian situation, Germany has also provided \$100 million again for 2019, most of it disbursed. We want to support in particular UNICEF's WASH programme and others that are fighting cholera.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like first of all to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and to wish you and the delegation of friendly Germany every success.

The people of Yemen aspire to peace, security and stability. The need for peace has been repeatedly underscored by President of the Republic Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, in particular in his most recent speech before Parliament, which convened in Hadhramaut governorate last Saturday. In this regard, the Yemeni Government has made major efforts to arrive at a lasting peace. To that noble end we participated in many rounds of negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations. Nonetheless, the armed Houthi militias, supported and pushed by Iran, have deliberately worked to ensure the failure of the negotiations and to undermine prospects for peace through their rejection of what was agreed upon by the most recent Stockholm Agreement.

More than four months have elapsed without the slightest progress in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement because the Houthi militias refuse to work towards peace, while using delaying tactics accompanied by arrogance, in order to benefit from the suffering of the Yemeni people and achieve political and military gains so as to implement their sectarian and dynastic projects.

During this period, the Government of Yemen has shown a great deal of patience and flexibility, as have our brothers in the coalition, with a view to implementing the Stockholm Agreement. This would be a positive step towards achieving lasting peace based on the agreed terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), with a view to relieving the suffering of the Yemeni people and ensuring that humanitarian assistance reaches those who are starving, ill or suffer from cholera. This disease has resulted in the death of hundreds of our people because the Houthi militias refuse to allow the delivery of vaccines to the areas affected. I would have liked to hear Mr. Lowcock refer to this issue, which has

caused an increase in the number of deaths resulting from cholera, which is spreading in areas controlled by the Houthi militias.

The Government of Yemen has worked constructively with the United Nations, through its Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths. We have supported all the redeployment and withdrawal plans, including the plan presented by Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard on 18 February, which has two phases. We agreed to begin implementing the first phase by taking measures and actions to resolve security-related issues. His Excellency President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi, during a meeting with the Special Envoy at a time when the Houthi militias had rejected the redeployment, presented his vision for addressing the security issues, including the establishment of a joint tripartite mechanism. That proposal was approved by the Special Envoy and Lieutenant General Lollesgaard. However, the Houthi militias rejected it. Those militias often send messages to the Council on the eve of its meetings on Yemen, providing verbal acceptance and later refusing to implement on the ground. They go back on their statements by deceiving the international community and the Security Council. The militias hamper the work of the Redeployment Coordination Committee in Al-Hudaydah and prevent any kind of progress. They have repeatedly refused to allow the Chair of the Committee to pass through and meet with the Government team in regions under the Yemeni Government's control.

On the other side, members of the Government team risk their lives to participate in the meetings that are convened by Lieutenant General Lollesgaard in areas under the control of the Houthi militias in order to facilitate the work of the United Nations mission and support its efforts to carry out withdrawals and execute redeployment. The militias target the sites of the joint meetings with the Chair of the Committee by launching mortar shells, drones and Katyusha rockets against them. That is a flagrant violation of United Nations rules and clear intention to undermine the Al-Hudaydah agreement and the peace process as a whole.

Last week, the Houthi militias targeted the convoy of Lieutenant General Lollesgaard and humanitarian workers preventing them from reaching the Red Sea Mills, which contain 51,000 tons of grains, enough to feed 3.7 million Yemenis for a month. That could allow the grain stocks to rot.

I agree with the representative of the United Kingdom in asking Mr. Lowcock: Who is preventing United Nations agencies and World Food Programme from reaching the Red Sea Mills? The Yemeni Government is always ready to cooperate with the United Nations and its agencies, including the World Food Programme, in order to facilitate access to the Mills and make sure that humanitarian assistance arrives to the safe areas that are under the control of the Yemeni Government.

The number of violations committed by the Houthi militias since 18 December 2018 has surpassed 3,047. They have sought to provoke the national army forces and the Arab coalition, claimed numerous victims and caused enormous material damage. In fact, 134 martyrs have fallen and 668 people have been injured, including women and children. The militias continue to intensify their confrontation with the national army forces. They use the territories of Al-Hudaydah governorate to launch their drones and speed boats. They continue to target civilians and public and private facilities and to send more military reinforcements and fortify their defensive sites by planting mines, erecting barricades and digging tunnels. More than 777 tunnels have been dug to date, while the number was 70 in December 2018. All of that demonstrates that the Houthi militias do not have a sincere desire to implement Stockholm Agreement. Instead, they are exploiting time, misleading the Council and deceiving the international community.

