



# Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

**8551**<sup>st</sup> meeting  
Monday, 17 June 2019, 10 a.m.  
New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Alotaibi . . . . .	(Kuwait)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium . . . . .	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China . . . . .	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire . . . . .	Mr. Adom
	Dominican Republic . . . . .	Mr. Singer Weisinger
	Equatorial Guinea . . . . .	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	France . . . . .	Mr. Delattre
	Germany . . . . .	Mr. Heusgen
	Indonesia . . . . .	Mr. Djani
	Peru . . . . .	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland . . . . .	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
	South Africa . . . . .	Mr. Ntsoane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Cohen

## Agenda

### The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 10 June 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/485)

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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**

#### **Letter dated 10 June 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/485)**

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme.

Mr. Griffiths is joining today's meeting via video tele-conference from Amman.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/485, which contains the text of a letter dated 10 June 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

**Mr. Griffiths:** I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the latest developments in the Yemeni peace process. With the Council's steadfast support, I have continued to work with both the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah on the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and the way forward to a comprehensive political solution to the conflict based on the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the National Dialogue Conference outcomes and all the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015) in particular.

In Hudaydah, despite reports earlier today, in general the parties have sustained the reduction in violence across the governorate for the six full months

since the Agreement entered into force in the middle of last December. That has continued despite the delays in the implementation of the Agreement due to a number of challenges and the frustrations associated with those challenges, which we have all experienced. During the five months prior to the ceasefire, the fighting resulted in more than 1,300 civilian casualties in the governorate. In the five months following the ceasefire, the number of civilian casualties was reduced by 68 per cent. Nevertheless, of course, I remain deeply concerned by continued violence and civilian casualties. However, it is clear that the overall de-escalation continues to benefit the people of the city and the opportunities for effective humanitarian response.

The Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC), set up by the Agreement, and its members from both parties continued over the past months to engage constructively with my colleague Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard on the plans for the first and second phases of the redeployments. He remains positive that an agreement on both phases of the redeployments can be achieved in line with what the parties agreed in Stockholm, including in particular with regard to the tripartite monitoring mechanism. Once outstanding issues are resolved, joint implementation can commence. Joint implementation will allow for the parties to fully verify all elements of the redeployments, including those previously executed. I commend Lieutenant General Lollesgaard for his relentless efforts to build relationships and confidence between the parties throughout his engagements to ensure the effectiveness of the RCC, amid challenging logistical and political circumstances.

The economic aspects of the Hudaydah Agreement regarding the revenues of the ports are also at the forefront of our attention. I hope that achieving consensus on those aspects will enable the payment of public sector salaries in Al-Hudaydah governorate and across all of Yemen. That would be a significant step forward for the benefit of the Yemeni people. We have had very positive exchanges with the Government of Yemen on the matter, and I hope to build on last month's Amman meeting and convene further discussions with both parties in the near future.

I thank the Council for its continued support, which has been instrumental for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement ever since its inception. Parties should take the necessary next steps to ensure the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement

in its entirety, while ensuring full respect for Yemen's sovereignty. I note the Government of Yemen's flexibility and continued support to the Agreement in its entirety and its continued constructive engagement in that regard. I look forward to continuing my close engagement with President Hadi Mansour, the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah to advance the implementation of the Agreement. If I may, allow me to brief members on where the parties stand on the remaining aspects of the agreements reached in Stockholm last December.

We all hoped that the statement of understanding on Taiz agreed in Stockholm would open the door for the parties to work together on a way forward for the city and alleviate the suffering of its citizens. The military and political situation in the city is extremely complex and fragile, to the detriment of the population. I continue to work with the parties to convene a meeting of the joint committee agreed in Stockholm to identify a way out of the current situation. The benefits of a de-escalation of tensions and improved access for humanitarian aid would be tangible, immediate and visible.

I am also disappointed by the lack of progress on the implementation of the exchanges of prisoners and detainees as agreed before the Stockholm meetings. That is in essence a humanitarian issue that would provide relief for the prisoners and detainees and reunite them with their families and loved ones. As I have informed the Council previously, the parties have held productive sessions on the details on the exchanges in recent months. With greater political flexibility, I believe that they can translate those discussions into actions on the ground. I believe passionately that, more than any other issue, tangible progress on the exchange of prisoners would indicate the seriousness of the parties to build confidence and a significant humanitarian gesture of good faith. That has yet to happen, despite the continued efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, with which my Office works very closely. I call on the parties to prioritize the implementation of the exchange of prisoners in good faith and to demonstrate the flexibility required to make it a reality, for the sake of peace and, perhaps even more importantly, for the sake of thousands of Yemeni families that long to be reunited and are extremely disappointed that this has not yet happened.

The Council has recently expressed concern at re-escalating violence across Yemen and at attacks on civilian infrastructure in southern Saudi Arabia. I must

echo these concerns, including the recent drone attacks on Abha airport. I have repeatedly warned that war can take peace off the table, and in the context of wider regional tensions, the risks to the political process have never looked more stark. Naturally, I call for steps to be taken to de-escalate tensions for the benefit of the Yemeni people and regional security.

The Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah have consistently affirmed to me, and continue to do so, that a political solution is the only solution to this conflict. The longer the conflict goes on, the more challenges and the greater difficulties we will face in resolving it and reversing its terrible effects on the people of Yemen. The continued dialogue between the parties to implement the Stockholm Agreement is significant, but it is not enough for the Yemeni people. They want their suffering to end now and not tomorrow.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity, if I may, to reaffirm my personal commitment and that of the United Nations to pursuing an impartial and inclusive political process based on national ownership and in full respect for Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, as underscored by the Council on numerous occasions. Ending the conflict in Yemen can be achieved only through a comprehensive political solution. Opportunities for compromise are still readily available to the parties and, with the support of the Council, I remain confident that the parties can yet reach a comprehensive and peaceful settlement to the conflict in Yemen.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

**Mr. Lowcock**: Every month, I update the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. Today marks my fifteenth briefing and the thirty-sixth members will have heard since 2015. My experience is just like that of the main character in the hit Hollywood movie *Groundhog Day*. Many in the Chamber will have seen it. He finds himself trapped in a time loop, repeating the same day over and over. He tries to escape in many different ways — to no avail. Every morning, he wakes up back where he started. Just as in *Groundhog Day*, the details in my briefings to the Council change from month to month. The larger picture, however, does not.

Today I want to step back and consider the time loop we seem to be experiencing in Yemen. How has

this war evolved in the past four or five years? What has it wrought? What can we expect if it continues? What are we doing about it? And what is needed to help Yemen break this cycle for good? Let me begin with the nature of the war.

From the start, it has been brutal. One independent monitoring group, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), estimates that more than 70,000 people have been killed just since 2016. Violence has also been remarkably consistent. Fighting may decrease in one area — as we have seen recently in Al-Hudaydah with the Stockholm Agreement — only to mushroom elsewhere, as we are seeing right now in Al-Dhale'e, Hajjah and Taiz.

Today there are more than 30 active front lines in Yemen — more than enough to absorb fighters redeploying from quieter areas. In fact, ACLED data indicate that conflict incidents across the country have been mostly increasing since 2016. Yemen is getting more violent, not less. The conflict is getting worse, not better. Fighting this year has displaced more than 250,000 people. The number of incidents killing or injuring children more than trebled between the last quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of this year. In recent days, we have also seen a dangerous and reprehensible increase in attacks on Saudi Arabia, as well as air strikes in Sana'a and other areas.

All the fighting has, however, led to relatively few major shifts in control. Today, the large majority of Yemenis live in areas controlled by Ansar Allah and its allies. After tens of thousands of air strikes, shells, mortars and ground clashes, this has changed only marginally since 2016. So the war is not only brutal; it is unwinnable. Everyone agrees on that, at least in their public statements, and yet the fighting continues. So the next question is: If all the fighting has not materially changed the military facts on the ground, what has it achieved?

We give the Security Council the figures every month. Eighty per cent of the population — more than 24 million people — need assistance and protection, including 10 million who rely on food aid to survive. Some 600 incidents per month damage or destroy civilian infrastructure. More than 100 hospitals, health facilities and schools were hit just last year. A quarter of Yemeni children are out of school. More than 3.3 million people remain displaced. The economy has been devastated, shrinking by 40 per cent or more.

Some may suggest that the war is not solely to blame for this tragedy. Four years ago, Yemen was already the region's poorest country and millions of people were receiving aid. That is true. But there was also a functioning economy. Public institutions were providing essential services and basic infrastructure reached across the country. Yemen was even seeing improvements in food security and nutrition.

All that has now been undone. Today, the number of people who need assistance is 50 per cent higher than it was before the war. For the first time this year, assessments confirm pockets of famine-like conditions in dozens of places across Yemen. So when people ask about what the effect of all the fighting has been, the answer is clear: untold death, damage and destruction; the immiseration of a nation; and the fracturing and fragmentation of its society — all amounting, in sum, to the world's worst humanitarian tragedy.

Let me turn now to the question of what will happen if the war continues. There are two immediate answers.

First, many more people will die and conditions will get much worse for those who survive. An independent study by the University of Denver, commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme, recently used a global model to forecast the impact of continuing conflict in Yemen. If fighting lasts until 2022, we can expect close to half a million total deaths, including more than 300,000 people who will die from hunger, lack of health care and related causes. That is twice as many people dying as the model predicts if the war were to stop this year. We would also see a profound decline in the status of survivors throughout the country. A quarter of all children would be malnourished, and nearly 40 per cent would be out of school. Council members can imagine better than I can what the implications of this might be for security and stability in the wider region.

That brings me to the second answer. We will need an even larger and an even more expensive relief operation. At \$4.2 billion, this year's response plan is already the world's largest. It is also three times more than we needed in 2015, but if the fighting does not stop, today's requirements will be a fraction of what we will need to keep people alive a few years from now.

Some Yemeni activists have rightly asked why the international community is spending so much money in Yemen but things keep getting worse. Unfortunately, humanitarian organizations cannot do much more

than keep people alive, and we have been reasonably successful at that. In early 2017, we were providing aid to about 3 million people every month. Two years later, we are now reaching more than 10 million a month. Working with local institutions, we have rolled back the risk of famine in some areas, stemmed the world's largest cholera outbreak and greatly increased the number of malnourished children who are being treated and cured. But as conflict continues, underlying conditions keep deteriorating.

