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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Baeriswyl	(Switzerland)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Ms. Dautllari
	Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
	France	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
	Gabon	Mr. Biang
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	Japan	Mrs. Shino
	Malta	Mrs. Frazier
	Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Ms. Yasmeen Al-Eryani, co-Executive Director for Knowledge Production, Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: I am pleased to be with you, Madam President, in person today to brief the Council on the situation in Yemen and my efforts to secure an agreement on a way forward that could sustainably end the conflict.

Since my previous briefing (see S/PV.9304), I have continued my engagement with the Yemeni parties and regional interlocutors to establish a ceasefire and launch a political process. I met with the President of the Presidential Leadership Council, Rashad Al-Alimi, in Aden and with the Ansar Allah leadership, represented by Mahdi Al-Mashat, in Sana'a. I also met with senior regional and Yemeni officials in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi and senior United States officials in Washington, D.C.

I am encouraged by the positive and detailed discussions I have had. All interlocutors demonstrated an understanding of the immensity of what is at stake and displayed willingness to constructively engage on the way forward. There is clear determination on all sides to make progress towards a deal on humanitarian and economic measures, a permanent ceasefire and the resumption of a Yemeni-led political process under United Nations auspices. I also welcome the ongoing efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and

the Sultanate of Oman to support the United Nations mediation role.

While progress is being made, there are still issues that require further discussion. With sustained determination from the Yemeni parties, supported by a coherent and coordinated regional and international community, I believe that the outstanding issues can be resolved and that the parties will be able to commit themselves to an agreement. Indeed, the parties have an obligation to build on the progress made to date and to take decisive steps towards a peaceful and comprehensive solution.

As stated in my previous briefings, the truce has provided a conducive environment and starting point to build towards next steps. More than one year after its announcement and seven months since its official expiration, the truce continues to deliver. Yemenis benefit from commercial flights to and from Sana'a airport and fuel and other commercial ships entering via Al-Hudaydah port. While sporadic military incidents continue to occur, the levels of hostilities are significantly lower than before the truce.

But the fragility of the military situation, the dire state of the economy and the daily challenges facing the Yemeni people provide us with constant reminders of why a more comprehensive agreement between the parties is so vital. The continuing reports of violence across front lines, notably in Al-Jawf, Taiz, Ma'rib and Sa'ada highlight the fragility of the current situation and underscore the need for a formal ceasefire. I am equally worried about the deteriorating economic situation and restrictions on freedom of movement and its impact on economic activity and people's livelihoods. The inability of the Government of Yemen to export oil, which generated more than half of total Government revenues last year, is straining the Government's capacity to meet its obligations to the Yemeni people. Inconsistent financial and economic policies in different areas of the country have hit citizens and businesses hard, with businesses facing particular uncertainty in Sana'a and the surrounding governorates. The lack of cooperation between the parties on critical monetary and financial issues means those challenges will worsen and potentially become more entrenched.

Despite those profound challenges, there is room for cautious optimism. In recent weeks the parties have taken some additional positive steps. Following last month's release of 887 detainees, facilitated by my Office

and the International Committee of the Red Cross, with the generous support of the Swiss Government, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Ansar Allah unilaterally released additional detainees. I am confident that those releases will build further confidence between the parties and support an environment conducive to dialogue. But while every release is positive news for the detainees and their families, thousands more remain detained. I therefore call on the parties to continue to work with my Office to fulfil their commitments to release all conflict-related detainees, in line with the Stockholm Agreement.

Exactly two weeks ago, 3 May, we marked the thirtieth anniversary of World Press Freedom Day. While the recent release of four journalists as part of the Prisoners and Detainees Exchange Agreement is a welcome step, media professionals across Yemen continue to face threats, harassment, imprisonment and the confiscation of their offices and assets. I call on the parties to comply with their obligations under international law to immediately release all who remain in arbitrary detention, including journalists, human rights defenders, political opponents and other arbitrarily detained civilians.

