



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8619th meeting

Monday, 16 September 2019, 10 a.m.

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Provisional

President: Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation)

Members:

Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
France	Mr. De Rivière
Germany	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland	Mr. Radomski
South Africa	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Russian*): 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, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Mr. Griffiths is joining the meeting via video-teleconference from Geneva.

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, Sir, for giving me the opportunity today to brief the Council once again on the situation in Yemen.

Today I will argue, based on the facts in front of us, that we have no time to waste before moving forward with purpose and resolve towards a political solution to end the conflict in Yemen. In my most recent briefing to the Council (see S/PV.8598), I made just such a call. If anything, the facts before us now make that even more compelling.

What are the reasons behind this appeal? The first reason is the worrying military escalation. The attack on ARAMCO facilities in Saudi Arabia on the morning of Saturday, 14 September, which has caused significant disruption to the Kingdom's crude oil production, has consequences well beyond the region. I echo the Secretary-General's statement condemning this attack. At a minimum, this kind of action carries the risk of dragging Yemen into a regional conflagration because of one thing we can be certain — that is, that this extremely serious incident makes the chances of a regional conflict that much higher and of a rapprochement that much lower. With Yemen in some way or other linked to that possibility, none of it is good for Yemen.

That is, frankly, terrifying and an eventuality that runs completely counter to the many detailed conversations I have had in recent weeks with people in Yemen, the region and elsewhere in favour of a series of steps to be taken by the parties towards de-escalation. It is not entirely clear who was behind the attack, but the fact that Ansar Allah has claimed responsibility is bad enough. Whatever we may discover of the attack, it is a sure sign that for Yemen the direction of travel seems to be away from the peace we all seek. Every day the war goes on, the greater is the threat to regional stability, as we have seen. We need to make a bold move.

It is always and inevitably invidious to choose for attention one event in a war as broad, complex and violent as the one we face in Yemen. But we do so, as I do on this occasion, to illustrate the horror of the war and thus appeal to the collective conscience, with an emphasis on the terror faced by ordinary people in Yemen on a daily basis.

The attack on Dhamar on 1 September led to the deaths of approximately 110 people and the wounding of 43 more. Only a handful escaped unhurt from that building. I am well aware of the reasons put forward for this attack. My purpose here is not to adjudicate, of course, on that decision, but the attack itself nevertheless reminds us so vividly of all that we want to bring to an end. The actions I have described make peace more difficult and, indeed, even more necessary.

The second reason for my appeal is the situation in the south. Events there present to us an eerie calm. The city of Aden remains broadly under the control of the Southern Transitional Council. In neighbouring Abyan, its forces face those of the Government of Yemen. In Shabwa, further east and north, a shaky standoff has been achieved. Forces from other fronts have moved to support their respective sides in this new and dangerous crisis. Those moves, in turn, destabilize those other fronts, encouraging new military adventurism.

There is really nothing good to be said about this besides the calm I mentioned. I am of course, encouraged by the calls for peace from other groups in the southern governorates that do not want events in Aden to be repeated or to spread. Nevertheless, the risk of further fragmentation, violence and displacement is real. The status of forces and their rearmament make even the most optimistic of us cautious in judgment. I condemn, as I did last month before the Council, the unacceptable efforts of the Southern Transitional

Council to take control of State institutions by force. The functioning of State institutions is a necessity and must prevail.

In Jeddah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is intensely focused on mediating a solution. We discussed this at the last meeting of the Council on this issue, on 20 August. I wish the Kingdom every success. As I said then, it is indeed the indispensable mediator and frankly it brings real meaning to the phrase that its success will be our success. I welcome the presence of delegations from the Government of Yemen, under the leadership of President Hadi Mansour, and the Southern Transitional Council in Jeddah. I can imagine and know that the Council joins me in wishing the Saudis, their leadership and the two delegations every success in their crucial effort to reduce this threat to Yemen's very existence.

As many have said before, the lasting and resounding message from developments in the south is a clarion call for an urgent need to end the conflict in Yemen as a whole. As President Hadi told me last month, we need to make progress urgently if the war is not to expand further. There is simply no argument, no choice and no better use of our energy now than to engage in that endeavour. We see the war therefore not merely continuing to wreck the lives and livelihoods of men and women in Yemen, but also threatening to metastasize into something that threatens the existence of Yemen itself. We must therefore move to end it and end it soon.

Despite this admittedly very grim picture, we had some limited progress this month. Since my last briefing, the parties have taken further steps towards implementing the Stockholm Agreement. On 8 and 9 September, the parties held the sixth joint meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee in the Red Sea to discuss ceasefire enhancement, disengagement from the front lines and the implementation of plan for the redeployment of forces. The meeting was held in a very positive and a very pragmatic atmosphere, and I am grateful to the leadership of the parties who made this so and their representatives present on that vessel.

I am very pleased to say that the tripartite ceasefire and the de-escalation mechanism are now alive and well and that a joint operations centre has already been set up and running for a full week. That mechanism, perhaps overdue, allows for greater communication between the parties with liaison officers physically present on a 24/7 basis and with contact with commanders on the

ground to prevent military escalation. The tripartite mechanism is, in fact — again, way overdue — the first joint practical initiative since the Stockholm Agreement was made. It is practical in the sense of an immediate, visible impact on the way that the parties operate in Al-Hudaydah.

Both parties asked for that mechanism, as part of their efforts to shore up the ceasefire. I am sure that it will help to save lives. We have already seen a decrease in the number of incidents in Al-Hudaydah over the past week. I am therefore encouraged by the parties' willingness to implement further measures, including the regular meetings of the liaison offices I mentioned and their meetings in specific locations along the front lines in Al-Hudaydah, as well as the opening of key humanitarian corridors. The sustained reduction in violence, still somewhat controversial in some minds, but not in ours, has been one of the major achievements of the Al-Hudaydah Agreement so far. I welcome those concrete steps to reinforce it and improve access for the delivery of humanitarian aid. We must be reminded that the Al-Hudaydah Agreement remains a humanitarian agreement. Those shall continue to be the primary goals of the Agreement reached in Stockholm last December.

On the basis also of detailed analysis in that last Redeployment Coordination Committee meeting of the issues surrounding the phase one redeployments we have all been waiting to see happen for so many months and on the basis of a proposal I presented to the Committee, the parties now have a revised proposal before them based on the discussions for their urgent consideration to allow those redeployments to take place. We expect their response by 20 September. I appeal to the parties to respond positively.

The Al-Hudaydah Agreement is moving forward — slowly perhaps, late certainly, but with purpose. My own hope is that we will continue to manage improvements in the ceasefire and prevent any major attacks in the governorate. That is the bottom line of that Agreement. Meanwhile, the parties now have in their hands the decisions about redeployments.

As we have heard — as the Council has certainly been involved — I would like to congratulate the new Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) and the new Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, my good friend and colleague Lieutenant General Abhijit Guha. I can think of no one better qualified for that difficult,

demanding and important role. I wish him every success in his position. Of course, he has my full support. I would also like to express and reiterate my gratitude to UNMHA colleagues who continue to work under extremely difficult conditions and have maintained the level of attention and engagement and pace during the period between the departure of Lieutenant General Lollesgaard and the imminent arrival of Lieutenant General Guha.

I do not have much to say today about other elements of the Agreement reached in Sweden. I have seen no breakthroughs on prisoner release — a matter made all the more tragic given the deaths in Dhamar. My proposal for the release of the first batch of prisoners was welcomed by one party but not by the other, which insisted, instead, that all prisoners everywhere must be released in one go — an interpretation of the all-for-all principle. I am afraid that is not a practical suggestion. If it were, we would have certainly followed it some time before now. As both sides are reluctant, at different times, to avow the identity, existence and location of prisoners, identifying prisoners and their location in the fog of war, not exclusively in Yemen, is desperately difficult task. That is why I have concluded, perhaps rightfully or wrongfully, that we should identify and release and then continue to identify and release and that the first batch of prisoners be followed by other batches, until we exhaust the list of all prisoners agreed between the parties. For now, that is not to be.

The complex military situation in Taiz, the third element agreed in Sweden in December last year, has posed serious challenges to all our frequent efforts to implement the statement of understanding, which is the title of the Agreement reached in Stockholm. However, I was encouraged by a recent statement by the Minister of Planning of Yemen to engage and be ready to help the people of Taiz, as was originally agreed. We were together in a meeting in Berlin, just a few days ago. We have not given up. I would like to do that, primarily now, through support for the local community and for women's groups and local groups that have always been so active on the same issues in Taiz. I was privileged to meet them at a seminar hosted by the European Union in Amman a few weeks ago.