How do we get out of this deadly loop? What needs to change to break the cycle altogether? Last October, I set out five priority actions to avert catastrophe in Yemen. At the time, I emphasized that all five steps needed to be taken together to bring about real change. It is worth reviewing where we stand with those priorities today.

First, I said that we needed an immediate ceasefire across the country and to silence the guns and ground the war planes. There has been a reduction in violence in Al-Hudaydah since December, but that has been essentially offset by escalating conflict elsewhere. Enough is enough. The parties must also respect international humanitarian law, sparing civilians and civilian infrastructure at all times, whether or not there is a ceasefire.

Secondly, we need all parties to facilitate rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access, as again required under international humanitarian law. More than 5 million people who need help, including 3.8 million people in acute need, live in 75 districts that are hard to reach because of bureaucratic impediments, insecurity or logistical constraints. In April and May, access constraints prevented or delayed humanitarian assistance for more than 1.5 million people. That is half a million more people than in the previous two months. Bureaucratic impediments remain a major problem, costing lives and increasing suffering.

So far this year, Ansar Allah-affiliated authorities have prevented or delayed 55 United Nations field missions, which is an average of three per week. Monitoring restrictions, issues with beneficiary targeting and other interference all require constant engagement.

Despite those challenges, we have seen some progress recently. For example, it is encouraging that Ansar Allah-affiliated authorities have issued more entry permits for aid workers recently. And last week,

Ansar Allah-affiliated authorities told us that they wanted us to proceed with a technical assessment to assess the decaying *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which is storing an estimated 1.1 million barrels of oil off the coast of Al-Hudaydah.

I have repeatedly alerted the Council to the risks in that regard. If the tanker ruptures or explodes, we could see the coastline polluted all along the Red Sea. Depending on the time of year and water currents, the spill could reach from the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait to the Suez Canal and potentially as far as the Strait of Hormuz. I leave it to Council members to imagine the effect of such a disaster on the environment, shipping lanes and the global economy. If a major spill occurs, the world will surely demand answers from anyone who could have prevented the catastrophe but chose not to. Provided Ansar Allah-affiliated authorities continue to facilitate this work, the assessment team should be able to deploy to the *FSO SAFER* tanker within the next two weeks.

The other major concern about interference and access relates to the diversion of food aid. I will leave it to David Beasley to update Council members on that.

The third priority that I outlined in October (see S/PV.8379) is full funding for the humanitarian operation. This year, as I said, we require \$4.2 billion. We have so far received only \$1.15 billion, or 27 per cent. In February, we heard very generous pledges in Geneva, amounting to \$2.6 billion. We thank all our donors for their generosity, and we understand that this money comes from voluntary contributions. But when pledges are made, they must be fulfilled. It has now been four months since the Geneva conference. The World Health Organization has already had to suspend payments to health workers and the procurement of medicine and other supplies. Vaccination programmes will also soon start winding down. That means that people are almost certainly already dying as a result of those funding gaps. Other critical programmes, including malnutrition treatment, cholera prevention and support for displaced people, could start closing in the next few weeks.

Fourthly, in October, I emphasized the need for sustainable measures to strengthen the Yemeni economy. We have seen some important progress on economic issues over the past six months. The Government recently published its first budget since 2015, and I strongly support its efforts to get it fully financed. I

hope donors will do the same. The Government has paid salaries across the country for health workers and some other civil servants for several successive months, and the Ansar Allah authorities have also made salary payments in some areas. In May, commercial food imports through Al-Hudaydah and Saleef were the highest in three years, and fuel imports have largely recovered from the fuel crisis in the previous month.

With salary payments rising and increasing imports, many Yemenis should have more money in their pockets and find more goods to purchase in the market. But — and this is the point to focus on — like the war itself, progress on one issue can obscure the bigger picture. Commercial imports through Al-Hudaydah and Saleef rose in May but they also fluctuate greatly from month to month. As I have said before, we frequently see that in months in which food imports increase, fuel imports drop, and vice versa. And the trend line, which is what really matters, points sharply downwards. Since the conflict began, food imports have declined by more than 40 per cent, fuel imports by 70 per cent and the import of medicines by 50 per cent.

Almost no containerized commercial cargo has entered Al-Hudaydah or Saleef since late 2017. That means that everything that is not food or fuel, such as medicine, clothing or shelter materials, must go elsewhere. Food, fuel and other goods are able enter Aden and other ports, but moving them north, where most people live, is increasingly difficult and pushes prices even further out of reach for many people. And while it is true that civil servant salaries are being paid more often, the currency is also losing value again. One United States dollar now costs about 560 Yemeni rial as compared to 400 rial at the end of last year and 215 rial before the crisis. Any extra money in Yemeni pockets is therefore now worth much less, especially since nearly all goods must be imported.

A growing number of families are also getting less help from friends and family overseas. According to the World Bank, Yemenis working abroad, almost entirely in Gulf countries, send home more than \$3.3 billion a year. Remittances are a lifeline for their families. Some experts estimate that those payments make up nearly a quarter of Yemen's gross domestic product and pay for more than half of commercial imports. But stricter labour policies are sending thousands of Yemeni workers home every month, effectively cutting off family incomes. There therefore remains an essential, indeed growing, requirement for a predictable and

regular flow of foreign exchange into Yemen at a scale that allows the Government to continue to pay salaries and to keep the exchange rate stable.

The fifth priority is the most important: meaningful progress towards peace. The Stockholm Agreement is a crucial step in the right direction. But as Council members just heard from Martin Griffiths, we are in danger of losing that momentum. I hope that everyone will do everything they can to work with Martin and his team to keep moving towards peace. I have already again today explained the consequences of failing to do so.

After almost endless repetition, there is a happy ending to *Groundhog Day*. The main character eventually breaks out of his time loop but only by completely changing his behaviour. The film ends as he embarks on a peaceful, satisfying future. There is a lesson here for our own time loop as well. Nothing will change in Yemen unless everyone is ready to do things very differently. The steps I have outlined are the way to start. Otherwise, Council members can expect more of what they have been hearing for the past four years: more fighting; more death; more destruction; more hunger; more disease; more appeals; more pledging conferences; and more briefings like this one.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Beasley.

**Mr. Beasley**: I offer very special thanks for the opportunity to be here with Council today. I also thank Martin Griffiths and Mark Lowcock, who are literally on ground, working all over the world. Mr. Griffiths is working in a particularly difficult situation in Yemen. We interface, collaborate and coordinate literally on a day-to-day basis.

I hope some day I can come here to brief the Council on some great news with respect to the conflict ending or well-fed and healthy children. Regrettably, today is not that day. The humanitarian situation in Yemen is dire, and despite the immense suffering of the 20 million Yemenis who do not have enough to eat, we continue to face fierce resistance to simply just doing our job to keep people alive.

Council members may recall that, in November 2017, I spoke out very vocally and critically about the coalition's blockade of Al-Hudaydah and the lack of humanitarian funds and support in response to the

consequences of war. At that time, the Houthis told me how grateful they were that I spoke out. I told them then: “This has nothing to do with you.” I said that it had everything to do with what was right and with the World Food Programme’s humanitarian obligation and mandate to do everything within our power to reach those in need and to be neutral, impartial and independent. And I told them: “If one day you cross the line, I will speak out about you. So do what is right.”

Today, I am sad to report that the World Food Programme (WFP) is being prevented from feeding the hungriest people in Yemen. Food assistance provided by the United Nations is being diverted in areas controlled by Ansar Allah at the expense of hungry children, women and men.

Let me take a step back just a moment to describe one of our main jobs at the World Food Programme — that is, to determine who has the greatest need of our assistance. No matter where we operate, we must be able to independently identify and verify those who need assistance. We also have to put in place monitoring systems to ensure that those people truly get the food they need. That is another of our obligations. These systems help to ensure that others cannot deprive people of the food they need to stay alive and that our food does not support political agendas. These systems protect the people we feed and ensure that basic humanitarian principles are met and that we are accountable to our donors and the world.

In the past two years, like in the film *Groundhog Day*, we have been telling Ansar Allah over and over that we had concerns about its resistance to our neutral, independent operations. It was not just a matter of registration that we were talking about. As Mr. Lowcock remembers, we were also having trouble getting equipment imported, getting visas approved for staff and many other issues. We kept raising these issues repeatedly, day in and day out. In December 2017, we started formal negotiations with the Sana’a authorities to allow us to identify the hungriest and put them on a biometric system. Months and months of talks did not yield any results, and while we kept talking and talking and talking, in late 2018 we uncovered serious evidence that food was being diverted and going to the wrong people.

As I told the Security Council in November last year (see S/PV.8404), the situation in Yemen was and is catastrophic. Livelihoods have been destroyed; the

economy is in shambles. We are now feeding more than 10 million people a month. But as the head of the World Food Programme, I cannot assure the Council that all the assistance is going to those who need it the most. Why? Because we are not allowed to operate independently and because aid is being diverted for profit and/or other purposes. The bottom line is this — food is being taken from the mouths of hungry little girls and little boys who need it just to survive. Let me sight just a few examples of the evidence we have gathered.

In Sana’a city, a number of beneficiaries told us that they had not received any food assistance. But the distribution list contained their thumbprints, as if they had. Who took their food? We interviewed beneficiaries at seven centres in Sana’a city. As much as 60 per cent of beneficiaries confirmed that they had not received any assistance. Where did their food go?

While we saw an initial improvement in early 2019, through the hard work of Martin Griffiths, Mark Lowcock, Lisa Grande and others, concerning information has emerged and continues to emerge. For example, in Saada, 33 per cent of the respondents of our survey did not receive food in April 2019. In just the past 60 days, our hotline and monitoring system have detected more than 30 cases of possible misappropriation of food in parts of Yemen controlled by the authorities in Sana’a. On top of this, in Saada, overall 79 per cent of third-party monitors and 66 per cent of WFP staff monitoring visits were blocked. Let me be clear — diversion, while mostly in areas controlled by Ansar Allah, is not limited only to Houthi-controlled areas, but when we face challenges in areas controlled by the Government, we have received cooperation to address the issues on an ongoing basis.

Our food assistance is being manipulated, and we are being blocked from fixing it. If we do nothing, does that mean we condone it? Are we a party to it? Are we no longer neutral? Humanity is the reason we are in Yemen in the first place. It is why the world and many nations represented in this Chamber today are providing the World Food Programme with over \$150 million per month to feed hungry Yemenis. When food assistance goes to the wrong people, when it fails to reach the neediest, have we failed humankind?