To bring an end to the conflict, the cornerstone of an agreement on the way forward must be the resumption of a Yemeni-led political process under the auspices of the United Nations. The difficulties that I have described, along with Yemen's other myriad challenges, cannot be addressed through partial or temporary solutions. Only an inclusive and comprehensive political process can sustainably forge a new political partnership and bring the promise of a secure and economically stable future in which State institutions function effectively and Yemen returns to peaceful relations with its neighbours. That process will have to address complex issues regarding Yemen's long-term future and must start as soon as possible.

The inclusivity of that process will also be key to ensuring the sustainability of any political solution. The recently held dialogue among a number of southern political groups in Aden once again underscored the urgent need for Yemenis to collectively discuss and define their own future through a Yemeni-led, United Nations-sponsored process. All Yemeni voices must be heard in that process. Equally essential is the meaningful participation and representation of women and young people, as well as civil society, in all aspects of the peace process, in line with resolution 1325 (2000).

Meaningful and effective participation is not only about the number of female and civil-society participants but also about providing a space for women and civil society to address their priorities and contribute with their perspectives and expertise. Women and civil society are far too often sidelined.

Allow me to take this opportunity to reiterate my appreciation for the Council's steadfast support. The Council's engagement and unity on Yemen is something I value greatly. Its continued support and accompaniment to any agreement reached will become even more important in the long as well as the short term, as Yemen charts a way towards a more peaceful and prosperous future that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Grundberg for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Wosornu.

Ms. Wosornu: This is my first briefing to the Council in my role as Director of Operations and Advocacy of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I look forward to engaging closely with all members.

There are many hopes hinging on what is happening in Yemen. There is hope that at long last there could be an end to a terrible war, as well as hope for a sustainable peace agreement. On behalf of Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, I want to commend the Special Envoy for the tireless work he is doing to make those hopes a reality. I join him in urging the parties to seize that important opportunity. In the meantime, Yemenis across the country are also hoping for other things — food on the table, a roof over their heads and their children's ability to go to school or play outside without fear of injury from landmines. For millions of people, access to basic services and to safety and security is still devastatingly out of reach. But the humanitarian community remains absolutely committed to doing all it can to address those and other humanitarian needs in Yemen.

So far this year, aid agencies, in collaboration with hundreds of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local Yemeni organizations, have reached more than 11 million people every month with humanitarian assistance. In the first quarter of 2023, that has included, for example, the provision of food aid to nearly 10 million people per month, while almost 1 million have benefited from better access

to clean water, sanitation and hygiene support. Two critical factors, however, continue to limit our ability to reach the people we are trying to help.

The first is access. Humanitarian workers continue to face chronic access impediments, primarily in areas controlled by the Houthi de facto authorities. In particular, the ongoing restrictions on the movement of Yemeni women aid workers have severely disrupted the ability of aid agencies to operate and reach those in need, particularly women and girls. Likewise, obstacles to our ability to conduct independent assessments of humanitarian needs and contract services have caused prolonged delays and risk jeopardizing the quality of our response. That comes on top of ongoing bureaucratic and administrative constraints, which have slowed and hampered our operations both in Houthi- and Government-controlled areas. The humanitarian community has remained in constant contact with the parties in Yemen to resolve those issues and find ways to facilitate access. Improving the operational environment was a primary objective of the recent mission to Yemen by the Emergency Directors' Group — a team of senior United Nations and NGO leaders — which concluded earlier this month. The group held frank but constructive and productive discussions on access with both the de facto authorities and the Government of Yemen. We hope that will be the beginning of a positive shift on access. We once again remind all the parties of their obligation to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief in line with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