The energy, creative will and desire to improve the conditions of families and civilians, as represented and exemplified by those groups, are remarkable. I would like to voice my support for that. I think that they will light the way for the rest of us. I hope that at a future

meeting of the Council, you, Mr. President, will allow them to brief us all on the ways and means of how Yemeni civilians see resolving the conflicts that oppress them in the war. Our main goal, and their main goal, in Taiz continues to be the opening of humanitarian corridors to alleviate human suffering and allow access to humanitarian assistance.

I began by saying that the case for an urgent move towards peace has never been stronger. I hope that remarks on the various aspects of the situation in Yemen — the war itself, the threat from the south, the unforeseen direction in which the ARAMCO attack will take us — have made that plain.

I know from the daily and detailed discussions that I have with Yemenis, officials, young people, women and, indeed, the diplomats of those States anxious to see an end to the conflict — and they tell me clearly — that they want me to get on with my job, just as the members of the Council do and have made so clear in the presidential statement (S/PRST/2019/9), for which I am indeed very grateful. In parallel, therefore, to the continued efforts to implement the Stockholm Agreement and not forsaking it for a minute, the Yemeni parties must move forward to resume an inclusive political process to reach a comprehensive solution to end the conflict, and that must be done without delay. We must maintain the momentum, if we are to preserve the unity and future of Yemen for its people.

I will continue to intensify the engagement I have already begun with a wide range of Yemeni stakeholders in the coming weeks. As part of those efforts, I aim to start informal discussions with different stakeholders, including the representatives of political parties, but also public figures, women, youth and civil society. Those discussions, of course, will include what they consider to be the key elements that need to be included in the final agreement to be decided, debated and, hopefully, agreed between the parties in the near future.

Finally, I would like to make a personal statement. I was present in Sweden when agreements were made, as we are all aware. I have a personal reason to hold those agreements very dear. Nobody needs have the slightest doubt about my desire, and our desire at the United Nations, to pursue those promises to their conclusion. I am frequently reminded, for example, that the Al-Hudaydah Agreement must be implemented before we do other things. To those people I say that the United Nations will continue, under the leadership of

Abhijit Guha, to devote unparalleled time, effort and energy to achieve that objective. Let us have no doubt about that. Let us have no doubt either that that will not detract from our essential focus on efforts to reach a political settlement to resolve the conflict in Yemen. I am sorry my statement was so long.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

Mr. Lowcock: Let me, like Martin, at the outset again repeat the United Nations condemnation of Saturday's attacks on Saudi Arabian oil facilities and reiterate the Secretary-General's call of yesterday on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and prevent any escalation.

On 29 August, as Martin just reminded us, the Security Council issued a presidential statement on Yemen (S/PRST/2019/9) — its fourth since 2015 and the first since it adopted resolution 2451 (2018) last December. In that statement, the Council advocated for key humanitarian priorities, including, first, respect for international humanitarian law; secondly, unhindered humanitarian access; thirdly, a fully funded aid operation; and, fourthly, support for Yemen's struggling economy.

Many of those themes were also addressed in resolution 2451 (2018) and, indeed, in nearly all the Council's products since hostilities escalated in Yemen, more than four years ago. We have also covered those issues extensively in our monthly briefings to the Council.

And yet, with few exceptions, we seem no closer to the outcomes we all say we want. In some cases, we have moved farther away. I would like to update the Council now on the current situation on each issue.

First, let me turn to the issue of international humanitarian law, which requires all parties to respect civilians and civilian infrastructure and to take constant care to spare them throughout military operations. Since last month's briefing, we have seen numerous incidents that have killed or injured civilians or damaged civilian infrastructure.

Two weeks ago, air strikes hit a prison in Dhamar governorate. In better times, this facility had been a university — itself a sobering illustration of where this war has taken Yemen. More than 100 people were

killed in the attack, making it one of the deadliest of the conflict. What exactly happened in this incident remains disputed.

The scale of the carnage in Dhamar is shocking. But otherwise, this kind of attack is disturbingly common and familiar. On Friday, three days ago, shelling by Ansar Allah-affiliated forces in Al-Hudaydah killed 11 civilians, including seven children. The same day, two children were killed in a separate shelling incident in Taiz. There are many other similar examples. We see a persistent pattern of attacks in Yemen that kill or injure civilians or damage critical civilian infrastructure.

A nationwide ceasefire, as I have long advocated, would reduce people's exposure to harm right now. All parties must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law at all times. Part of this commitment entails accountability for serious violations. In 2017 the Human Rights Council established the Independent Group of Eminent Experts to examine possible violations. They have just released a disturbing report, and I hope that their mandate will again be extended.

Secondly, despite the Council's recent and repeated calls for unimpeded humanitarian access, the operating environment for aid agencies has perhaps never been worse than it is right now. In June and July, humanitarian agencies reported 300 incidents that hindered humanitarian assistance, affecting 4.9 million people. Almost 90 per cent of incidents were due to bureaucratic impediments and other kinds of interference.

Most of those incidents were due to restrictions imposed by Ansar Allah authorities. They include obstacles to beneficiary registration, attempts to divert aid and efforts to control the selection of implementing partners. Humanitarian workers have been detained at checkpoints and, in several cases, arbitrarily arrested. Staff also face intimidation and harassment at Sana'a airport.

The Ansar Allah authorities are now seeking to introduce new regulations for international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that would undermine humanitarian principles. A large number of NGO projects in the north have been unable to start this year, affecting some 4.3 million people.

I am also disappointed at the fact that the long-planned assessment of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker has not taken place. Based on prior agreement from

the Ansar Allah authorities, we deployed the United Nations assessment team and equipment to Djibouti last month. The assessment should have started on 27 August. As the start date approached, Ansar Allah authorities raised several objections, despite their earlier agreement. We worked hard to overcome those objections, but, when it became clear that progress was highly unlikely, we just had to send the team home.

We remain eager to assist with the SAFER, within the limits of technical feasibility and available funds. But whether this work can proceed is up to Ansar Allah. I have explained to the Council many times now the risks posed by the tanker, and I implore Member States to do all they can to allow us to address this issue as quickly as possible. Our team can still deploy within three weeks if allowed to do so.

In the south, the recent violence in Aden and other areas illustrates how volatile the situation remains. Millions of people in the south also need humanitarian assistance, including help to prevent and treat cholera or stave off extreme hunger. The services we provide in the south are essential to save lives and reduce the suffering there.

Recent clashes between the Government and forces affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council undermined this critical work, restricting some operations for several days. Despite this, we have done everything we can to keep operations on track. Humanitarian staff remain in place and are not leaving.

But this volatility, if not addressed, will continue to present a serious potential threat to aid operations in the south. We are also concerned by ongoing Government delays in approving NGO projects, which are currently holding up relief programmes for an estimated 1.6 million people. We continue to see bottlenecks at the Dhubab checkpoint, where coalition requirements are slowing aid agencies' access to Government-held areas along the west coast.

The third point is funding for the aid operation. Despite all the access problems, we can reach people and save lives if humanitarian agencies are adequately financed. Let me repeat that: if funded, the aid operation will help save millions of lives.

I have just this morning received confirmation from the Saudi authorities that they plan on 25 September to transfer \$500 million in a single payment to my Office in discharge of the pledge they made for the Yemen

humanitarian response plan in February. I warmly welcome this and look forward to the signing of the agreements on 25 September alongside the transfer of the funds that day.

The United Arab Emirates has also just allocated \$200 million to the response plan. This includes \$100 million for the World Food Programme and an additional \$100 million channelled through my Office for other urgent priorities.

Until there is more money in the bank, we will not be in a position to reopen vaccination programmes and nutrition centres or to resume cholera-prevention work or other activities that we have had in recent weeks to close down. Other programmes targeting millions of people will also remain at grave risk. So, again, I welcome the developments I have just informed the Council of.

The fourth point that the Council highlighted in its 29 August statement is Yemen's struggling economy. This is an issue that requires more attention. Recent indicators are alarming. The exchange rate is once more depreciating and is now hovering at just over 600 Yemeni rial to the dollar — compared with, as the Council will recall, 215 rial to the dollar before the crisis. We have not seen the rate cross the 600-rial threshold since last year, when uncontrolled depreciation took hold in the country and prompted major hikes in food prices.