The Houthis are not only creating obstacles to the Al-Hudaydah agreement, but are also refusing to implement the agreement concerning the release of prisoners, arbitrarily arrested detainees, the forcibly disappeared and those who are under house arrest. That was the only agreement which was reached before the round of negotiations in Sweden. The Houthi militias are trying to manipulate the agreement, which calls for the release of everyone, in order to make gains to the detriment of those who and their families are suffering. There can be no political bargaining on this humanitarian issue.

The Yemeni Government has adopted a number of economic measures and taken decisions in an attempt to save the Yemeni economy, improve the economic situation, end the collapse of our national currency, relieve the suffering of our people, improve living and humanitarian conditions, and reclaim the monetary cycle, financial flows and business transactions from

the black market to the official banking market, which is committed to installing controls and meeting international requirements in order to combat the financing of terrorism and money-laundering and to limit randomized speculation against our currency, while dropping the demand concerning foreign currency.

The Yemeni Government has undertaken a number of measures to honour its commitments to our citizens. We pay salaries to retirees and to public civil servants in Al-Hudaydah governorate, as well as to those who work in the education and health sectors. We intend to pay the salaries of all civil servants as soon as we can start collecting and managing all governmental revenues, in cooperation with the international community.

We thank donor countries and international organizations for their generous support pledged at the 2019 high-level conference to fund the humanitarian response in Yemen, which was convened in Geneva on 26 February with the aim of alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people. We particularly thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Kuwait, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany as well as all the friendly and brotherly countries. We reiterate our appeal to make sure that those pledges are honoured.

On Saturday 13 April, an extraordinary session of Parliament was convened in the city of Seiyun, in the governorate of Hadhramaut. That was a confirmation and demonstration of the unity of the Yemeni people, regardless of their parties, positions and social class. The session was based on legal grounds and national spirit, while deferring to the leadership of Parliament to activate the role of the constitutional institutions, achieve many legislative tasks that support the executive authority in restoring the State, put an end to the coup d'état and armed rebellion by the Houthi militias, supported by Iran, restore State control throughout the country and attain peace, security and stability, in addition to implementing the outcome of the national dialogue and pursuing the political process. At this session, Parliament is discussing, inter alia, the 2019 budget submitted by the Prime Minister.

In 2014, the Government of Yemen signed with the United Nations a programme of work to put to an end to child recruitment. In December 2018, it also

signed a road map to implement the plan and prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts. The Government is working with the country team to implement that plan. The Republic of Yemen has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and the Yemeni Government makes great efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate the children who had been recruited by the Houthi militias. We return them to their families through Ma'reb Rehabilitation Centre for Children, which is funded by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre. In this regard, we thank the coalition countries, notably the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for their great efforts to help the Yemeni Government protect children and prevent their recruitment while rehabilitating and reintegrating them into society.

I would like to ask Ms. Gamba the following question on recruiting girls. Who is responsible for recruiting girls? The Houthis have an armed group called the Zeinabites. This armed group forces girls to be recruited while taking advantage of their humanitarian circumstances.

I want to reaffirm once again and to add to what Mr. Lowcock said about the visa issue. The Yemeni Government has demonstrated its willingness to cooperate with the United Nations and its agencies by issuing visas through all its embassies throughout the world without delay or hindrance. It is our responsibility as the Yemeni Government to support the United Nations efforts. However, those who are impeding the entry of United Nations personnel and its agencies to Yemen are the Houthis themselves.

We call on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility and maintain credibility while implementing its resolutions on Yemen. It should exert greater pressure on the armed Houthi militias to implement the Stockholm agreement without delay. The agreement is the focus of attention and the cornerstone of the political process. It is necessary therefore to identify the entity that is undermining the agreement because its failure would kill the hopes of the Yemeni people to achieve sustained peace and end the conflict.

The President: I now invite Council Members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.