The second factor limiting our ability to reach people in need is funding. Five months into the year, despite the generosity of many donors, around 80 per cent of the Yemen humanitarian appeal remains unfunded. The shortfall is increasingly threatening our ability to provide life-saving and livelihood assistance. Certain elements of the Yemen appeal are being hit particularly hard. Support for migrants and refugees, for example, has received very limited funding so far in 2023, although the needs of those communities are severe. Economic times are hard, but we must once again urge donors to do what they can to fund the Yemen appeal. More funding is also needed for the United Nations-coordinated *FSO SAFER* oil tanker operation. I welcome the pledging event hosted by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands on 4 May, at which an additional \$8 million was raised. I hope that further

pledges will be forthcoming to bridge the remaining gap and ensure that the operation is fully funded. The replacement vessel arrived in Djibouti on 7 May. The salvage vessel, *Ndeavor*, is expected in Djibouti around 22 May, and the operation is expected to begin before the end of the month, which is good news.

But while the humanitarian community is doing everything possible to save lives and end the acute forms of suffering, we cannot stop there. As we tentatively look towards a future in which urgent humanitarian needs reduce, we must bolster Yemen's ability to recover. That is why the United Nations is working on a revised economic framework that addresses the broader economic drivers of humanitarian need in Yemen. We hope that will promote increased focus and momentum around development programming. This year, the humanitarian community is supporting such efforts through investment in two major areas, namely, mine action and sustainable outcomes for displaced communities and returnees.

Mines and explosive remnants of war continue to kill and maim civilians, including women and children — and they will do so as long as they remain where they are. They prevent people from returning safely to their homes and earning a living, and they obstruct the re-establishment of essential services. Scaling up mine action programming is critical, including for economic and community recovery.

Support is also needed for displaced communities to resettle or return to their homes and reintegrate. People cannot continue to live, year in and year out, in fear of eviction or discrimination or being forced to flee once again. They and the communities that host them need sustainable solutions that allow them to restart their lives. The humanitarian community is devoting senior capacity to advance such efforts. The engagement and support of donors are needed if they are to succeed.

I began my statement speaking about hope. Hope is important. It holds the promise of a better future and inspires us to continue to pursue the path leading towards it. But hope dies in the absence of action. Now is the time for the parties, with the full support of the international community, to drive resolutely towards peace and an end to the conflict. Meanwhile, the humanitarian community will continue to deliver aid to as many people in need as our resources and access allow. At the same time, we will also continue driving for progress on the economy, including by

scaling up mine action and support for displacement-affected communities.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Wosornu for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Al-Eryani.

Ms. Al-Eryani (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for honouring me with the invitation to address the Security Council and for the Council's interest in listening to the voice of Yemeni civil society, which is now crucial, as recent developments in Yemen demonstrate that it is time for the guns to fall silent and for the voices of Yemenis who yearn to shape their country's future to be heard. My name is Yasmeen Al-Eryani. I speak to Council members today on behalf of the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, but above all as a Yemeni.

As members of the Council are well aware, the Yemeni people have suffered the effects of an almost decade-long war during which no Yemenis — whether children or adults — have been spared. The conflict has destroyed their lives at every level, including at the humanitarian, economic, educational, health and environmental levels, and has deprived Yemenis of the chance to dream of a better tomorrow. But I assure the Council that Yemeni women, young people and every other social group are fully capable of rebuilding the country and shaping its future. At the same time, I would like to emphasize that there is a shared international responsibility to steer Yemen out of its crisis and create an environment that is conducive to its reintegration as an active country in the region and the world. And that moral responsibility is twice as great for all those that have become involved in the war in Yemen in one way or another in previous years.

Therefore, I address the Council today on the top priorities for achieving comprehensive and sustainable peace. While I note the importance of the talks being conducted between Saudi Arabia and the Houthi group, I should like to emphasize what Special Envoy Hans Grundberg said in his briefing today, that is, that no agreement can be achieved unless it is under the auspices of the United Nations. While we welcome any negotiation that can mitigate the level of conflict and open political pathways, the interests of the country and its people as a whole must be considered, and all talks should be coordinated under the United Nations umbrella and engage local peace efforts. At this critical juncture, it is incumbent upon us as civil society to pause

and remind everyone that Yemenis, who have suffered the scourge of war, deserve to be heard, express their grievances and have their concerns taken into account in an impartial manner.