Because Yemen imports nearly everything, higher exchange rates mean that millions more people are unable to afford food and other essential goods. Last year, the collapse of the currency was a primary driver in pushing Yemen to the brink of widespread famine.

In the past, injections of foreign exchange have helped to stabilize the exchange rate. Last year, such support quickly brought the rate back from a peak of 800 rial to about 400 rial. We need a predictable, regular programme for those injections, which, I hope, Yemen's partners will provide. I am encouraged by the news last week that Saudi Arabia has released another \$90 million to the central bank from a \$2 billion deposit announced in January 2018.

I also remain concerned about the potential impact of regulations of the new Government of Yemen on commercial fuel imports, including Decree 49. We are concerned that such measures could discourage critical import flows despite the presence of an effective United Nations inspection and monitoring mechanism to

facilitate them. The stricter enforcement of regulations is already creating delays for commercial ships serving Al-Hudaydah. As of today, the Government and the coalition are blocking 10 vessels with commercial fuel imports from entering Al-Hudaydah. Together, the ships are carrying 163,000 metric tons of fuel. That is more than an average month of fuel imports.

The impact on hundreds of thousands of families is already being felt. People who are barely surviving now will find it much harder to do so unless adequate levels of commercial imports, including fuel, are able to enter the country continuously through all ports. In the wake of fuel shortages last April, the Government introduced more flexible arrangements and shortages eased. According to Government statements at the time, that approach did not undermine the stated purpose of the regulations. We therefore hope that the Government will again take that route. We also call on Ansar Allah to end interference in fuel markets, which exacerbates shortages.

Beyond those humanitarian priorities, the presidential statement mainly addressed the urgent need to get the peace process back on track. We all agree that peace is what Yemen needs more than anything, and Martin Griffiths and his team have our full support as they work with the parties to achieve that.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Lowcock for his briefing.

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

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank Special Envoy Mr. Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their briefings.

Let me start by joining the United Nations unequivocal condemnation of the attacks on the ARAMCO facilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 14 September. They were reckless and despicable and are completely unjustifiable. It is only sheer luck that no one was killed, not by any design of the perpetrators. Threatening civilian areas and commercial infrastructure is a violation of international law, as well as being dangerous and provocative. I am sure that all members of the Council will today want to join in condemning the attacks not only as a clear threat to

regional and international peace and security but also as an effort to disrupt global oil supplies.

At the moment, we are still assessing what happened and who is responsible for the attacks. Once that is being established, we will discuss with our partners how to proceed in a responsible manner. We hope for a united international response to the terrible attacks.

Turning at to the situation in Yemen, I note with great sadness and concern/trouble that the situation is not improving. What we heard today from the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Special Envoy shows that we are in grave danger of letting the situation slide backwards despite everyone's efforts. We have been gravely concerned about the escalation in violence in the south, and we condemn the use of force by the Southern Transitional Council to seize State institutions.

The Saudi-led talks in Jeddah need our full backing and all parties need to cease hostilities and engage in the talks. We support Saudi Arabia's efforts. We hope that the talks can broker a deal that brings southern representatives into the Yemeni Government and makes the Yemeni Government more representative. Inclusivity is a key pillar of stability, as we have seen in so many conflicts around the world. For the United Kingdom's part, we stand ready to assist in any way that we can, and we support what the Under-Secretary-General said with regard to safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian responses and commercial supplies. Goods need to be able to move freely through Aden port across the south and from Aden to the north of the country, and we call on the parties to ensure the continued functionality of institutions and the protection of civilians from human rights abuses.

The Special Envoy rightly devoted a large part of his briefing to the broader inclusive political process. We remain strong supporters of efforts to that end. They are given renewed momentum by the events over the weekend and in the south of Yemen last month. In its presidential statement S/PRST/2019/9, of 29 August, the Security Council gave its full backing to the Special Envoy and his efforts to work with the parties to pave the way for the resumption of comprehensive negotiations without delay on the security and political arrangements necessary to end the conflict and resume a peaceful transition in Yemen. We look to such negotiations to engage all parties in an inclusive dialogue in order to resolve differences and address

the legitimate concerns of all Yemenis, including those in the south, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Turning to the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and the Agreement on the City of Hudaydah and the Ports of Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa, we too welcome the appointment of Lieutenant General Guha and look forward to working with him. I wanted to welcome the recent meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee held on 8 and 9 September and urge the parties to engage constructively in that process and to finalize outstanding negotiations to allow for the implementation of the first and second phases of the Al-Hudaydah Agreement.

We heard from the Under-Secretary-General about the very dire situation of attacks, violence and violations of international humanitarian law. I thought what he said about the operating environment and the 300 incidents affecting nearly 5 million people was particularly shocking and something that the Council should address. We also echo his calls on handling the tanker incident. I wonder why we have so many bureaucratic impediments from Ansar Allah and what lies behind that. But we look to all parties to work with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies to ensure that support reaches those who so desperately need it.

The one bright spot, as Mr. Lowcock also said, is the pledge from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for \$500 million, to be made on the 25 September during high-level week. That is extremely welcome news and we join others in thanking the Saudi Arabian authorities for that step. All donors should now consider whether they can provide additional funding this year to ensure that the \$4.2-billion humanitarian appeal is fully funded. For our part, we have already disbursed 87 per cent of our funding and we are assessing whether we can provide more.

Finally, while I would like to say more when we get to closed consultations, I would like to end by echoing what the Under-Secretary-General said about the economy. We are also very worried about the backlog of fuel vessels outside Al-Hudaydah. We hope that the Government of Yemen will engage constructively with importers on the effective implementation of Decree 49 and that the revenues can be used for the regular payment of public salaries in all areas of the country. It is vital that fuel continue to enter the Red Sea ports,

reducing the risk of pump prices increasing, which would further worsen the humanitarian situation.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for their briefings. We are grateful for the tireless efforts of their teams, and I look forward to working with them to bring lasting peace and security to the people of Yemen.

Before I continue, I would like to briefly address the deeply troubling attacks on Saudi oil facilities that occurred this past weekend. The United States condemns those attacks in the strongest possible terms and stands firmly with our Saudi friends. We must all be clear-eyed about that event — it is a direct assault on the world energy supply. Claims of responsibility have been made but, as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has clearly stated, there is no evidence that the attacks came from Yemen; the emerging information indicates that responsibility lies with Iran.

Turning to today's briefing, the United States offers its condolences for the loss of life due to clashes in Yemen. This ongoing unrest distracts from the broader settlement process, which benefits only Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and other malign actors. We urge the parties to use the Saudi-led talks to address their differences, and we commend Saudi Arabia for creating a space for that dialogue. To be clear, the use of force to express grievances will further destabilize Yemen and lead to greater suffering. Only an inclusive political settlement will guarantee Yemen's stability, unity and prosperity in the long term.

We support the Special Envoy's efforts to facilitate a comprehensive political agreement, and we encourage the parties to demonstrate progress, particularly by implementing the Al-Hudaydah Agreement. We call on the Houthis to cease escalatory attacks that have affected civilians in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Iran must stop providing lethal aid in defiance of the arms embargo outlined in resolution 2216 (2015).

As the Under-Secretary-General explained in his briefing, civilians continue to bear the brunt of this conflict. Nearly 80 per cent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. Allow me to repeat myself: nearly 80 per cent of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian aid alone will not solve this crisis. However, it remains critically important for millions of

vulnerable Yemenis. As one of the largest humanitarian contributors in Yemen, we are encouraged to hear that a portion of the outstanding \$1.2 billion in aid funding pledged by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates may be disbursed in the coming weeks. These urgently needed funds will help essential aid programmes resume operations, and we are especially encouraged by Mr. Lowcock's announcement today that money is on its way. We call on all donors to increase their funding for these under-resourced programmes. Beyond funding constraints, humanitarian aid workers must also be permitted immediate access to civilians affected by unrest. Finally, as we have heard, currency instability further worsens Yemen's humanitarian crisis. In that regard, we call on the parties to continue to respect the Central Bank of Yemen and other Government institutions underpinning economic stability.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my personal desire to work closely with the members of the Security Council and the entire United Nations to support the people of Yemen.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Griffiths, for his briefing. We assure him of our full support in his efforts. We would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mark Lowcock, for his briefing.