We cannot let this stand. We have tried every possible option to resolve this issue over the past 18 months. We have been dialoguing and negotiating with the Ansar Allah leadership to simply let us do our job

and reach the most vulnerable people in Yemen. It is not any more complicated than that.

I have personally appealed to Abdul-Malik Al-Houthi, the leader of Ansar Allah. In December and January, he responded in a most favourable way and we made some progress. On 28 December 2018 and 15 January of this year, we signed agreements with the Sana'a authorities on beneficiary registration, beneficiary targeting and biometrics. It was a tremendous breakthrough. It seemed as if we might be able to move forward. But every time we got close to actually putting those agreements into place, there would be a new roadblock.

After extensive dialogue, I again wrote to the authorities, asking not for words but for action. I asked them to honour the agreements they had signed. I told them that if we did not receive these assurances, then we would begin a phased suspension of food assistance, most likely towards the end of the week. If and when we do initiate suspension, we will continue our nutrition programme for malnourished children, pregnant women and new mothers, and we will also keep pushing and pushing to get an agreement.

We want to resolve this quickly so that the people can get the help they need and the help they deserve. Then we can go back to doing our regular work, which we do all over the world with more than 80 or 90 million people in the most difficult places on Earth. And we can do beneficiary targeting and the biometric registration, as needed, to make sure that the right beneficiaries get the support that they need. If not, then we are looking at expanding the suspension to others areas where the risk of diversion is high. We do not want to do that; it goes against every fibre of our being. All we are asking is to let us do what we do everywhere else, all over the world. Our humanitarian principles — the very tool that allows us to do our job in the most complex places — are compromised if we are not allowed to independently determine who needs our help the most. We have the expertise, and, fortunately, we have the funds to keep suffering Yemenis alive.

Let me be crystal clear here: children are dying right now as we speak because of that interference and our lack of access. I believe that there are elements of the Ansar Allah leadership who want to move forward and do what is right. I really do believe that. But, like in every war, there are those who stand to make a profit, and they will do everything to obstruct and delay. They

know that children are dying. They know that families are suffering because they are not getting the food that they need. No one associated with the United Nations should stand idly by while that happens. It is not just about Yemen. It is about the integrity of the entire United Nations and the humanitarian system around the world. That is what is at stake. We are not giving up. I still have hope that we will prevail on what is right, and that the Houthi leadership will do what is good. We are not asking the Ansar Allah movement for anything other than to let us do our job.

Let me end with a short story. I do not know how many of those present saw the *60 Minutes* special exposé on starving children about a year and a half ago, which was very tough and implicated all sides. Scott Pelley held an extensive interview with many people, including me personally. At the end, as he was turning the microphone off, he looked at me. I had known Scott from the past, from politics. He said,

“Governor, you have got the greatest job on Earth, keeping people alive”.

I said,

“Scott, I do. I really do have the best job on Earth. But I want to say something to you that you have not thought of and it is going to bother you. Sadly, I do not go to bed every night thinking about the children we saved; I go to bed at night thinking about the children we could not save. When we do not have the access or the money that we need, my team has to choose which children eat and which do not eat, and which children live and which children die. Scott, how would you like that job?”

Scott looked at me and said,

“Oh, my God, I never thought about that”.

I said,

“Scott, unfortunately, I have to think about that every day and every night.

In Yemen we are fortunate enough to have the money that we need, we just do not have the access. We do not make this decision lightly. I am begging the Houthis and all those concerned to do everything within their power to let us do what we do best — save lives.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Beasley for his briefing.



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

**Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom): As this is the first time that I personally take the floor during your presidency, Mr. President, I would like to welcome you to the position and pledge the United Kingdom's support for Kuwait during this month. I would also like to thank your predecessor.

This is a very difficult set of issues, as we heard very graphically today. I want to start by making it crystal clear how much we support the United Nations. We support Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, Lieutenant General Lollesgaard, the Head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Head of the World Food Programme. I think that I speak for all the Security Council when I say that, based on our discussions so far.

When things do not happen on the ground that ought to happen on the ground, the people responsible for that — those responsible for not moving forward, blocking access and preventing aid getting through to starving people — need to know that they are not just acting against the people of Yemen and against the United Nations, but they are acting against the Security Council and its manifestation in New York, given the fact that the Council is charged by the membership with the maintenance of international peace and security. I therefore call on all the parties to redouble their efforts to work with those representatives on the ground, on behalf of all of us and the United Nations. I would like to draw the audience's attention to the fact that the Council was able to speak with one voice to that effect in its press statement (SC/13834) issued on 10 June. I therefore repeat that all parties have a duty to cooperate with the manifestations of the United Nations on the ground. I will come back to the aid question and diversion later, if I may.

I want to talk about the military escalation. At one level, it is remarkable that the Al-Hudaydah agreement has held as long as it has, and we need it to continue to hold. We need Mr. Griffiths and Lieutenant General Lollesgaard to be able to continue their very important work because, whatever the problems in Yemen are, the fact that the agreement holds is very important to us.

But the recent escalation in tension is extremely worrisome. I want to condemn the Houthi attack on Abha airport. Twenty six civilians were injured. I want to express concern about the seeming link between the

Houthis and Iran. I would also like to use this occasion to urge all parties to show restraint from retaliatory military actions. Escalations are not in the long-term interests of any of the parties. It is not in the interest of regional stability and security. And it is certainly not in the interest of the people of Yemen.

On Al-Hudaydah, the initial redeployment of Houthi forces from the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa is very welcome, but we need the Houthis to complete the process by clearing mines and removing military manifestations. We need both parties to engage constructively with the United Nations, as I said earlier, on expediting the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement. A return to military operations really would be catastrophic for the Yemeni people.

We all know — I think that the Council has been very clear — that a political settlement is the only way to bring long-term stability to Yemen. We must not lose sight of how to enable those broader political efforts. I think that we all know that a resumption of the political process needs to take place in parallel to further the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement.

I was very interested in what Mr. Griffiths had to say about the prisoner and detainee exchanges. Given the importance of that single issue to overall progress, I have to say I am slightly mystified as to why more progress cannot be made. I therefore hope that we can pick that up in consultations.

On the economy, the United Nations mediated a meeting in Amman between the Central Bank of Aden and Sana'a, that is, both branches of it, on enacting the revenue-management elements of the Stockholm Agreement. I want to endorse what the Special Envoy said about the importance of improving Yemen's economy and ensuring the payment of public-sector salaries across the country. We encourage both parties to continue to engage with the Special Envoy on the issue and to meet again to pursue an agreement. I also want to reinforce the importance of donor countries being able to support the United Nations in that regard, both in terms of foreign exchange and, as we heard from Mr. Lowcock, in terms of humanitarian aid and its disbursement. There is a cruel irony in the fact that Yemen is enduring what is currently the worst humanitarian disaster in the world while the appeals for it are underfunded. Between us, and appealing also to the wider United Nations membership, that is something we have to put right. For its part, the United Kingdom

has made available more than half of its \$300 million in support, and we are going to bring forward further funds where we can.

To turn to the humanitarian arena, I think that the figures we heard from Mr. Lowcock are shocking. If this war continues until 2022, I do not think there are enough superlatives to describe how awful the human cost will be, and it is already awful enough. I think we Council members must redouble our efforts to help support humanitarian access. The issue that Mr. Beasley raised about the manipulation of aid is cynical, and in a way evil. When it is all over, the Yemeni people will remember who it was that tried to starve them of assistance. Not only for the sake of the people, but for the sake of the future stability of Yemen, it is therefore extremely important that this gets sorted out, and quickly. We should also consider what Mr. Beasley said about the existence of factions within factions as to who supports the impartial delivery of aid and who does not.

I hope that other Council members will be able to join me in supporting the World Food Programme's efforts and calling on the Houthis to comply with resolution 2451 (2018) and facilitate unhindered humanitarian access. It is extremely important to convey that message strongly today. I note that not all the problems are coming from Houthi-controlled areas, and it is important to point that out, but if I have understood Mr. Beasley correctly, there is a way to resolve those other issues on the ground, meaning that the Houthi problem is the biggest obstacle overall. I therefore appeal to anyone with any humanitarian instinct on the ground to work with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Food Programme to get this sorted, because as we have all heard, the people of Yemen cannot take much more.

**Mr. Cohen** (United States): I want to thank Special Envoy Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock and Executive Director Beasley for their briefings and for their teams' tireless efforts.

The United States acknowledges the tragedy of this human-made crisis in Yemen, which continues to deteriorate as the conflict continues for a fifth year. We strongly condemn the reported Houthi missile attack on Abha airport on 12 June, which injured numerous innocent civilians. The Houthis should be implementing the commitments they made in Sweden instead of launching such attacks. As we repeatedly hear in the

Council, there is no military solution to this conflict. The Houthis must demonstrate good faith in the political process and cease their unmanned aerial vehicle and other attacks on their fellow citizens and neighbours. Iran must stop supplying them with the weapons to do so. Attacks on Yemen's neighbours threaten to derail the progress made by the United Nations and the parties to the conflict and do not serve the greater interests of the people of Yemen.

The goal of the United States in Yemen remains consistent. It is to work with our international partners to bring peace, prosperity and stability to Yemen. That is our focus, and we will continue to support Special Envoy Griffiths, Lieutenant General Lollesgaard, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock and Executive Director Beasley. Since December the Council has been urging the Houthis to finish the first phase of redeployments initiated on 11 May, demonstrating their commitment to a political settlement and to the terms of the Stockholm Agreement. It is imperative that the Yemeni Government and the Houthis work in good faith with Mr. Griffiths and General Lollesgaard to achieve the full implementation of the redeployments as soon as possible. That means addressing the contentious issues preventing further progress on the ground while continuing to exercise restraint so that fighting does not threaten the ceasefire.

We were pleased to hear of initial progress with regard to positioning additional United Nations monitors, should redeployments proceed as planned. We must all seize the momentum of that progress. The Council should continue to demonstrate full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy and the Redeployment Coordination Committee on the ground. The parties must facilitate the United Nations monitors' arrival in Yemen by providing permits and safe passage.

The ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah is one of the Stockholm Agreement's most important outcomes. It was meant to encourage a nationwide de-escalation of hostilities, but as we have heard, it has instead led to the redeployment of forces from Al-Hudaydah to other battlegrounds. The escalation in Al-Dhale'e and Hajjah threatens humanitarian access and is forcing residents to flee for their lives. Fighting all over the country, not just in Al-Hudaydah, has to end.