Any hastily arrived at peace deal that does not bring justice to Yemenis will not end the conflict or improve regional stability. And while we commend the recent exchange of prisoners and detainees and its significant humanitarian impact, we recall that, even as we meet, thousands of men and women detainees await their own release. Justice must never be traded for security. In doing so, we lose both. Any settlement that disregards the principles of transitional justice and absolves the belligerent parties of their responsibilities will not only fail the victims but also risk renewed cycles of conflict and revenge. Addressing grievances always remains the wisest and least costly course of action in the long run. It is important to recall in that regard that for decades Yemen has experienced a series of cycles of violence, owing to incomplete and unjust settlements. Therefore, the concept of inclusive justice, to which I just referred, calls for engineering a peace process that adheres to the basic tenets of justice and grants citizens the right to a dignified life, a fair share of national wealth and power, the protection of their environment and equal opportunities based on the principle of equality, while eliminating all forms of discrimination. We recall that those rights must be granted to all marginalized groups, religious minorities and the most vulnerable members of society.

That brings me to another critical issue that I hope the Council and the international community will spare no effort in addressing — women's freedoms and combating all forms of violence against them. With the overall erosion of civic space, Yemen has witnessed the unprecedented rollback of women's hard-won freedoms, including their right to participate in the labour market and play a vital role in revitalizing the economy, while ensuring their protection from exploitation and ill treatment. It also includes the freedom of women to act as political decision-makers, not just in a limited role in terms of representative participation but also in terms of their right to organize and shape civic spaces without being exposed to incitement against them; the right to a quality education and to prosper; and the right to enjoy the freedom of movement and be visibly present in all aspects of public life. Those basic rights must not be used as a tool to garner influence, and they must never be bargained away.

Let me express my disappointment about the passive stance taken by international actors towards discriminatory policies that target women. It appears that the international community has chosen to deal with the issue as a mere procedural hurdle facing women humanitarian relief workers that can be negotiated. In fact, they are systematic policies that are intended to reshape the whole of society, and if we do not push back harder today, we may find ourselves in a nightmarish reality in which women are erased from public life altogether, including from schools, universities and politics. That the international community has chosen to remain idle in that regard is failing women and may amount to complicity.

Let me also point out the importance of putting economic priorities at the centre of any peace process. Despite the decrease in fighting, the majority of Yemenis continue to feel unsafe, owing to economic insecurity. One of the major drivers of Yemen's conflict is the unjust distribution of economic resources. The competition over scarce resources is intensifying. Warring parties have found new ways to extract money from an already impoverished population through the imposition of extortionate taxes, while normal economic activity has been completely consumed by the war economy, as has humanitarian assistance. It is therefore imperative that the international community in general and the neighbouring Gulf States in particular play a leading role in the revitalization of Yemen's overall economic activity through investment and sustainable programmes. That should include paving the way for Yemen's economic integration into the region and the global financial system, and facilitating Yemenis' access to labour markets in neighbouring countries.

Ecological justice is another issue that has been neglected for decades, despite its direct relation to Yemen's economic well-being and future. The dilapidated *FSO SAFER* is a blatant example of how an environmental threat that could affect millions in the region and jeopardize the Red Sea's fragile ecosystem can be exploited as a military and political bargaining tool. While an operation to transport the fuel from the *FSO SAFER* to a replacement vessel is set to get under way, many Yemenis wonder how it can be ensured that the belligerent parties will not threaten to target the new tanker down the road. Meanwhile, oil companies continue to operate with impunity and little regard for the environment and welfare of communities and surrounding farms and pastures.