We align ourselves with the other members of the Security Council who have condemned in the strongest terms the attacks last Saturday against the two ARAMCO facilities, Abqaiq and Khurais, in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These attacks are a stark violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We emphasize our full support for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and all the measures it has taken to ensure its safety, stability and territorial integrity. Attacks of this kind necessitate the activation of the arms-embargo measures pursuant to relevant Security Council resolutions.

In my statement I would like to address two main issues: the political developments and the humanitarian developments.

With regard to political developments, nine months have elapsed since the entry into force of the Stockholm Agreement. In that period we have seen continued stalemate and a lack of any tangible progress. However, the Redeployment Coordination Committee continues

to hold its meetings, and the parties are still abiding by the provisions of the Al-Hudaydah Agreement, in particular the activation of the de-escalation and ceasefire mechanisms. This is very encouraging, as it helps to build trust, assists in implementing the different stages of the Agreement as provided for in the concept of operations, allows for the making of a tangible move forward in creating an environment of trust between the two parties leading to the implementation of the agreements on the exchange of prisoners, detainees and the forced disappeared and on Taiz understandings, which has been under siege for more than four years.

We express our concern about the latest developments in a number of areas in southern Yemen. We look forward to the concerted efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in hosting talks in Jeddah between the representatives of the Yemeni Government and representatives of the Southern Transitional Council. We hope that such talks will lead to the return of security and stability and thereby maintaining the unity and sovereignty of Yemen.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, its repercussions are worsening the crisis in Yemen, especially with such imminent challenges as food scarcity, the spread of epidemics and continuous impediments that obstruct humanitarian assistance. We renew our appeal to all parties to cooperate with humanitarian relief agencies, refrain from imposing any restrictions on, or placing obstacles to, their movement and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers.

We would like as well to express our concern on a subject Mr. Lowcock just raised, that is, the inability of employees of certain non-governmental organizations to reach some areas in the north of the country. We also express our deep concern of what he mentioned about the inability of United Nations to reach the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker in Ras Isa, to undertake the necessary assessments and verification of the situation, which portends a grave environmental crisis in the Red Sea.

In conclusion, we reiterate our steadfast position that there is no military solution to this crisis. We renew our call on all Yemeni parties to fully implement the three elements of the Stockholm Agreement and to support the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to reach a political solution based on the three agreed-upon terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and

the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2216 (2015). That would lead to an end to this crisis, preserve the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen and prevent any interference in its internal affairs.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes the holding of this important briefing on the evolution of events in Yemen and wishes to express its gratitude to the Russian Federation for convening this meeting at a critical moment for that nation on the Arabian peninsula. We are also grateful for the important and illustrative briefings made by Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock.

Allow me to begin by expressing our strong condemnation and total rejection of the drone attacks perpetrated on Saturday, 14 September, against two ARAMCO oil facilities located in the eastern region of Saudi Arabia. Those and previous attacks, including those against certain parts of Yemen, only afflict the civilian population in the affected localities and further exacerbate the tense and delicate situation currently existing in the subregion, as well as undermine all efforts made and progress achieved on the road to a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

With regard to the situation in Yemen, Equatorial Guinea continues to have faith in the work of the United Nations, which, last December, through the good management of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, opened a new chapter in the process of bringing about a peaceful resolution to the conflict with the signing of the Stockholm Agreement, the implementation of which has seen some progress in the first half of this year, thanks to certain cooperation between the parties, whom we have been encouraging to be bold and give more of themselves, so as to make this historic agreement more effective.

At the Council's meeting in August, we, like other members of the Council, expressed our deep concern about the escalation in bloody clashes in the city of Aden and other parts of Yemen (see S/PV.8598). Although since then we have received information on an apparent calm, we hope that the parties to the conflict have reached out to each other to engage in steadfast and stable negotiations with a view to bringing sustainable peace to the people of that city and Yemen as a whole.

The resurgence of attacks by violent extremist groups is yet another disturbing aspect of the hostile

environment in Yemen. On 1 August, the same day as the missile attack on the Al-Galaa base, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant claimed responsibility for a bomb attack on a police station that resulted in the deaths of 12 policemen in Aden. An attack by Al-Qaida on the Arabian Peninsula the next day in Abyan killed at least 20 Government soldiers. In order to fight that violent extremism, it is imperative to have a stable Government, backed by the main political parties in the country, resulting from a comprehensive and inclusive peace agreement.

Yemen's humanitarian and economic conditions are increasingly oppressive. It is estimated that almost 22 million people are in need of some form of assistance. In that tragic context, we wish to express our full support for the humanitarian work of the United Nations system and other agencies deployed in Yemen and to reiterate the moral and legal duty to allow them full access to those in need. We therefore continue to look forward to the full implementation of the agreement reached between the World Food Programme and the Houthi authorities on selecting and registering those who will receive humanitarian assistance.

Before concluding, we urge the Yemeni Government and the Houthi movement to continue to work on the ongoing and full implementation of the important commitments set out in the Stockholm Agreement. At this very moment, the composition of the local forces to take over the security of the city of Al-Hudaydah and the ports is crucial.

In that regard, we hope that all members of the Council will continue to support the mediation efforts of Special Envoy Griffiths and that the international community, as well as States that are interested in and have influence over Yemen, will exert the necessary pressure on all parties to the conflict with a view to finding a sustainable and definitive solution that frees the population from this conflict, which has caused so much damage to the country.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their briefings. We welcome the recent appointment of Lieutenant General Guha as the new Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement, to whom we extend our full support.

Yemen's future is at a historic moment, in which it is necessary for the parties to demonstrate their

willingness to move forward in the implementation of the agreements. That is why we once again express our concern about the current impasse. The situation is partly attributable to the rigid positions of the parties, which have considerably diminished the momentum that this important political process needs. In that regard, we are pleased that the Redeployment Coordination Committee has held another meeting to support the process of implementing the Al-Hudaydah Agreement.

Any small step of progress is constantly disrupted by continued offensives by the parties to the conflict. We join in the condemnations for the attack on oil installations on Saudi territory. Those actions destabilize the region and further avert the prospect of reaching lasting peace in Yemen. We also strongly condemn the attack on a detention centre in Dhamar earlier this month, which resulted in the deaths of more than 100 people. We urge the parties to take all the necessary measures to protect the civilian population. Tensions must be assuaged. The immediate cessation of acts of violence committed against civilians and civilian infrastructure in violation of human rights law and international humanitarian law is more necessary than ever.

There is no peace without justice. That is why we urge the parties to cooperate with independent investigative mechanisms, such as the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, established by the United Nations Human Rights Council.

On the other hand, the humanitarian situation remains catastrophic. The war continues to affect millions of civilians who depend on the tireless work of humanitarian workers. That difficult effort is impacted by the lack of funding for the humanitarian response plan in Yemen. We therefore call on all major donors to urgently make their donations. The parties must ensure respect for humanitarian principles and guarantee safe and unhindered access for humanitarian workers. It is unacceptable that severe restrictions continue to hamper the implementation of projects that are necessary to save the lives of millions of people.

That grave humanitarian situation is further compounded by the use of landmines, which have affected hundreds of civilians. The proliferation of those devices constitutes not only a threat to people's lives but also one of the factors that jeopardizes agricultural

production and access to water, depriving civilians of the means necessary to survive.

Food security is particularly relevant in a country where less than 3 per cent of the land is arable. In 2018, Yemen suffered the world's most severe food insecurity crisis, and the multidimensional effect of that scenario has caused severe conditions for conflict-induced hunger, which could very well constitute a war crime.

We must not be distracted from the ultimate goal of those efforts. An immediate and definitive ceasefire is needed throughout the country. That will be possible only with the resolute will of the parties to put an end to a conflict that has already claimed too many lives.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their briefings.

We strongly condemn the serious drone and missile attacks on civilian targets in Saudi Arabia, including this weekend's attacks on oil installations, which were claimed by the Houthis. Such attacks are unacceptable and jeopardize the efforts to reach a lasting political solution to the conflict. We also join the Secretary-General in both condemning and calling on all the parties to exercise maximum restraint in the current climate of tension.