Apart from Al-Hudaydah, in the rest of Yemen civilians are living in desperation, as today's briefings repeatedly underscored. The Yemeni Government

has demonstrated a clear commitment to the United Nations-led process. We call on the Houthis to demonstrate to the international community that they too are serious about the United Nations process by removing all Houthi-affiliated personnel from the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa so that the first phase of redeployments can be completed.

We reiterate our deep concern about the rise in suspected cholera cases this year and call on all parties to provide humanitarian support, including by providing the funding that was pledged in Geneva in February. We further call on the parties to allow access to food, medical care and safe shelter for displaced people throughout the country. The United States supports the World Food Programme's efforts to ensure that critical humanitarian aid is delivered throughout Yemen to those who need it and in accordance with the international humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence. We call on the Houthi authorities to respect those principles and work with the World Food Programme to achieve a swift resolution. With some 20 million people in need of emergency food assistance and more than 24 million requiring some type of humanitarian assistance, it is critical to ensure that aid gets to those who need it immediately.

In conclusion, United States support for Special Envoy Griffiths and General Lollesgaard remains steadfast. Along with their staff and the international humanitarian community, they are working tirelessly to help the parties reach a peaceful, enduring resolution to the conflict and to save Yemeni lives. The United States applauds the Yemeni Government for joining them in this effort and calls on the Houthis to do so without further delay.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank today's briefers, whose work we also support, for their comprehensive overview of the situation in Yemen. The briefings we have just heard reaffirm the need for united international efforts to advance the political settlement, end the conflict and alleviate the humanitarian situation in the country.

Before moving on to considering the conflict in Yemen directly, we would like to express our concern about the rise of tensions in the Persian Gulf. We expect all the incidents that have taken place in the area to be duly investigated. Russia condemns the attacks on oil tankers, and their organizers must be identified and held accountable. However, we emphasize that artificially

stoking the situation and jumping to conclusions and accusations are not conducive to an impartial international investigation but rather politicize and undermine trust in it. We call on all parties to engage in dialogue and assess the situation judiciously. In that connection we would like to remind the Council of resolution 598 (1987), which requested that the Secretary-General work together with States of the region to develop a security architecture for the region. We once again point to Russia's proposal to launch a process for developing confidence-building and security measures in the Persian Gulf and eventually the whole of the Middle East. That has a direct bearing on the conflict in Yemen, among other things. The escalation of aggressive, accusatory rhetoric and the artificial incitement of anti-Iranian sentiments are having a destabilizing effect on the tense situation in the entire region and could undermine our collective diplomacy and undo the gains made on the Yemen issue under the auspices of the United Nations, however small they may be.

It is our collective responsibility to support the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard, who are doing painstaking work to induce the Yemenis to implement the Stockholm Agreement. The parties have begun to implement the first phase of the redeployment of forces from the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa, and Ansar Allah's unilateral withdrawal of forces was an important step towards implementing the broader plan for the disengagement of the opposing parties. We note the growing role in that context of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement and call for its full deployment as soon as possible, which will make it possible to closely monitor the steps being taken to implement the agreements regarding the Red Sea ports. The progress in Al-Hudaydah is making it possible to move forward with the achievement of other aspects of the Stockholm Agreement, including the exchange of prisoners and the de-escalation of tensions in Taiz, as well as discussions on a framework for a political settlement.

Russia will continue to provide assistance to the United Nations mediation efforts to resolve the Yemenis' differences. We would like to note the support that the Special Envoy is receiving from the Ambassadors accredited in Yemen from the five permanent members of the Council, and we call on all who are interested in the speedy restoration of peace in Yemen to work

actively with the parties to the conflict on whom they have influence to convince them of the futility of a military solution.

As we have heard from our briefers, against the background of the lack of progress towards a political settlement in Yemen, the humanitarian situation continues to worsen every day. Two thirds of the country's population are suffering from hunger and lack access to essential medicines and basic social protective services. The civilian infrastructure is in ruins and the national economy is collapsing. The longer the war lasts the more difficult post-conflict reconstruction becomes. Like other Member States of the United Nations, including Yemen's immediate neighbours, Russia will continue to do its part to assist the Yemeni people through bilateral channels and by contributing to the activities of the major humanitarian organizations. We stress that emergency humanitarian assistance to the population of Yemen must be provided regardless of who controls what territory. We call on all parties to the Yemeni conflict to ensure unimpeded access for humanitarian personnel, comply with international humanitarian law and refrain from the indiscriminate use of force and intentional damage to civilian infrastructure, especially oil production and air transportation facilities.

Alleviating the humanitarian situation in Yemen is vital not only right now but also with regard to future national reconciliation issues. However, humanitarian efforts are not and cannot be a panacea. The solution is exclusively in the political arena, and in that connection we have great hopes for the mediation efforts of the United Nations. We will support and actively assist Mr. Griffiths in that regard.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We want to express our thanks for the convening of this meeting and the important briefings given by Mr. Martin Griffiths, Mr. Mark Lowcock and Mr. David Beasley, who from different perspectives have described a bleak scenario that requires urgent support on the part of the international community and concerted action on the part of the Council.

Peru notes with deep concern the worsening violence and suffering in various parts of Yemen, which have resulted in new fatalities among the civilian population, most of them women and children. We strongly condemn the attacks by the Houthis, which have intensified in recent weeks and have included

the use of drones and missiles in populated areas of Saudi Arabia. We hope that those reprehensible acts, which may qualify as war crimes, will be subject to exhaustive investigations leading to the identification and punishment of those responsible. However, any response must comply with international law. We must reiterate that there can be no military solution, and that any indiscriminate action would risk aggravating an already catastrophic humanitarian situation and work to the advantage of terrorist groups, especially when violations of international humanitarian law and human rights are being committed throughout the conflict.

We are particularly concerned about the fact that the upsurge in violence coincides with the positive initial progress that has been made in the process of redeploying the forces in the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa and is a threat to the possibility of reaching a political solution. In that context, Peru reaffirms its gratitude and support for the efforts that Mr. Griffiths is making with all parties to the conflict in Yemen to bring them closer to an inclusive political solution. We also welcome the fact that his work has received the firm and unanimous support of the international community and the members of the Council in particular. We must stress that the agreements reached in Sweden constituted a turning point in the bloody and prolonged conflict in Yemen, and that no circumstance can serve as a justification to abandon the commitments agreed there. In that regard, we urge the parties to reaffirm their commitment to the political solution promoted by the United Nations and to tackle the difficulties that will arise throughout that complex process in prudence and good faith, avoiding unilateral actions that further undermine trust. The renewed commitment demanded of them must be translated into new and tangible progress in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, both in relation to the redeployment of forces from the crucial port of Al-Hudaydah and to the exchange of prisoners and the commitment to de-escalation in Taiz.

We also want to highlight the professionalism and sense of duty of the staff of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA), and to underline the importance of ensuring that the Houthi authorities provide the necessary facilities for their deployment, which include the timely issuance of visas for Mission personnel and guarantees for their freedom of movement and safety. In that regard, Peru supports

the renewal of the mandate of UNMHA, whose presence and effective stabilizing role are much appreciated.

All those efforts at the political level are even more imperative when the humanitarian crisis seems to be worsening on the ground, as Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley reminded us. That is reflected in the imminence of widespread famine that could affect 80 per cent of the Yemeni population, as well as the more than 360,000 new cases of cholera reported so far this year, which indicate a major spread of that scourge. We must therefore be consistent in our responsibility to protect the most vulnerable people. That means eliminating all barriers to assistance, ensuring that aid is not diverted or misused, guaranteeing humanitarian personnel a safe space to do their work and establishing conditions for the place, form and beneficiaries of that assistance. It also demands that the international community step up its contributions aimed at stabilizing and reactivating the local economy, since factors such as inflation and currency devaluation significantly increase the risk of famine.

My delegation will continue to work and speak out to end the suffering of civilians and support all efforts to promote the easing of tensions required to achieve peace and reconciliation in Yemen.

**Mr. Heusgen** (Germany): I will be brief. Germany supports what was said, in particular by my colleague of the United Kingdom at the beginning of the meeting. Having listened to the earlier statements, I must say that there is unity in the Council with regard to Yemen. I believe that we must our utmost to gain traction on the subject and try to ensure that we make progress on the ground.

First, I would like to tell Martin Griffiths that Germany fully supports his efforts. We have full confidence and trust in his work. I recall what Mark Lowcock said at the end of his intervention when he mentioned the film *Groundhog Day* and said that everything had to change in order to achieve a result. Therefore, we also support his ideas and initiatives so long as he stays within the mandate and the rules-based international order. Germany fully supports the work of Mr. Griffiths.

It is always very depressing to listen to Mr. Lowcock's briefings — approximately 15 times now — as the situation continues to worsen. I do not wish to repeat what I said the last time around. Germany fully supports Mr. Lowcock and will honour

the pledges we made at the pledging conference. We have met our pledge of €100 million — equivalent to approximately \$115 million — and we have more in the pipeline. I would appeal to everyone who participated in that conference to honour the pledges made. That also goes for the members of the coalition.

It is good to see David Beasley here in the Chamber. Germany fully supports his work. Germany has also been a very reliable partner of the World Food Programme. We are increasingly worried about what he told us with regard to the situation on the ground. Concerning the faction of Ansar Allah impeding his work, how brutal, cynical and selfish can you be to do what he has described, to the extent that he is even forced to consider stopping his work? I do not want to talk about the wider region; I will focus on Yemen. I can only repeat what has been said before and appeal to all those with influence on the parties to do everything they can to stop the conflict.

As Mr. Cohen, along with several others, said in his intervention, there is no military solution to the problem. Instead of realizing that, resuming negotiations and allowing humanitarian aid, we hear that there is military escalation. Therefore, we must be united in condemning such escalation. That also holds true with regard to attacks on the airport in Saudi Arabia. Military engagement has not changed anything on the ground, which is yet another reason to stop the military escalation.

With regard to the coalition, we are concerned about reports regarding air attacks on Sana'a and beyond, with several civilian casualties. As in most humanitarian situations, women and children are the victims. We make an appeal to allow access to all humanitarian actors so that they can do their job. All actors on the ground must respect international humanitarian law, in particular with regard to children and women.