In addition to the threats to the environment from such practices, Yemen, which is dealing with a severe water crisis, has also become one of the world's countries most vulnerable to climate change. Recurring extreme weather events, in the form of floods, cyclones and drought, have had a major impact on citizens' livelihoods, leading to repeated displacements. Despite that, Yemen has remained outside global discussions on environmental justice and has limited access to funds earmarked for climate adaptation. It is therefore imperative that environmental protection and climate-change adaptation programmes be urgently introduced to revitalize the economic sectors that Yemenis rely on, such as fisheries, agriculture and apiculture.

The Council has been involved in the events that have been unfolding in Yemen since 2015 and before, and it is important to ensure that it continues to be involved in order to see Yemen ushered safely through a comprehensive peace process that will give its people a solid foundation on which they can begin to heal and rebuild their country.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Al-Eryani for her briefing.

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

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): Let me start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg for his briefing and for his team's very hard work. I also thank Ms. Wosornu and Ms. Al-Eryani for their briefings.

I would like to begin by welcoming the strong progress towards resolving the major threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker and the risk of more than a million barrels of oil leaking into the Red Sea. In recent days, as we heard from Ms. Wosornu, both the replacement and service vessels have arrived near the site, and crucially, following the joint United Kingdom-Dutch fundraising event earlier this month, the United Nations has announced that it has sufficient funding to start the emergency operation to transfer oil from the vessel. But, as Ms. Wosornu said, there is more work to be done. And I think none of us here wants to be fundraising for the \$20 billion required to clean up if we are unable to avert a catastrophic spill. The United Nations requires \$43 million to complete the operation. I again encourage contributions so that we can reach a lasting solution to that ticking time bomb for the

environment, global trade, millions of local livelihoods and the delivery of life-saving aid in Yemen.

Secondly, the United Kingdom welcomes the positive work done by all parties to build on the truce-like conditions in Yemen over the past year. We call on all the parties to continue engaging constructively and creatively and to negotiate in good faith towards lasting and inclusive peace for the Yemeni people. The recent Saudi and Omani delegations to Sana'a represented valuable steps towards reaching a comprehensive ceasefire, and I urge the parties to engage constructively and in a spirit of compromise. Our focus should be on accepting that all Yemenis should have access to all sources of revenue. An inclusive peace process, under United Nations auspices, is the only pathway to end the dreadful war. I am also reassured by the unity that the Council continues to demonstrate, and which Mr. Grundberg referenced. I hope that we can continue to work together on our common goal of finding peace in Yemen.

Finally, I want to echo the concerns of Ms. Wosornu. In spite of the relative peace in Yemen over the past year, 21.6 million people, or two thirds of the population, remain in dire humanitarian need. And while I welcome the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in securing unrestricted humanitarian access, we are continuing to see impediments to the free movement of women, to independent monitoring and assessment and to the fair selection of service providers. As we have heard, the humanitarian response is already facing severe funding challenges. Those impediments pose additional and entirely avoidable burdens on the humanitarian effort, and ultimately on the people of Yemen.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and all the briefers for their updates. I also welcome the presence of the representative of Yemen at today's meeting.

For some time now, the relevant parties have been in close communication on the efforts to achieve a political settlement of the situation in Yemen and have continued to strive to end the suffering of the Yemeni people, which China appreciates. They should maintain the current momentum, step up dialogue and consultations, set reasonable expectations and demonstrate flexibility, as appropriate, so as to arrive at mutually acceptable solutions to the outstanding issues as soon as possible. Special Envoy Grundberg recently

visited Aden and Sana'a as well as other countries in the region in an effort to promote the political process. China will continue to support his work.

Relatively speaking, the security situation in Yemen has eased recently. However, sporadic exchanges of fire have still occurred in Taiz and other places, causing civilian casualties, and China is concerned about that. We urge all parties in Yemen to put the interests of the people first by staying on course to political solutions, abandoning military means and actively cooperating with the Special Envoy so that a comprehensive ceasefire can be achieved and a favourable environment created for the political process as early as possible.