With respect to Al-Hudaydah, we welcome the outcome of the last meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee on 8 and 9 September, in particular regarding the de-escalation mechanism and the activation of the joint operations centre. We reiterate our call on all parties to fully implement the withdrawal agreement, respect the ceasefire in its entirety and resolve outstanding points of disagreement. I take this opportunity to congratulate Lieutenant General Guha on his appointment to head the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement. We continue to call on all parties to implement the Stockholm Agreement in its entirety, including the prisoner exchange agreement and the Taiz agreement.

Additional efforts are needed to improve the humanitarian situation, which remains catastrophic, as we have heard. We commend the humanitarian agencies for their outstanding work despite the difficulties encountered. It is critical that all parties facilitate access for humanitarian assistance and respect international humanitarian law.

We draw the Council's attention to the excellent and recently published report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen (A/HRC/42/17). Belgium is part of the core group of supporters of the Human Rights Council resolution 36/31, which established the Group of Experts. We will support the extension of the mandate at the next session. We call on the parties to honour their obligations and commitments under international humanitarian law and human rights law. In that context, Belgium stresses the importance of taking measures to protect against sexual and gender-based violence, such as the establishment of structures and services to respond to sexual violence.

Belgium encourages the Special Envoy to continue to prepare the next steps in the political process, which must be inclusive, with the meaningful participation of women and young people, so as to adequately reflect the ethnic, geographical and political diversity of the population of Yemen. As stressed in presidential statement S/PRST/2019/9, of 29 August, a political agreement negotiated following an inclusive dialogue is the way to resolve disputes and address the legitimate concerns of all Yemenis, including those in the south. In that context, we welcome the talks organized by Saudi Arabia in Jeddah so as to identify a solution to the situation in the south, and we call on all parties to participate constructively.

Violence in the rest of the country continues and exacerbates the lack of trust between the parties. In addition, such violence hampers access to humanitarian assistance. We call on all parties to cease hostilities throughout the country. Belgium remains very concerned about the high number of child victims of air strikes and ground fighting and demands that all parties take immediate measures to protect children.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): We thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings. South Africa wishes to express its support for Mr. Griffiths and commends his efforts to find a peaceful solution to the situation in Yemen. We also welcome our colleague from Yemen and look forward to his briefing.

We further welcome the appointment of Lieutenant General Guha as Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement, and we wish him well in his Mission. We condemn the attack on the Saudi

oil facilities and call on all the countries of the region to de-escalate tensions that might undermine security and stability in the Gulf region, the supply and security of global energy, and the security of maritime trade.

My delegation would like to address two points in our statement today: first, the political situation, and secondly, the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen.

First, on the political situation in Yemen, we continue to call on all parties involved in the conflict in Yemen to de-escalate tensions and fully commit to the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. We reiterate our support for a negotiated political settlement that engages all parties in an inclusive Yemeni-led dialogue to resolve differences and address the legitimate concerns of all Yemenis, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. South Africa supports dialogue and the cessation of hostilities in the country, including in the southern region of Yemen.

It is only through a diplomatic and negotiated solution that the people of Yemen can achieve sustainable and lasting peace. We therefore continue to stress that the differences among the parties in Yemen cannot be solved by military means, as such a course of action would only further aggravate the situation. We call upon the Council and the countries of the region to spare no effort in supporting the political process in Yemen. South Africa welcomes all efforts and interventions of neighbouring countries to find an inclusive, peaceful political settlement in Yemen. Moreover, we believe that accountability is an essential part of achieving lasting peace and stability.

On the humanitarian situation, South Africa remains extremely concerned about the dire humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which has caused immeasurable suffering for millions of civilians, as reported this morning by Under-Secretary-General Lowcock. We note the latest report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen (A/HRC/42/17), which calls on all the parties to do their part to address the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

The impact of the conflict on civilians in Yemen has been devastating, as over 24 million people, or nearly 80 per cent of the population, requires humanitarian assistance and protection. The number of civilian casualties continues to rise, and the Human Rights Council has certified 7,508 civilian deaths — including those of 1,997 children — since March 2015.

The continued violence committed by all parties to the conflict is not conducive to peacebuilding measures. South Africa reiterates its call on all parties to de-escalate the fighting in other parts of the country and commit to a general ceasefire so as to enable dialogue and inclusive peaceful negotiations. South Africa remains extremely concerned about the serious humanitarian crisis in Yemen. To date, over 15 million people — more than half the population of Yemen — are facing starvation; 1.1 million are affected by cholera, and 3 million have been forced to flee their country.

Vulnerable groups, especially women and children, often face the most severe consequences of war, and this is no different in Yemen. Those statistics shows that the humanitarian crisis in Yemen continues to be the world's worst, and the Council has to pay more attention and dedicate more time to addressing it. South Africa joins Mr. Lowcock in calling on all parties to abide by their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate that the only sustainable solution to the conflict will be a negotiated, Yemeni-led political settlement that is inclusive and fair and puts the interests and well-being of all the citizens of Yemen first.

Mr. De Rivièrè (France) (*spoke in French*): We firmly condemn Saturday's attacks on the oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais. Such actions can only exacerbate tensions and the risk of conflict in the region and undermine political efforts to resolve the crisis. They absolutely must end.

I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs for their briefings.

In the face of the catastrophic humanitarian situation, we must redouble our efforts. The intensification of fighting continues to come at a high cost for the population in all governorates of Yemen. All parties must ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. In that connection, I recall two absolute priorities: the protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical personnel, and guaranteed immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

Four and a half million people are unable to receive assistance due to restrictions imposed by the parties to the conflict. New constraints imposed by the Houthis

on food aid supply chains could further aggravate the situation. Given the fact that more than 80 per cent of the Yemeni population is dependent on humanitarian aid, this aid must not be allowed to decline at any cost. The World Food Programme needs \$663 million for the next six months, two-thirds of which before the end of the year. We support the appeal of the Under-Secretary-General for pledges to be honoured as soon as possible or for new contributions to be made to the United Nations humanitarian response plan. We commend those States that have indicated their intention to respond to this call.

The fight against impunity is essential, including to achieving lasting peace. France calls on the parties to conduct transparent, independent, impartial and credible investigations and to cooperate with international mechanisms. France takes note of the conclusions of the report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen. It is important for the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict to be able to adopt conclusions.

Only a political solution will bring a lasting end to the crisis in Yemen and the suffering of the population. With every passing day, it becomes more urgent to find that solution, as reinforced by the recent tensions in the south of the country. Discussions to reach a comprehensive political agreement must therefore resume without delay or preconditions and on a more inclusive basis. The parties to the Stockholm Agreement must pursue their implementation efforts.

But the progress expected in Al-Hudaydah should not be a prerequisite for the resumption of discussions to reach that comprehensive political solution. We can wait no longer. France encourages the parties to take steps in that direction and reiterates its support for the efforts of the Special Envoy. In addition, France stands ready to promote de-escalation. A commitment by the parties to the conflict to reducing the level of tensions would be a first step towards resuming discussions on a political solution. The partial withdrawal of the forces of the United Arab Emirates on the ground is a step in the right direction in that regard.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this meeting and thank Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Lowcock for their valuable briefings. We recognize the important work they are both doing, in their respective capacities, to end a conflict that has no military solution and to address

the largest humanitarian crisis in the world today. We also welcome the appointment of Lieutenant General Guha to head the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement.

Peru has been following developments in Yemen with concern. While we welcome the recent meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee and the commitments made there, we would be remiss in not stressing the extreme fragility of the current situation, given the deep mistrust that prevails among the parties and the rigidity of their positions.

We strongly condemn the drone attack on Saudi Arabia's oil installations on Saturday, claimed by the Houthis, which puts regional and world security at high risk and is having unpredictable global economic consequences. We join the Secretary-General in calling on all parties involved to reduce tensions and seek negotiated solutions, pursuant to international law. Furthermore, we regret the atrocities committed by the Houthi rebels and the disproportionate responses thereto, such as the attack on a detention centre, which show the parties' disdain for international humanitarian law and human rights. We are also concerned that the climate of violence is now compounded by profound uncertainty in the south of the country, with a real risk of Yemeni institutional collapse. In that regard, we welcome the recent joint statement by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to help end confrontational rhetoric and accusations among the various actors and to return to diplomatic channels.

The delicate situation in the south, together with the deteriorating humanitarian situation, reminds us of the urgent need to act swiftly and pragmatically in order to make greater progress in reaching a political solution, as promoted by the United Nations. To that end, Peru considers it essential that a new round of consultations be convened as soon as possible and underscores that all sectors of civil society and the country's regions must be properly represented, including groups from the south, provided that they commit to respecting the territorial integrity of the country and agree that the use of force is exclusively reserved for the State. We encourage parallel efforts to continue, in critical areas — for instance, the redeployment in Al-Hudaydah — the exchange of detainees and the establishment of the joint committee in Taiz.