I would like to highlight one aspect, which was mentioned by my Russian colleague, who spoke about accountability for the attacks perpetrated in the Gulf of Oman. We condemn those attacks. With respect to developments in Yemen, we must highlight the issue of accountability. Such crimes committed in violation of international humanitarian law should not go unpunished.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by warmly thanking Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General

for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme, for their important briefings. We fully support them.

I would like to firmly reiterate France's full support for the tireless efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Lieutenant General Løllesgaard. We all pledged our support in the Council's latest press statement concerning Yemen (SC/13834). Mr. Griffiths has our full support and trust.

It is clear today that progress is slow — too slow — and that much remains to be done. The initial redeployment of forces in the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa began last month. It is imperative that all parties pursue and accelerate their efforts. Lieutenant General Løllesgaard was recently on site to verify the redeployment. We again call on the parties to fully implement the Stockholm Agreement, in particular both phases of the planned redeployment and remain fully engaged, in good faith, in the Redeployment Coordination Committee and with the Special Envoy. That is obviously a crucial point. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement, whose presence on the ground is key for observing and facilitating redeployment, in line with resolution 2452 (2019).

Strengthening United Nations presence on the ground is vital. It is important in particular for all observers provided for in the Mission mandate to be on the ground as soon as possible and for the various agencies of the United Nations concerned to intensify their efforts, in line with the Stockholm Agreement. As has been mentioned, it is up to the parties to ensure their safety and free movement.

The efforts of the Special Envoy are even more vital in the context of the recent deterioration of the regional security situation. Yemen is both a reflection of and one of the factors of the particularly worrisome regional instability. The recent attack for which the Houthis claimed responsibility, targeting the Abha airport in Saudi Arabia and injuring more than 20 civilians, including children, is unacceptable. We firmly condemn that attack. Since then, the Houthis have also claimed responsibility for other drone strikes, some of which were intercepted by Saudi Arabia. Such attacks must end, as must the transfer of weapons, including ballistic weapons, to State and non-State actors in the region.

Parties must refrain from any escalation that serves only to jeopardize the Stockholm Agreement, threaten the resumption of talks that would lead to a political solution and further destabilize the region.

The relative respect for the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah should not make us lose sight of the extreme gravity of the humanitarian situation, as Mark Lowcock and David Beasley just recalled. We are deeply concerned about the deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation. As tensions continue to rise in Yemen and the region, it is crucial now more than ever to protect civilians, including women and children, who are particularly vulnerable. More than 2 million children suffer from acute malnutrition. We call on all parties to do their utmost to protect children and ensure that they receive the assistance they so urgently need.

Echoing what previous speakers have underlined, especially my colleagues from the United Kingdom and Germany, I would like to reaffirm France's full support to humanitarian actors for their outstanding and essential efforts in this particularly difficult context. They too must be protected. Commercial and humanitarian access, which must be ensured, has been further complicated and hampered by the closure of the road between Aden and Sana'a. The floods have also required an urgent humanitarian response, and we welcome the work undertaken in that regard. At a time when, as Mr. Beasley described, the entire country is at risk of starvation, the parties must do everything possible to facilitate the implementation of the humanitarian response plan.

Finally, given the immense challenges and difficulties that lie ahead, it is important not to forget the priority objective to be achieved, namely, the relaunching of the political process as soon as possible. We all know that that is the only way forward. The initial results obtained in Al-Hudaydah can help to recreate a positive momentum towards a political solution. The military solution cannot, and must not, be an option.

Resuming the talks on a comprehensive and inclusive political agreement that takes into account the various Yemeni actors, including women and civil society representatives, is the only real prospect for putting an end to the conflict and the humanitarian crisis. At a time when the situation in Yemen is clearly very alarming, the Council must put its full weight behind bringing an end to this terrible war and maintaining the momentum initiated in Stockholm. Our

mobilization and unity are our best asset for moving forward on this difficult path, which is the only way to restore the peace to which the Yemenis aspire.

**Mr. Adom** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, for their detailed and particularly moving briefings on the latest developments in the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen. They have our full support.

Four years since the beginning of the conflict in Yemen, the quest for peace and stability in the country seems remote due to the many security and humanitarian challenges and, above all, the lack of willingness of the belligerents to translate into concrete action commitments freely entered into in order to overcome the serious crisis facing the country. The lack of progress in implementing the Stockholm Agreement of 13 December 2018 with a view to definitively resolving the issue of the control of Al-Hudaydah port is a perfect illustration of that.

Today it is undeniable that the international community's efforts to resolve the crisis in Yemen peacefully are hampered by the climate of mistrust between the Government and the Houthi rebels. The many artificial obstacles that they are putting in the way of implementing their commitments can also delay the full and comprehensive implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. That climate of mutual mistrust is counterproductive and contributes to the ongoing deterioration of the security situation in a country where 10 million people are facing the world's worst humanitarian crisis, according to the United Nations specialized agencies.

However, a successful process to restore lasting peace in Yemen clearly depends not only on the ongoing and multidimensional engagement of the United Nations but also, above all, on the cooperation in good faith of all stakeholders with all United Nations actors on the ground. My country therefore reiterates its full support to Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, as well as its ongoing support for the United Nations efforts. That is also why we urge the Yemeni parties to maintain a constructive dialogue with the Special Envoy in order to jointly address all issues related to the implementation

of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Stockholm Agreement.

It is therefore absolutely crucial to continue the partial redeployment of military forces. It is especially urgent to ensure the withdrawal of the Houthis from the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa, in accordance with the first phase of the ceasefire agreement signed in Stockholm. As highlighted by Mr. Martin Griffiths and Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard, those redeployments should allow the United Nations to dispatch teams from the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism so as to help the port authorities increase the port capacities and undertake inspections in line with the Al-Hudaydah agreement.

Côte d'Ivoire therefore calls on the parties to the conflict to fully respect the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah city and to help complete the mutual redeployment of forces outside the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa. We also urge them to implement the statement of understanding on the city of Taiz for the opening of humanitarian corridors and to promote the effective implementation of the agreement on the exchange of 15,000 prisoners with a view to strengthening trust between the parties.

My country also notes with deep concern the warning signals from specialized agencies, pointing to the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the resurgence of endemic diseases in Yemen as a result of the ongoing ceasefire violations. In a context where United Nations agencies report that there are more than 3.3 million displaced persons and more than 24 million in a situation of humanitarian emergency, Côte d'Ivoire can only strongly condemn obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We therefore call on the Yemeni parties to cooperate with the humanitarian agencies in full respect for the spirit and letter of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

In that regard, my country welcomes access for the World Food Programme (WFP) to the warehouses of the Red Sea Mills, where approximately 51,000 tons of cereals intended for 3.5 million people had been blocked for months. We can now hope that that food reaches those in need, in particular women and children. We also urge the Council to support the WFP initiatives to bridge its budget deficit of \$700 million for the period from April to September.

Côte d'Ivoire is also deeply concerned about reports of the recruitment of child soldiers in the Yemeni conflict, which is facilitated in particular by the fact that more than 2 million children are out of school and the irregular payment of teachers' salaries.

Moreover, the recent drone attacks on airport infrastructure in Saudi Arabia are another matter of concern for my country. Those attacks, claimed by the Houthi rebels, represent a factor in and a preliminary sign of a possible regionalization of the Yemeni conflict with potential consequences for regional stability. Côte d'Ivoire therefore calls for the international community, including regional actors, to step up their efforts towards a rapid settlement of the Yemeni conflict.

As my country has often underlined in the Council, peace is a long-term process that requires both the ongoing commitment of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, which is entrusted with the noble mission of maintaining international peace and security. It must above all be supported by the unwavering will of all parties to a conflict to work towards the peaceful resolution of their dispute, however complex it is. At a time when the conflict in Yemen is regrettably entering its fifth year of stalemate, the Government and the rebels must acknowledge that there is no military option and that only dialogue will enable bold compromises for a peaceful and lasting way out of the crisis.

**Mr. Singer Weisinger** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the information provided by the briefers. At the outset, we would like to commend Mr. Griffiths for the leadership he has shown in this very delicate phase in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and extend him our full support in calling on the parties to cooperate constructively, in good faith and without preconditions for the benefit of their people.

In his statement, Mr. Lowcock once again spoke of the crux of this conflict — the humanitarian situation affecting millions of people after years of war and economic and institutional debacle. We have noted how restrictions on the movement of assets and personnel due to continued fighting and bureaucracy constitute one of the greatest obstacles facing humanitarian agencies, with areas declared as military zones by the parties to the conflict. The movement of goods from the port of Al-Hudaydah to the rest of the country must be accelerated in order to alleviate the suffering of the

population and to make it possible to use port revenues to pay the salaries of civil servants, which would boost the economy. Above all, the promised financial resources must be disbursed in order to comply with the humanitarian response plan for Yemen in order to implement without delay the comprehensive response aimed at saving the lives of millions of people.

We have listened with great attention and concern to the information Mr. Beasley presented today. We reiterate that humanitarian access must not be politicized or used as a weapon of war. All parties must facilitate the collection of objective data in order to produce reliable assessments of people's needs. The international community must continue to influence all parties to conflict in order to allow timely, safe and unhindered humanitarian access.

We note with concern and condemn the growing hostilities between the parties, as evidenced by attacks carried out by both sides. The parties and the States that support them must do more to protect civilians. We recall that all military action directed against civilians, public spaces, residences or medical and educational facilities, as well as the launching of missiles and the deployment of anti-personnel mines, are contrary to international law and international humanitarian law. Such actions could constitute crimes against humanity to be investigated and punished by international tribunals.

With regard to the situation of children in this conflict, we recognize the efforts of the Government of Yemen to identify 90 focal points within the Yemeni armed forces to be trained in the identification and documentation of children within their ranks. While some measures have been put in place by the parties to mitigate grave violations against children, the number of cases continues to rise, due primarily to children being recruited in recent months, which is unacceptable. We therefore call on the parties to the conflict to prioritize the protection of children and to ensure that all incidents are duly investigated.

Despite the conflict and fear of reprisals, young people remain hopeful and involved in their communities, and aspire to lasting peace. We therefore reiterate that the key to the permanence of a political solution is the meaningful participation of women and young people in conflict resolution processes.

Finally, we pay tribute to the humanitarian workers who daily face the human face of this war. The Council remains united in the face of this situation afflicting the



people of Yemen, as it recognizes that there can only be a political solution that, once and for all, will lay the foundations for ending one of the worst and most tragic humanitarian crises of all time.