Yemen has one of the worst humanitarian situations of any country on the Council's agenda. The recent stampede in Sana'a was heartbreaking. The international community should increase its humanitarian and development investment in Yemen to halt the continuing deterioration on the humanitarian front. The humanitarian operations of the United Nations in Yemen should be fully funded and the unreasonable restrictions on such operations lifted immediately.

The replacement vessel for the *FSO SAFER* tanker is about to arrive at the port of Al-Hudaydah. China hopes that the crude-oil transfer operation will proceed as planned, and that budgeted funds will be raised and made available soon.

The political settlement of the situation in Yemen cannot be considered apart from the regional dynamics. We are pleased to be seeing a tidal wave of reconciliation and hearing a clarion call for solidarity among countries in the Middle East. There have been positive signs for regional peace and stability and new and favourable conditions for improving the situation in Yemen are emerging. China has consistently been a promoter of security and stability in the Middle East, a partner in development and prosperity and a facilitator of unity and self-reliance. We are ready to work with the international community to actively support the efforts of the countries of the region to strengthen solidarity and cooperation and engage in dialogue and consultation. We will continue to work to achieve peace and tranquillity in the region as soon as possible.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), namely, Gabon, Mozambique and my own country, Ghana.

We thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and the Director of the Operations and Advocacy of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Edem Wosornu, for their briefings, and we welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in this meeting. We also take note of the remarks of the civil society briefer.

The A3 welcomes the climate of optimism built in recent times by key stakeholders in finding a lasting solution to the Yemeni conflict, including the ongoing engagement between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Houthis, as well as the intermediary role being played by the Sultanate of Oman. We believe that those engagements remain essential, and any attempt by any party to reverse the marginal progress being made would be counterproductive and must not be countenanced. We therefore affirm our support for such regional-led efforts, which we consider to be indispensable in addressing the crises sustainably.

The A3 holds that a Yemeni-owned and -led political process lies at the heart of a sustainable resolution of the crises. We therefore encourage the support of the international community for such processes in a manner that enhances the trust and confidence required to consolidate the gains being made in the peaceful resolution of that protracted conflict. We consider useful and encourage the Special Envoy's determination to work closely with regional and Yemeni stakeholders to ensure that the Omani-facilitated talks feed into United Nations mediation efforts for an intra-Yemeni political process on a future political, economic and security governance. We underscore the importance of leveraging the release plan reached between the Government of Yemen and the Houthis, which led to the liberation of about 900 conflict-related detainees last month. We encourage the parties to continue their efforts for further releases, as that symbolic gesture can help build bridges and enhance confidence-building among the parties to address other aspects of the crises. We continue to appreciate the invaluable contribution of all stakeholders, especially the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In charting a path towards sustainable peace in Yemen, it is essential for all the parties to deepen their commitment to sustaining a formal and nationwide ceasefire and affording the people of Yemen the opportunity to ultimately own their political future. Furthermore, we urge the prioritization of inclusivity by harnessing the potential of women in the ongoing

political processes for the attainment of a durable peace in the country. We commend the Special Envoy for his commitment to engaging with actors in a manner that enhances the meaningful participation of women in the peace process and would welcome more of that support. Despite the modest gains being made, we remain concerned about the persisting challenges, including the continued closure of the main roads leading to Taiz and the challenges related to the payment of public employees in Houthi-controlled territory. In that regard, we call on the parties to prioritize the interest of the Yemeni people and demonstrate their full commitment to the peace process in order to preserve the fragile security situation in the country.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation, with an estimated 21.6 million people in need of aid, is worrisome. Today only 11 million people have access to aid every month. It is therefore crucial for the challenges that are undermining relief efforts, including restrictions to access and interferences in humanitarian activities, to be tackled as a matter of urgency. We are grateful for the generosity of donors, and we encourage them and the wider international community to consider increasing their funding support to the 2023 humanitarian response plan for Yemen in order to enable it to meet the \$4.3 billion target required to help address the humanitarian needs of the people. We reiterate our call on all the parties to facilitate the safe, rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief to all civilians in need and to protect humanitarian personnel and assets, in line with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