However, the emphasis on the political process in Yemen should in no way obviate the need to continue addressing the humanitarian crisis there. We are especially alarmed by the degree of food insecurity and the deterioration of economic indicators that deepen the suffering of the population.

One of the main issues of concern is the insufficient fulfilment of the pledges made at February's donor conference. We therefore welcome the announcement of contributions from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to which Mr. Lowcock referred. We encourage the countries concerned to take appropriate measures so as not to prolong the severely adverse impact on the roll-out of the humanitarian response plan. Moreover, we note the urgency of continuing to prioritize the containment of cholera, in the light of the increase in the number of cases observed compared to last year. In that regard, we commend the crucial prevention and control work carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and its humanitarian partners, which has prevented outbreaks of the disease. We emphasize that the ports, airports and roads in Yemen must remain open and operational, in line with the Council's various statements. In addition, humanitarian aid and the population's access thereto cannot and should not be conditional on strategic considerations.

In conclusion, I reaffirm that my delegation will continue to work to build a sustainable peace in Yemen that puts an end to the humanitarian disaster, promotes regional stability, provides full respect for human rights and guarantees accountability for the atrocious crimes committed there.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Envoy Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for their briefings. China supports the Special Envoy in his efforts to promote the political process in Yemen and commends the United Nations and relevant agencies for their tireless efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in that country.

Recent developments in Yemen have added new, complex dimensions to the search for a political solution. The international community is paying close attention and has called for an early de-escalation of tension in the south. China condemns the attack on Saudi oil refinery facilities and opposes any attack on civilians and civilian installations. We call on the parties to refrain from any action that could lead to the

further escalation of tensions in the region and, instead, rely on political means, such as peaceful negotiations to achieve regional peace and stability.

China supports maintaining the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen. The parties should be guided by the primacy of the interests of their country and their people, show reason and restraint, resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiations and restore stability and order in Yemen as soon as possible.

China has taken note of the recent joint statement issued by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, in which they expressed their willingness to promote the ceasefire arrangement and facilitate constructive dialogue among the Yemeni parties. We hope that countries of the region will continue to create the positive conditions for the Yemeni parties to ease tensions and enhance mutual trust.

The Stockholm Agreement is a major step towards achieving a political solution to the issue of Yemen. It was an important outcome brought about through the good offices of the United Nations, and it should therefore be fully implemented. Focus should be placed on the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah Agreement. The United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement and the Redeployment Coordination Committee should play a constructive role in that regard. On 8 and 9 September, the Committee held its sixth joint meeting, at which it was decided to activate the mechanism to strengthen the ceasefire and de-escalation to establish a joint operations centre and deploy monitoring teams to the front lines of several locations in Al-Hudaydah.

We hope that those concrete measures will lead to the effective implementation of the ceasefire in the Al-Hudaydah area and the reduction of civilian casualties. The Yemeni parties should continue with the good offices of the United Nations, pursue dialogue and consultations on outstanding issues, including those concerning the regional security forces and port revenues, and strive to make progress on issues, including the exchange of prisoners and the implementation of the Taiz agreement.

The Yemeni people are the primary victims of the fighting in the country, and the deteriorating humanitarian situation is indeed worrisome. The international community should increase its humanitarian assistance to the country. We hope that

the donor countries will honour their commitments through strengthened coordination with the United Nations. We hope that the parties concerned will ensure that humanitarian supplies can reach all populations and regions in need of such assistance.

A political solution is the only solution to the Yemeni issue. The United Nations will continue to play its role as the main avenue of good offices in the political process, and the Security Council should continue to maintain unity and provide political support. The Yemeni parties should act in accordance with Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015), the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, its Implementation Mechanism and the outcome document of the National Dialogue Conference; return to the path of dialogue; and resolve the issue through political negotiations.

Through bilateral and multilateral channels, China has provided large amounts of assistance in the areas of the economy, education, and health care, and will continue to do so to the best of its ability. China sincerely hopes that the country can restore peace and stability and achieve development as soon as possible. China stands ready to play a constructive and positive role in that regard.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): Let me thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their detailed accounts of the current situation in Yemen.

At the outset, let me also express our condemnation in the strongest terms of the recent attacks on two major oil facilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Such incidents pose a direct threat to the global energy supply as well as to broader security and stability in the Middle East, as they have the potential to further escalate regional and global tensions. We call on all parties to exercise the maximum level of restraint.

Let me now address the situation in Al-Hudaydah. We welcome the recent meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee and the activation of the ceasefire enhancement and de-escalation mechanism, which enables the establishment of a joint operations centre. We hope that it will help preserve the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah and build trust among the parties. However, in our view, it is critical to expedite the implementation of the remaining stages of the redeployment of forces from the city. We also encourage the parties to take meaningful steps to ensure the full

implementation of all the remaining provisions of the Stockholm Agreement.

Poland is deeply concerned about the surge of violence across Yemen in recent weeks, in particular in the south, resulting in a high number of casualties among civilians and threatening the vital lifelines for the import and distribution of basic supplies and services across Yemen, both by air and sea. If the fighting continues, it will contribute to further instability, the exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis and the deepening of Yemen's political and social divisions.

It is therefore paramount that the parties cease all military operations and engage in a constructive dialogue to resolve their differences without further delay. They must also meet their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and ensure the protection of civilians at all times.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, we are deeply alarmed by the negative impact of the underfunding of the humanitarian response plan for Yemen. Without the much-needed financial help, United Nations humanitarian operations will have to be further scaled-back. As the survival of millions of Yemenis depends entirely upon the delivery of humanitarian assistance, we urge all donors to swiftly disburse the pledges made during the conference in Geneva. We also urge the parties to ensure unhindered access, both in terms of humanitarian aid and personnel into and across Yemen.

I would like to reiterate once again that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. Violence and military operations contribute only to the prolongation of the crisis and further deepen the already immense suffering of the civilian population. Poland strongly believes that an inclusive, United Nations-led political process must be urgently resumed in parallel with the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, as it is the only way to end the violence and create the necessary conditions for a substantial improvement of the disastrous humanitarian situation.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Mr. Griffiths for his tireless efforts to bring about a negotiated, comprehensive solution to the conflict and urge the parties to engage constructively and without preconditions with the Special Envoy. Yemen cannot wait for peace any longer.

Mr. Ipo (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 excellent briefings.

Côte d'Ivoire remains deeply concerned about the resurgence and escalation of violence that is undermining hopes for achieving peace and is exacerbating the already dire humanitarian situation. My delegation condemns in the strongest terms the 14 September attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities, which are likely to undermine regional security and stability. The stalemate and risk of fragmentation caused by the conflict, as well as the various theatres of open fighting in Yemen, could have irreversible consequences for the country and the entire region if the peace process remains at an impasse.

Relaunching the political process through inclusive dialogue, with the support of regional and international actors, remains one of the major challenges to be met in order to end the ongoing violence that is deepening political, cultural and economic divisions in Yemen.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2019/9 on 29 August, which encourages Special Envoy Griffiths to pursue his efforts within the framework of the resumption of comprehensive negotiations. The statement calls on all parties to work to preserve the unity and stability of Yemen and urges the warring parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

My delegation also welcomes the initiatives undertaken by various stakeholders to revive the political process, including the meeting on 8 and 9 September of the Redeployment Coordination Committee under the auspices of the United Nations, the planned meeting in Jeddah, and the joint declaration of 9 September by regional actors, calling for constructive dialogue. All of this forward momentum must be maintained and strengthened at all costs to create the necessary conditions to bring about peace in Yemen.

There remains an urgent need to scrupulously respect and fully implement the Stockholm Agreement, signed in December 2018, and the Al-Hudaydah Agreement, concerning the redeployment of the military forces at the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Issa. Indeed, my delegation is of the opinion that

the control of ports is undoubtedly a major issue. We also remain convinced that the establishment of local security forces in these ports will reinvigorate the political process.

Côte d'Ivoire therefore urges the parties to proceed in redeploying port military forces under the auspices of the Redeployment Coordination Committee and to cooperate fully with the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) with a view to ensuring the unhindered and expeditious movement of its personnel and equipment needed for humanitarian assistance.