**Mr. Ma Zhaoxu** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Envoy Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock and Executive Director Beasley for their briefings. China supports the work of Special Envoy Griffiths in advancing the political process in Yemen and commends the United Nations, including the World Food Programme and other relevant agencies for their tireless efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

The Stockholm Agreement is an important step towards the political settlement of the Yemeni issue. After the Agreement was reached, the Security Council adopted resolution 2451 (2018) to endorse it. The Stockholm Agreement should be implemented in earnest. Of course, since the Agreement is only a framework, it is inevitable that we will encounter difficulties and challenges during its implementation. We must build confidence and overcome difficulties to push for its early implementation.

We have seen that, thanks to the efforts of the parties to the conflict, notable progress has been made in the implementation of the Agreement, the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah is largely holding and redeployment has also advanced. However, we should also realize that differences remain between the parties on outstanding issues, such as the composition of local security forces and prisoner exchange. We hope that the Special Envoy, the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) and the Redeployment Coordination Committee will strengthen coordination and enhance synergies to resolve those issues.

The Yemeni parties must support and cooperate with those efforts. The Security Council should remain united and provide political support, in accordance with the relevant Council resolutions. China condemns all attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Recently, the Secretary-General submitted a review of UNMHA, as requested by the Council in resolution 2452 (2019). Since the deployment of the Mission, the overall violence in Al-Hudaydah has declined and the Mission's operations have been effective, on the whole. The Yemeni parties need to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations in order to assist with and facilitate the Mission's deployment.

China supports the Yemeni parties on the basis of relevant Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015), the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, and the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference in returning to the track of dialogue and resolving the conflict through political means. The sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen must be safeguarded. In the long run, it is essential to resume political talks for peace and seek a comprehensive solution.

China is deeply concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation in Yemen. The people of Yemen have suffered immensely from conflict, hunger, disease and displacement. The international community must increase assistance and honour its commitments in a timely manner. The relevant parties need to ensure humanitarian access in Yemen so that humanitarian assistance can reach all people in need in all regions.

China has been closely following the food prices in Yemen. Since July 2017, China has sent seven shipments of rice to Yemen, totalling 7,600 tons. China will continue providing humanitarian assistance to Yemen to the best of its ability.

**Mr. Esono Mbengono** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would first like to express our gratitude to Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. Beasley, for the very detailed briefings they just delivered and the ongoing efforts of their teams in Yemen. Equatorial Guinea supports and commends such efforts.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea has closely followed the developments in Yemen. The signing of the Stockholm Agreement last December, under the sponsorship and auspices of the United Nations, was an unusual event since the conflict broke out, which has been going on for almost five years now. My delegation welcomes the momentum being spearheaded by the United Nations in that new process, as evidenced by the early deployment in Yemen of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA), as well as the various calls for its implementation.

It gives us more hope to hear that, since 18 December 2018, the relative ceasefire has been maintained in the governorate of Al-Hudaydah, given that none of the parties seems to have attempted any

major offensive actions to seize new territory. In the context of the progress needed to implement the Stockholm Agreement, we cannot overlook the fact that the Houthi movement ordered the withdrawal of its uniformed elements from the ports of Saleef and Ras Isa and the strategic city and port of Al-Hudaydah last May. In that regard, we commend the Office of the Special Envoy and UNMHA on those very significant strides, which we consider to be the fruit of successful cooperation between the two offices. At the same time, we would like to encourage them to continue working with the parties in that direction, so as to ensure that the process proceeds.

Despite the improvements observed so far this year, we cannot fail to be concerned, bearing in mind that the very reports that we take up indicate that there are places that should have enjoyed the progress achieved up to this point but, unfortunately, continue to be the subject of serious, violent incidents, such as direct exchanges of fire and the use of snipers. Attacks with drones and other such acts must cease.

We believe that the Yemeni parties to the conflict must ensure full compliance with all the commitments set out in the Al-Hudaydah agreement, as that is the key to unblocking and advancing this delicate process. They must take into account the strategic importance of that enclave in guaranteeing the delivery of humanitarian and commercial supplies to the population. However, we are confident that the active presence of UNMHA, through its monitoring patrols, can defuse such tension and create a climate worthy of praise.

Millions of people continue to face serious and significant difficulties in accessing basic supplies, such as is the case with the lack of food and drinking water, which exposes the people, particularly children, to the threat of diseases such as cholera, among others. To all that we must add the enormous difficulties faced by humanitarian agencies in trying to reach the people most in need; the panorama is bleak and chaotic. We therefore hope that the Government of Yemen and the Houthi leaders will take note of that serious concern and that they will remove the protocols that hinder and obstruct that process.

Finally, as we have said before, Equatorial Guinea expresses its full support for the efforts of the United Nations in Yemen, with the hope that the gains made in Stockholm will be increasingly productive and serve as a reference for future meetings. In that regard, we

encourage the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and all intermediaries in Yemen to continue working towards a political solution to the conflict. The countries with influence in the region must participate unambiguously in that process. The unity of the Council is similarly key.

Equatorial Guinea reiterates that this conflict has no military solution, which is why the parties to the conflict, namely, the Government of Yemen and the Houthis, must continue to work together with the United Nations in the quest for the only possible solution, which is a political one, and that must lead to reconciliation in Yemen.

**Mr. Ntsoane** (South Africa): We thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Griffiths; the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Mark Lowcock; and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. David Beasley, for their briefings. We wish to express our full support for the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen and to commend him on all the efforts that he is undertaking to find a peaceful solution to the situation in Yemen.

We further urge all parties involved in the war in Yemen to cease hostilities. Progress on the political process is hampered by the continued fighting, which is not conducive to building trust as the first step in creating a negotiated settlement. My delegation would like to address the following three points in its intervention today, namely, the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, the humanitarian situation and the impact of the conflict on women, and particularly children, in Yemen.

First, on the Stockholm Agreement, we believe that, in order to achieve sustainable peace in Yemen, differences among the parties cannot be solved militarily and will only be further aggravated by military activities. In that regard, we call on all parties to carry out their respective obligations as per their undertakings under the Stockholm Agreement. The implementation of the Agreement is of paramount importance, as it would assist in building confidence among the parties and improve the chances of reaching a broader political agreement. It is vital that both sides withdraw their forces from Al-Hudaydah and enforce the Stockholm Agreement. The steps that have already been taken in that regard are encouraging.

Secondly, on the humanitarian situation, South Africa calls for the full implementation of resolution

2451 (2018), which deals with the need for the unhindered flow of humanitarian supplies and humanitarian personnel into and across the country. It also addresses the need for all parties to the conflict to comply with applicable international law and fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, including to respect and protect medical facilities and personnel and allow and facilitate the safe, rapid and unhindered access of humanitarian and medical personnel to all those in need. To assist in alleviating the humanitarian plight of the Yemeni people, it is important for the international community to pledge adequate funding for the United Nations Yemen humanitarian response programme.

South Africa wishes to reiterate that it is critical that the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement be fully capacitated and its mandate conducted swiftly. We also note with concern that many Yemenis do not receive the aid that they so desperately need, as it remains very difficult for aid organizations and actors to get permission to provide humanitarian assistance in some areas. In that regard, we support the World Food Programme's efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by the conflict.

Thirdly, on the impact of the conflict on women and children, we note with regret the escalation of violence over the past few weeks, which is imperilling the Stockholm Agreement. We continue to call on all the parties to refrain from the excessive use of force in civilian areas and to spare the lives of women and children. Recent reports paint a bleak picture of the humanitarian situation in the country. The rate of deaths and injuries caused by land mines has doubled, with the average number of civilians wounded or being killed each day rising by one third, which totals more than 500 people killed.

The Council must support Yemen to ensure that it is safe to inhabit again when the conflict is resolved. Statistics from the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees indicate that Yemen is one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes in the world, with 3 million people having been forced to flee their homes because of the increased violence in the country and more than 20 million vulnerable Yemenis being in immediate need of humanitarian assistance, as Mr. Beasley indicated in his briefing. Those figures include women and children as those who are mostly affected by the conflict.

We call on the parties to sign and implement a time-bound action plan to end and prevent grave violations, pursuant to resolution 1460 (2003), as the formal and only path for de-listing from the annexes to the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict. Furthermore, we encourage the Secretary-General to list all parties based on credible and United Nations-verified patterns of relevant violations in section A of the annexes to his annual report.

In conclusion, South Africa continues to call for a cessation of hostilities and the de-escalation of tensions, which will bring lasting peace and stability to Yemen and the broader region.

**Mr. Djani** (Indonesia): I would like to thank all the briefers for their comprehensive reports. We very much appreciate the work they are doing. We also want to commend the Secretary-General's commitment to continuing to seek a political solution in order to achieve peace in Yemen. Ms. DiCarlo's recent visit to Riyadh to meet with the Government of Yemen to convey the Secretary-General's assurance that the United Nations remains committed to the Stockholm Agreement, and particularly the Al-Hudaydah agreement, is a testament to that commitment. We would also like to express our wholehearted support for the work undertaken by Mr. Griffiths and Lieutenant General Lollesgaard. I would like to underline what Mr. Griffiths said about a political solution being the only possible one for this conflict. We must keep the dialogue going with all parties while at the same time pushing for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. In response to the briefing, Indonesia would like to underscore three points.

First, we are very concerned about the tensions in the region, and we especially condemn the attacks on Abha airport in Saudi Arabia on 12 and 16 June. They are a threat to security and stability in the region and jeopardize the fragile ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah. Moreover, any provocative actions may escalate further violence in other parts of Yemen. The humanitarian cost is already far too high, and the Yemeni people have suffered far too much. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that an open conflict in Al-Hudaydah will result in a humanitarian disaster for the entire people of Yemen, as well as the region. We must all join the consensus on preventing an open conflict in Al-Hudaydah, as it is a vital lifeline for humanitarian corridors.

Secondly, Indonesia remains concerned about the humanitarian situation in Yemen. As the German Ambassador mentioned, every report we hear from Mr. Lowcock and Mr. Beasley paints a picture of sadness and grimness. I think that this has gone on for far too long. We also noted that the World Food Programme has considered suspending aid in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen due to the obstacles that have been introduced and that have meant that humanitarian workers have not been given the access and freedom to decide who receives their vital assistance. It is very saddening that humanitarian assistance is being used and manipulated by the party controlling the area. Indonesia calls for unhindered access for World Food Programme personnel to deliver assistance to the most needy. It is important that the parties responsible cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies. We cannot accept any obstruction of the efforts to bring food to boys and girls dying of hunger. As Mr. Beasley mentioned in his statement, no one should be in a position to decide who gets to eat or not. This is a tragic situation.

Thirdly, we would like to reiterate our support for the Special Envoy and the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, as well as for all efforts to continue seeking a political solution to the conflict in Yemen. We also urge all stakeholders to remain committed to the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah, as well as to the finalization of arrangements for the prisoner-exchange agreement and the memorandum of understanding on Taiz. I would like to stress once again that there is no way to end and resolve the crisis in Yemen other than through a political solution. War is never a desired option for anyone in the world, and the people of Yemen have been hoping for what must seem an elusive dream of peace for almost five years now, which is already far too long. As the Secretary-General said in his review (S/2019/485) of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA), the Mission is a key priority

“for the people of Yemen themselves, who see UNMHA as a ray of hope in the process of reaching a wider peace in the country”.

We are hopeful that we can establish a wider United Nations mission beyond Al-Hudaydah to bring more hope to more Yemeni people once a political solution has been reached. Peace is attainable if there is political will from us all.

**Mr. Lewicki (Poland):** I thank all of today’s briefers for their presentations. It is indeed really depressing to hear about the sufferings of the Yemeni people again and again in this Chamber. I would also add that it is becoming increasingly frustrating, because what is really at stake here are human lives that will be lost if this conflict is not stopped. The numbers presented by Mr. Mark Lowcock speak for themselves. That is why we have to do our utmost to redouble our efforts to break this deadly cycle of violence, suffering and ongoing hostilities. In that regard, the United Nations continues to play a crucial role. I therefore want to echo the words of other delegations — in fact, every delegation that has taken the floor so far today — by expressing our full and unwavering support, first to Special Envoy Griffiths but also to Under-Secretary-General Lowcock and the World Food Programme. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to all the United Nations workers providing life-saving assistance on the ground in Yemen.

During the previous briefing on the situation in Yemen (see S/PV.8525) we welcomed the initial progress towards the first phase of the redeployment of forces in Al-Hudaydah. We strongly believe that this positive development must be swiftly followed by the fulfilment of the remaining stages of redeployment. We urge the parties to engage constructively with Lieutenant General Lollesgaard to finalize the outstanding negotiations and enable the full implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement. It is time for the parties to demonstrate their commitment to the outcomes of the talks in Stockholm by delivering on their obligations and then advancing the redeployment of forces.

In our view, as we await further progress in Al-Hudaydah it is of the utmost importance to increase the efforts to find a comprehensive political solution to the conflict in Yemen, and as we understand it, the Stockholm Agreement is a step towards that. The resumption of consultations with the participation of all sectors of Yemeni society, including women and young people, is the only way to bring about an end to the crisis. I want to repeat that we strongly support Special Envoy Griffiths in his efforts to pave the way for the resumption of formal negotiations, and we call on the parties to engage constructively with him. We are also very encouraged by the Security Council’s continued unity in supporting the Special Envoy, as has been clearly highlighted during today’s meeting. In that context, we urge all the parties to refrain from taking

any action that threatens to undermine the United Nations-led political process. Poland strongly condemns all attacks on the territory of Saudi Arabia, which pose a serious national security threat to the Kingdom and have a negative impact on broader regional stability.

Advancing the political process in Yemen and finding a broad political solution are particularly pressing and necessary if we are to finally put an end to the extreme suffering of the Yemeni people. The security situation across the Yemeni governorates continues to deteriorate due to the widespread escalation of military operations, which are causing mass displacement and high numbers of casualties among civilians. As the humanitarian situation remains catastrophic, the lives of millions of Yemenis, including millions of children, depend upon the accessibility of humanitarian assistance. Therefore, we urge, and reiterate our call to, all parties to allow and facilitate the flow of humanitarian and commercial imports, including in-country shipments of fuel, and lift all bureaucratic restrictions, in order to ensure free, unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance and personnel to all parts of the country. Any form of denial of humanitarian access, diversion of resources or interference in humanitarian operations is unacceptable.

We are also very troubled by Mr. Beasley's statement that food assistance does not go to the neediest people but is instead diverted by some parties. That is unacceptable and must stop. It violates both international law and the resolutions of the Council, which also constitute international law. To echo other delegations, all people responsible for such violations should be identified and held accountable.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that all parties must first and foremost ensure the protection of civilians, including the most vulnerable groups, such as children and persons with disabilities, and fully comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

**Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, for their briefings.

As mentioned in last week's Security Council press statement (SC/13834), we take positive note that

the redeployment of Houthi troops from the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa has begun, and we call on the Houthis to dismantle all military structures at the ports. In addition, we call on all parties to fully implement the withdrawal agreement, respect the ceasefire in full and resolve outstanding points of contention, including the issue of local security forces. In addition, we continue to call on all parties to implement the Stockholm Agreement in its entirety, including the prisoner-exchange agreement and the memorandum of understanding on Taiz.

Although we are seeing just the beginning of the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement, Belgium encourages the Special Envoy to continue to prepare for the next steps in the political process. We stress the importance of an inclusive process in which women and youth participate meaningfully, thereby reflecting the ethnic, geographical and political diversity of the people of Yemen. The Al-Hudaydah agreement is of particular importance to the humanitarian situation, but of course the resolution of the conflict requires a durable and inclusive political solution. In that regard, we reiterate our full support for the efforts of Special Envoy Griffiths.

Violence in the rest of the country continues and is increasing distrust among the parties. The violence also has an impact on access to humanitarian aid. We call on all parties to exercise restraint. In addition, we condemn the continued targeting of civilians in this devastating war, including the recent attack on Abha International Airport, in the Houthi-claimed Asir province of Saudi Arabia. Belgium is deeply concerned by the increasing tensions in the region. We emphasize that the path of dialogue is the only one likely to lead to lasting peace and security in the region. Belgium believes that the United Nations has a role to play in supporting such a dialogue.

Efforts are needed to improve the humanitarian situation, which, as we heard this morning, remains catastrophic. We commend humanitarian agencies for their outstanding work despite the difficulties. It is essential that all parties facilitate access to humanitarian assistance and respect international humanitarian law. In particular, we strongly condemn any misuse of assistance, which must be provided to those who need it. What Executive Director Beasley just described is unacceptable.

We also heard the call of Under-Secretary-General Lowcock to disburse as soon as possible the pledges made at the pledging conference held last February in Geneva. Belgium's contribution has been disbursed in full. We call on other contributors to do the same.

Children are the main victims of this conflict. As Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, we convened a meeting of the Working Group last Friday in the presence of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Yemen, during which Mrs. Gamba de Potgieter, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Yemen. On the basis of the report, we will now facilitate negotiations on the conclusions of the Working Group. We reiterate our request to Special Envoy Griffiths to include measures for the protection of children in any peace process.

Finally, we would like to urge all parties to the armed conflict to respect their obligations and commitments under international human rights law and extend to the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen, established by the Human Rights Council, their full cooperation and all the access necessary to make an effective and independent investigation possible.

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

At the outset, I would like very much to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Mr. Mark Lowcock and Mr. David Beasley for their respective briefings, as well as to emphasize our full support for their efforts. I shall focus my statement on two main topics, namely, the political and security developments and the humanitarian developments.

The Security Council took action to promote a political solution based on dialogue sponsored by the United Nations by unanimously adopting resolutions 2451 (2018) and 2452 (2019), which endorsed the Stockholm Agreement in its three dimensions — the Hudaydah agreement, the agreement on an exchange of prisoners and detainees, and the Taiz understandings. However, anyone who follows the political developments in the Yemeni crisis will realize that the process reached a point of stalemate over the past six months, with slow and spotty implementation of the commitments and pledges made.

Despite the time that has elapsed, there have not been any constructive efforts towards achieving the objectives of the Stockholm Agreement. Taiz continues to suffer from an imposed blockade, which has now lasted for four years and daily illustrates for the international community the increased suffering of civilians in Taiz, including women and children, while no tangible processes have been put in place for the implementation — or even the beginning of the implementation — of the Taiz understandings. And, notwithstanding the agreement on an exchange of prisoners and detainees, and despite the series of meetings of the committee tasked with supervising the agreement, the committee faced many challenges that led to the slow pace in convening its meetings and the release of all detainees, prisoners, kidnapped persons and those who have been forcibly disappeared.

The Hudaydah agreement, which covers humanitarian aspects based on understandings and agreements endorsed by the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) during its many meetings, has led to a phased implementation of the redeployment of forces outside Hudaydah city in a manner that guarantees the supervision and monitoring of the tripartite RCC. We would like to emphasize that what was achieved between 11 and 13 May with regard to the unilateral withdrawal from the ports of Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa, as part of the first phase of implementation, must take into consideration the pivotal role of the RCC in a way that allows the Yemeni Government to perform its sovereign function of overseeing the redeployment from the city of Hudaydah.

We reiterate our belief and conviction that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Yemen. We underscore that all three aspects of the Stockholm Agreement must be fully implemented. That is the best way towards the resumption of another round of negotiations focused on a comprehensive solution to the crisis.

With regard to security developments, the State of Kuwait condemns in the strongest terms the continued attacks against civilian and vital facilities in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the most recent being the Houthi's targeting of the passenger lounge at Abha International Airport, which left 26 injured, including women and children. We extend our sincere sympathy to the victims and to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and wish the injured a speedy recovery. We stress our full support to the

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and support all measures taken to maintain its security, stability and territorial integrity. The continued attacks by the Houthis against Saudi territory constitute a blatant and direct threat to security and regional stability, as well as a reason to operationalize the arms embargo set out in the relevant Council resolutions. In that regard, we will work with the members of the Council to issue a statement that condemns that attack.

On the humanitarian situation, we stress once again the humanitarian dimension of the Stockholm Agreement to alleviate the suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people, such as the opening of safe corridors for humanitarian assistance in order to reach all those affected and the areas most in need. The United Nations and its relevant agencies must be allowed to reach the Red Sea Mills, whose silos hold enough grain to feed 3.7 million people for 30 days. Since the inception of the Stockholm Agreement, the Yemeni Government has expressed its willingness to facilitate access to the Red Sea Mills and open roads for humanitarian assistance, despite the major security challenges faced by the Government.