My country would also like to stress the need for the Security Council and other stakeholders to engage in new initiatives to help the warring parties speed up the process relating to the prisoner-exchange mechanism and the implementation of the memorandum of understanding on the city of Taiz, which would facilitate the opening of humanitarian corridors. These two initiatives are undeniably important components of the peace process crucial for rebuilding trust between the parties.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen remains a source of major concern for Côte d'Ivoire. It is imperative that all protagonists respect international humanitarian law and human rights in order to create the conditions for better access to humanitarian assistance for populations in need. Indeed, after several years of conflict, Yemen has been bled dry. According to United Nations agencies, 24 million people find themselves in a situation of humanitarian emergency, 10 million are food insecure and 3.3 million internally displaced. My country therefore urges bilateral and multilateral partners to respond to emergency appeals so as to support the financing of humanitarian aid and life-saving programmes.

Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Yemen and reiterates its call for an inclusive political process incorporating, in particular, the people of the south, women and civil society. In conclusion, my country congratulates Lieutenant General Guha on his appointment as Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee and Head of UNMHA and assures him of its full support.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): At the outset, I would like to thank Martin Griffiths and Mark Lowcock for their briefings and commitment. Martin said in his

statement that he held the Stockholm Agreement dear. I appreciate that commitment.

As our colleague for Cote d'Ivoire just said, there is no military solution to this conflict. There is no alternative to a political. I therefore very much appreciate the briefers' work. I know these are little steps, but even little steps are very important, as was just explained, with regard to Al-Hudaydah and elsewhere. To encourage them to continue, I would also like to welcome Lieutenant General Guha to his work.

With regard to the political developments, we also appreciate the Saudi engagement to get the Yemeni Government forces and the Southern Transitional Council around the table so as to achieve de-escalation in the south. On all of the different political tracks, we believe that it is very important that these talks be an inclusive political process involving women, young people, civil society and regional actors.

Mark Lowcock's briefings are the most depressing. Whenever he comes to the Security Council, it is not a happy day, and today is no exception. But what we are seeing in Yemen is truly a nightmare and I think that we as a body cannot accept the violation of international humanitarian law becoming a new normal.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the Ambassador of the United States, Kelly Craft. In her statement, she said that 80 per cent of the population was in need of humanitarian assistance. What we are witnessing is the world's gravest humanitarian catastrophe.

At the same time, again recalling what Mark said, the operating circumstances in Yemen are worse than ever. We really have to emphasize this and work against it. We remember before the summer break when David Beasley of the World Food Programme described the despicable practice of the Houthis misusing humanitarian funds for their own purposes (see S/PV.8578).

Mark mentioned funding shortfalls. In Geneva, Germany pledged €100 million. We committed to and paid this amount. We have also pledged an additional €30 million, which I think we have also mostly disbursed. I therefore hope that Saudi Arabia will proceed on 25 September to pay what it had pledged.

Turning to the victims, many around the table have evoked them. Our Belgian colleague mentioned sexual violence against women. Our South African colleague

mentioned the number of children being killed from air attacks. Many speakers have referred to the new report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, mandated by the Human Rights Council. The report (A/HRC/42/17) demonstrates the terrible impact on of the conflict on the daily lives of the people. Basic human rights are violated on a daily basis. There is no excuse for allowing the killing, torture and abuse of innocent people in this horrible conflict. I therefore join my French colleague in calling for that report to have real consequences.

Mark deplored the attack on civilian infrastructure. Since our last briefing, we have seen numerous more attacks against civilian infrastructure. I was not aware that the prison attacked in Dhamar, where more than 100 were killed, used to be a university. This just shows the extent to which things have deteriorated in Yemen. There have been further attacks on Al-Hudaydah and Taiz. I can only join the call for a nationwide ceasefire. That is what is needed.

We also firmly condemn, like all other members, the attacks on the Saudi oil facilities. This has a grave impact on the world economy and energy supply, as well as on the environment. Those responsible for these attacks must be identified and we cannot allow impunity for that or for any of these many violations of international law.

As everyone has said, it is time for de-escalation, and I would strongly welcome it if the Security Council were to publicly endorse that and say something about the need for de-escalation of the situation.

The President: In his statement, the representative of Germany referred to a summer break. Did we have a summer break? I did not notice.

Mr. Syihab (Indonesia): I would like to begin by thanking Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their briefings. I commend their tireless efforts in trying to push for new developments despite the wide variety of difficulties.

In responding to the briefing, Indonesia would like to underscore three points.

First, regarding the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah Agreement, we welcome the latest joint meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) to oversee the implementation of the Agreement between the Government and the Houthis to demilitarize the port city of Al-Hudaydah.

We also note the establishment of the joint operations centre and the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) facility and its activation. With the establishment of the centre, it is hoped that both parties and the United Nations can work on de-escalation and effectively address incidents that occur in the field. We hope that this exercise will also enhance confidence and trust between the parties. I believe that any progress on the implementation of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement will always be welcomed by members of the Security Council. We hope that more progress will be delivered in the near future. Indonesia also welcomes of the appointment of Lieutenant General Abhijit Guha as RCC Chair and Head of UNMHA. Indonesia wishes him success in carrying out the mandate given by the Security Council.

Secondly, with regard to the humanitarian situation in Yemen and the continuation of the peace process, as we heard from Under-Secretary-General Lowcock, the humanitarian situation is not getting better, and the lack of funding may force the closure of some of the relief programmes in Yemen. It is indeed very concerning. In our opinion, the need for humanitarian assistance will be greater, as will its cost, if the conflict continues. The only way to reverse the situation is by securing a wide-scale ceasefire and continuation of the political process so as to end the conflict. In that connection, we call on donors to fulfil their pledges and for the resumption of the political process in Yemen. While once again emphasizing the importance of the Stockholm Agreement and urging parties to implement it, Indonesia affirms that it is time to move forward into a bigger and more comprehensive political process. We reiterate our support for a negotiated political settlement that engages all parties in an all-inclusive dialogue.

Thirdly, with respect to the security situation and escalation of violence, we again express our concern about the continuous attacks by the Houthis, in particular the recent drone attack claimed by Ansar Allah against two major oil facilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Such attacks indeed provoke further escalation of the violence and we strongly condemn them.

With regard to the situation in the south, we support the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to hold a dialogue in Jeddah to resolve the situation. We also call for an end to all incidents of violence and encourage the various parties to engage with the joint committee to monitor and stabilize the situation. The new

confrontation in the south reaffirms the need to resume the broader political process in Yemen. After all, peace throughout Yemen is the end game for all parties.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Russian Federation.

We thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their detailed briefings on the political, military and humanitarian situation in the Republic of Yemen. It is now clear that Yemen and its people are experiencing a very serious political and humanitarian catastrophe.

As we have heard from our briefers today, the situation in the country remains dire. Despite the fragile ceasefire prevailing in Al-Hudaydah, intense fighting in the south of the country is cause for serious concern. We call on the parties to the military confrontation in Aden to resolve their disagreements through negotiations. Increased tensions make it difficult to establish a balanced dialogue with all political stakeholders in the country, while taking into account all their concerns, and only help terrorist groups.

We support Mr. Griffiths' mediation efforts to make the parties to the conflict understand that there is no military solution to the conflict and that a comprehensive ceasefire and confidence-building measures are needed. In that connection, we welcome the meeting on 9 September of the Redeployment Coordination Committee. We expect that negotiations and the quest for compromise will help move us forward in implementing the Stockholm Agreement.

The further deployment of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement and the withdrawal of military forces from the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa will not only facilitate de-escalation throughout the country but also help to unlock other aspects of the Stockholm Agreement, including the exchange of prisoners and de-escalation in Taiz, and to move towards a discussion of the parameters of a settlement.

As we heard from Mr. Lowcock, the humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate and increasingly resembles a full-fledged humanitarian disaster. Humanitarian assistance to Yemen needs to be a priority of our work. Let me again underscore that the humanitarian assistance which Yemen receives from

outside its borders needs to be provided to the entire population of the country, regardless of who controls a given area.

We are seriously concerned about the 14 September drone strikes on major oil facilities in Saudi Arabia. We strongly condemn strikes on non-military targets and the destruction of socioeconomic infrastructure. Armed escalation threatens to complicate the search for a political solution to the conflict and could also become a large-scale regional confrontation. We call on all parties to show restraint and ensure that such dangerous incidents do not recur. At the same time, we recommend that no hasty conclusions be made about who carried out the attacks, as that could destabilize the already tense situation in Yemen and the Middle East as a whole.