With respect to the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen, which has deteriorated following the coup against the legitimate Government, and despite the considerable reaction from the international community to support the humanitarian response plan — to which the State of Kuwait pledged \$250 million — we are deeply concerned about the content of Mr. Beasley's briefing, which pointed to serious challenges in areas under Houthi control, leading to the hampering of his operations on the ground, including the possible suspension of operations in those areas. We underscore that the Security Council must take action to put an end to the chronic violations that impede access to humanitarian assistance.

We commend the efforts of all humanitarian workers and the positive role of the Government of Yemen, which continues to pay salaries to public-sector workers and retirees, in addition to the continued efforts of its economic committee to facilitate the flow of fuel into the country.

In conclusion, we call once again upon all Yemeni parties to fully implement the Stockholm Agreement on Hudaydah and its three ports, the exchange of prisoners' agreement and the Taiz understandings. That would allow the Special Envoy of the Secretary-

General to continue efforts towards reaching a political solution, based on the three agreed terms of reference, that is, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). That is the means to end the crisis and safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen, free from interference in its internal affairs.

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 Arabic*): First and foremost, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you and the sisterly State of Kuwait every success. I would also like to congratulate the State of Kuwait for successfully presiding over the Security Council high-level meeting this month — led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait (see S/PV.8548) — during which the Council unanimously adopted a presidential statement on cooperation between the Council and the League of Arab States (S/PRST/2019/5).

The Government of Yemen has expressed its full commitment to positively cooperate with the Secretary-General through his Special Envoy for Yemen. We have made many concessions and demonstrated greater flexibility, openness, credibility and transparency in order to achieve comprehensive and lasting peace in Yemen, based on the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

Our efforts are also geared towards easing the suffering of the patient Yemeni people and starting the reconstruction process in the new federal State of Yemen, so as to meet the aspirations of our people and build a modern, democratic, civilian State based on justice, equality, national partnership, the peaceful transfer of power and respect for the rule of law and State institutions. To that end, the Government of Yemen participated in all the peace talks with the putschists, under the auspices of the United Nations, although we know that the rebel armed groups do not believe in dialogue or peace.

Iran supported and instructed them to take part in the talks in order to buy time and take advantage of the suffering of the Yemeni people, while at the same time carrying out their die-hard sectarian plans, fanning the flames of conflict, sectarian division and discrimination, rendering the social and cultural fabric of Yemeni society and destroying our economic capabilities. The aim is to carry out Iran's agenda for Yemen and the region and destabilize the situation at the regional and international levels. The gravity of the violations and practices committed by the militias is such that we cannot overlook it or remain silent.

The militias are violating every agreement and ignoring all the concessions made by the Government of Yemen, prolonging the war, hampering peace efforts and using erroneous and narrow-minded interpretations of the various agreements, while also ignoring the efforts of the Security Council and the United Nations. The aim is to seize the ports and the city of Al-Hudaydah, contrary to the letter and spirit of the Stockholm Agreement and the relevant Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). As the United Nations strives to implement the Hudaydah agreement, the Government of Yemen stresses the importance of implementing all aspects of the Stockholm Agreement, specifically with regard to prisoners, detainees and forcibly kidnapped or disappeared persons, as well as those still under house arrest, in addition to lifting the blockade on the city of Taiz.

Since the beginning of the talks, the Government of Yemen has extended all possible assistance to the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General, with the goal of allowing them to succeed in their efforts towards reaching a comprehensive political solution. We have sought to cooperate with and fully support Special Envoy Martin Griffiths in his efforts to make headway on all tracks regarding the implementation of the Hudaydah agreement and the Stockholm Agreement. We continue to do so despite the intransigence of the rebellious Houthi militias, which disregard the provisions of the Stockholm Agreement and whose actions, including their feigned withdrawals, clearly contravene the spirit and letter of the various agreements and the statements of understanding, including the Stockholm Agreement.

The Yemeni Government once again underlines its commitment to peace and its determination to end the conflict in Yemen, based on the agreed terms of reference, despite all the obstacles put in our way by the armed Houthi militias. It is essential that we comply

with the agreed terms of reference, agreements and the implementation of the concept of operations that governs the redeployment phases, while promoting the tripartite Verification and Inspection Mechanism, as emphasized by His Excellency Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, the President of the Republic, in order to address security issues. That has been welcomed by the Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard, Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC). The aim is to verify and monitor the levels of redeployment by all parties. Any step that ignores this tripartite mechanism does not help to build confidence or ensure the peace process, and also fails to respect the legal tracks and remove all obstacles and impediments to the security and administrative institutions performing their tasks in accordance with the Yemeni law, the spirit and letter of the Stockholm Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), on the situation in Yemen.

We welcome the visit by Ms. DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, who met with the President of the Republic on 10 June. We also welcome the commitment of the Secretary-General to a political solution in Yemen and to fully implementing the Stockholm Agreement before the next consultations. He also underlined the need to support the work of the tripartite mechanism regarding all the redeployment operations and to ensure that it can fully play its role. Any upcoming consultations will be meaningless and futile unless all provisions of the Stockholm Agreement are implemented. Therefore, any upcoming consultation must be linked to the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, which will help to build confidence.

The unilateral withdrawal of the armed Houthi militias will be unrealistic if it is not in line with the spirit and letter of the Stockholm Agreement. Those militias have affirmed the presence of their forces in the ports, which is contrary to their claims before the Security Council's meeting of 15 May (see S/PV.8525). The militia leaders have strengthened their military positions in the three ports of Saleef, Ras Isa and Al-Hudaydah in order to control the ports, deceive the international community and the Council, undermine the peace process, gain time and prolong the suffering of the Yemeni people. Those who work in the ports and the militia supporters there repeat the Houthi and Iranian slogans. We underscore the importance of putting



pressure on the Houthi militias to open the city roads and remove obstacles in order to facilitate the work of the RCC. Any wrongdoing will lead to a wrong outcome, and any unilateral action that does not comply with the tripartite mechanism and include the participation of the Yemeni Government is not acceptable and will not lead to peace or build confidence.

Since the Special Envoy's mandate was first entrusted to him, his priority has always been to build trust among the parties to the Stockholm Agreement. However, the Houthis have failed to implement the Agreement for more than six months. Peace and the implementation of agreements are not a priority of the Houthi militias, which seek only to kill or control Yemenis, achieve their own sectarian agenda and implement the Iranian plan to destabilize the region.

The Yemeni Government is making every effort to revitalize the economic situation, improve the livelihoods of the Yemeni people and provide them with the necessary support and services, despite the many obstacles facing it as a result of the coup by the armed Houthi militias. The Government is committed to paying the salaries and pensions of all civil servants across the country, including in Houthi-controlled areas and in Al-Hudaydah. The Houthi militias refuse to hand over the income from areas they control to the Central Bank in Aden or its branch in Al-Hudaydah.

We call on the international community, sisterly and friendly countries and international organizations to provide the necessary support to the Yemeni people in these dire circumstances so that they can rebuild their State and restore their legitimate institutions. The insurgent Houthi rebels insist on exploiting the economic situation and the people's needs in the areas under their control to destroy the national economy and to put pressure on all financial institutions and professional associations by using arms. That has led to the further depreciation of the national currency and paved the way for speculative practices, which further undermine the economy and the currency. They blame the Government for that while they are responsible for the suffering of the Yemeni people. They impede humanitarian workers and humanitarian convoys. We call on the international community and the Security Council to put an end to those violations so as to enable humanitarian organizations to identify and reach those in need by providing them with the necessary food assistance. The international community and the Security Council must also take steps to ensure that

international standards for the delivery of humanitarian assistance are respected.

The Yemeni Government supports the World Food Programme, but we are concerned about the painful message that the Executive Director of the World Food Programme shared with us earlier this morning, which speaks volumes about the inhumane practices of the Houthi militias and the suffering that they inflict. What can one expect from militias that steal food intended for women and children? What can one expect from rebels who are prepared to divert humanitarian assistance, resulting in the subjugation or death of Yemenis?

Those militias do not believe in dialogue but pursue their own sectarian agenda. They want to sow division within Yemeni society. We must send strong and clear messages calling for an end to such violations and despicable endeavours. There must be no ambiguous messages, which are liable to be misinterpreted by the Houthis and strengthen their practices in violation of the resolutions of the international community and the Security Council.

The violations and crimes perpetrated by the Houthi militias, supported by Iran, continue to target civilians, including women and children, which is a blatant breach of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. This is taking place against the backdrop of silence on the part of the international community, which is not shouldering its legal and moral responsibilities to protect civilians. More robust measures must be taken by the international community to put an end to the violations and heinous crimes perpetrated by the Houthi militias against the Yemeni people.

The Yemeni government renews its call for the necessary measures to be taken against the practices of those militias that target residential neighbourhoods and defenceless civilians, including women and children. The people of Yemen are suffering not only from a humanitarian disaster and crisis as a result of the Houthi's coup, but also from a hidden disaster of which the international community and the Security Council may not be aware. That disaster has been caused by the laying of more than 1 million landmines and explosive devices by the Houthi militias since the beginning of their coup d'état, and has killed and will kill hundreds of civilians, including women and children, while thousands of civilians will be permanently disabled. This disaster will also pose a dangerous threat to the

lives of Yemenis for decades to come before demining is undertaken, with the cooperation of the international community. This is a disaster that has not been seen in any country since Second World War.

With regard to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker off the coast of Al-Hudaydah, the Yemeni Government has sent an urgent letter to the Secretary-General and to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, drawing their attention to the decay of that vessel and the potential risk of a humanitarian and environmental disaster as a result of an oil leak. The Yemeni Government has already expressed its full support and determination to cooperate in assessing the situation of the tanker and how it can be maintained. It is the Houthis themselves who are hindering access to the tanker.

The Houthis continue to target civilian facilities in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the latest of which is Abha International Airport, as well as international navigation routes. They are doing so with the support and instruction of the Iranian regime, which reflects the scale of the threat posed by these extremist militias. Those terrorist acts constitute a blatant challenge to

the international community and a clear message to the world that the militias do not believe in peace and have no interest in peace. The Yemeni Government calls on the Security Council to take the necessary robust measures against those militants and the forces that support them.

In conclusion, it is time for the Security Council to live up to its responsibilities and implement its resolutions on the conflict in Yemen. It should compel the Houthi militias to fully implement the provisions of these resolutions with the aim of achieving sustained peace, end the coup and its consequences and alleviate the suffering inflicted on the Yemeni people as a result of the war waged by those armed and rebellious militias. The Security Council should also maintain regional and international security and stability.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): 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 12.30 p.m.*