In conclusion, I recall resolution 598 (1987), which requests the Secretary-General, in cooperation with States of the region, to develop a security and confidence-building architecture in the region. In that context, the well-known Russian concept of collective security in the Persian Gulf, which is aimed at unblocking conflict situations and developing confidence-building and control measures, is becoming increasingly relevant. We again call on all parties concerned to study that document and engage in collective work to find mutually acceptable solutions to regional problems.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's presidency of the Security Council this month and wish you and the delegation of the Russian Federation every success.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

I would like also to welcome Mrs. Kelly Craft, Permanent Representative of the United States, and wish her every success.

I thank 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 briefings.

The Republic of Yemen condemns in the strongest terms the cowardly terrorist attack perpetrated against

the two ARAMCO facilities in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia last Saturday at dawn. It was a drone attack. In that regard, the Government of Yemen affirms its solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in combating attempts to undermine its security and stability. We support all measures taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to fight terrorism and ensure security and stability in the region.

Developments since 8 August in the temporary capital Aden and in some governorates in southern Yemen — including the armed rebellion by the Southern Transitional Council, supported by the United Arab Emirates — require us to seriously and transparently review the situation in order to overcome this dilemma, address its causes and prevent its repercussions. The dilemma is marked by the taking control of State civilian and military institutions, as well as an assault on public and private property. It has deflected us from our main objective: the Houthi coup d'état supported by Iran.

On 8 August, military formation groups of the Southern Transitional Council waged a military rebellion, the second following a similar attempt in January 2018. Those military groups operating outside the State framework attacked legitimate Government forces, their positions and their facilities in Aden. Following that attack, the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which heads the coalition, along with its wise leadership, made great efforts to contain this crisis, and we appreciate that. Nevertheless, the rebels continued attacking State institutions in two other governorates, Abyan and Shabwah. The national army opposed the attacks, which run counter to the coalition proclamations, and was able to force those military formation groups to withdraw.

Unfortunately, on 28 August we were taken by surprise by air strikes waged by the United Arab Emirates on our military troops posted in Aden. To curb the bloodshed, we withdrew our units from the interim capital of Yemen. The next day we were also surprised by continued illegal air strikes, in violation of the coalition's goals, against the national army in Aden and in Abyan governorate. Those attacks claimed the lives of many national army soldiers and injured numerous others.

We reaffirm our unequivocal condemnation of the continued efforts to arm and support military formation groups outside the State framework, for

whatever reason. Moreover, the Government of Yemen welcomes the appeals for dialogue made by the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We value the Kingdom's position, which totally rejects the recent escalation of violence in the interim capital, Aden, and a number of southern governorates. We also thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its rejection of all the repercussions of those military attacks and for its strong insistence on the restoration of all civilian and military institutions in the quest for Yemen's full security, stability, unity and territorial integrity. Indeed, any threat to Yemen's stability is a threat to the Kingdom's security and stability.

We also commend the clear position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in supporting the Government of Yemen as represented by the President of the Republic of Yemen, His Excellency Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour. We thank the Kingdom for its efforts to preserve the foundations of the Yemeni State and the interests of our Yemeni people. We thank it for its opposition to the Houthi coup, and we value its efforts to ensure that we do not overlook the coalition's goals: supporting State legitimacy, uniting all efforts to put an end to the coup d'état and addressing the Iranian interference in Yemeni domestic affairs and the region.

The Yemeni Government has undertaken tremendous endeavours and made tireless efforts to put an end to the crisis and to return to the rightful path of achieving an overarching, peaceful solution based on the agreed terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council and its executive mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2216 (2015).

We have expressed our full support for the efforts undertaken by Mr. Griffiths and for all other international efforts aiming to achieve lasting peace in Yemen. The Yemeni Government, in its commitment to achieving lasting peace, has taken part in a number of discussions, the most recent of which were held in Sweden. The Government expresses its commitment to implementing the Stockholm Agreement; which is a positive step forward in terms of building trust, alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people and achieving the lasting peace we so desire.

The Yemeni Government has demonstrated great flexibility in order to save the Stockholm Agreement. However, the stubborn armed Houthi militias are

playing for time and have duped the international community while prolonging the war and the people's suffering and undermining the peace efforts sponsored by the United Nations through its envoy, Mr. Griffiths. They could also undermine the Council's efforts to achieve a comprehensive political solution based on the agreed terms of reference, one that meets the aspirations of all the Yemeni people and fulfils their desire to build a new, federal Yemen based on the principles of justice, equality, respect for the law, good governance and national partnership for peace, rather than war and destruction.

Following the agreement reached at the sixth joint meeting in Al-Hudaydah of the Redeployment Coordination Committee on 8 and 9 September, we nevertheless are gravely concerned about the continued shelling, incursions and violations of the ceasefire in various directorates in Al-Hudaydah governorate. Those violations are being perpetrated by the Houthi militias, which target civilians in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Those militias must uphold all provisions of the Stockholm Agreement and the Al-Hudaydah Agreement. They must rapidly redeploy their troops as provided for in the agreed operational concept while activating the tripartite control mechanism and freeing all prisoners and detainees as well as those forcibly disappeared, in addition to lifting the blockade on the city of Taiz.

The Government of Yemen is striving to achieve a number of goals. At the humanitarian and economic levels, we are looking to increase the State's revenue so that it can pay all civil servants in all governorates. We are looking to ensure that fuel can reach all parts of Yemen, abiding, of course, by the necessary safety standards and legal constraints. We are working to ensure that there is no shortage of fuel in local markets and that fuel prices cannot be manipulated. Since the coup d'état, Houthi militias have been collecting taxes and imposing illegal taxes on importers of oil products. The Government of Yemen calls upon the United Nations and its agencies to discharge their responsibilities and to play their humanitarian and professional role. We urge them to force the Houthi militias to cease impeding the Government's efforts aimed at alleviating the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people in such difficult circumstances. They must lift all impediments that obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need. We call for

sanctions and pressure to be imposed on the Houthi militias so that they do not cause an oil crisis, which would only worsen the humanitarian situation and compel merchants to violate Government directives.

We would warn against the continued efforts of Houthi militias to hinder the work of United Nations experts to evaluate the situation of the *FSO SAFER* tanker, which contains 1.14 million barrels of crude oil. If that oil were to spill, there could be devastating environmental consequences in the Red Sea. We deplore the silence of the international community on this point and urge the Secretary-General and the Council to take urgent measures to bring pressure to bear on Houthi militias, which would make it possible for the group of experts to reach the tanker and assess its technical status, thus avoiding a maritime catastrophe that would have repercussions for Yemen and the region.

Iran has caused a great deal of damage in Yemen and the region and has played a serious sabotaging role by providing arms and funding to the Houthi militias. Those militias, under the banner of the Iranian revolution, strive to practise oppression and torture, while using certain areas in Yemen as platforms to launch missiles that threaten the security of neighbouring States and maritime navigation in the Red Sea. They also undermine regional and international security.

The United Nations reports demonstrate the support that the Houthi militias receive from Iran. As a result of the coup d'état by the Houthi militias, Yemen is witnessing the worst humanitarian disaster in the world. The militias continue their violations by pillaging humanitarian aid, bombing silos, expanding their siege of cities and villages and launching attacks against civilians and residential areas. They lay mines, recruit children, destroy the homes of political opponents, target journalists, detain people arbitrarily and kidnap political and human rights activists, as well as bank managers and businessmen, with no legal justification. All such acts are in violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Before concluding, I would like to stress that there can be no further consultations without the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah Agreement. We therefore call on the Council to shoulder its responsibilities by implementing the Agreement and all its provisions without further delay.

I also wish to affirm that the Yemeni Government has done its utmost and will continue to do all it can to support the United Nations and its agencies in carrying out their activities. We are ready for increased cooperation and support so that they can continue their United Nations-facilitated work without impediment. We have clarified this issue in our response to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Addressing the conflict in Yemen means putting an end to the coup and restoring the State institutions that

have been taken over. We once again call on the Council to implement its resolutions on Yemen in order to reach a comprehensive political settlement that meets the aspirations of all Yemeni people and achieve a lasting peace based on the agreed terms of reference.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.