On a related matter, we express our concern about the enforcement over the past year of *mahram*, which requires women to be accompanied by male guardians in areas controlled by the Houthis. In that regard, we renew our demand to the Houthis to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The risk posed by landmines and explosive remnants of the war in Yemen, leading to civilian casualties, is also of great concern and urgent action is required to address it. We therefore call for effective international and local collaboration to comprehensively deal with the issue of landmines and explosive ordnance.

Undoubtedly, a robust Yemeni economy is part of the bigger picture needed to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation, and every effort must be made to sustain the peace in Yemen in order to facilitate

an environment that can unlock improvements in the socioeconomic conditions of the country. On that note, we renew our appeal to the international community to dovetail its support for the country's economy into every effort aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people. On the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil vessel, we encourage the close monitoring of the evolution of the rescue operation, especially in its first phase, and we hope for greater financial mobilization to cover the two phases of that operation. We encourage all the parties to cooperate with the United Nations for a safe and quick transfer of the oil from the decaying vessel into the newly acquired carrier.

Finally, the A3 affirms its support for the ongoing engagement between the Saudis and the Houthis, which we believe can lead to fruitful proposals that all the parties can embrace towards the attainment of lasting peace in Yemen. While calling for the demonstration of good-faith commitment by all the parties, we also believe that meaningful progress can be made in the ongoing talks if consideration is given to a number of factors, including the establishment of a ceasefire and the payment of public employees in Houthi territory, possibly through the oil and gas revenues. It would also be useful to relaunch broader talks among the Yemeni parties in order to foster an inclusive process aimed at ironing out all grievances so that meaningful progress can be made. Women should not be left out of that process.

In conclusion, we emphasize the point that an inclusive Yemeni political process facilitated by United Nations mediation remains critical for resolving the conflict in a sustainable manner. The continuous demonstration of the united voice of the Council with a view to resolving the crises in Yemen remains paramount and should be guarded jealously in order to consolidate the gains made.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to Mr. Grundberg for his insightful remarks and his tireless efforts in favour of the future of Yemen on behalf of the international community. His commitment and dedication to fostering peace, stability and development in a nation grappling with multifaceted crises is truly commendable. I also thank Ms. Wosornu for her informative briefing, as well as the work that her and her Office have done in Yemen. I welcome the delegation of Yemen to today's meeting, and my delegation takes note of the briefing by the civil society representative.

Yemen is at a pivotal moment. The ongoing conversations with the parties involved, spearheaded by Special Envoy Grundberg, hold significant promise. Coupled with the Saudi-Houthi talks facilitated by Oman, they exemplify the power of diplomacy as a catalyst for better days. They also serve as a reminder that even in the most challenging of circumstances, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding can pave the way towards peace. We must continue to support those efforts.

Brazil echoes the call made by Special Envoy Grundberg during his recent visit to Sana'a. Any ceasefire agreement must not be merely a document but should translate into tangible benefits for all Yemenis. That includes ensuring more destinations and flights to and from Sana'a airport, a critical lifeline for a nation in dire need. It also means the resumption of the country's oil exports, an essential component of Yemen's economy and a key factor in its recovery.

Additionally, the opening of key roads in Taiz and other governorates is vital to facilitating the free movement of goods and people, fostering economic revival and social cohesion. Such developments are essential — not only for easing the current humanitarian crisis, but also for paving the path to long-lasting stability.

Even in the absence of large-scale hostilities, the situation in Yemen remains one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, with two-thirds of the Yemeni population in need of assistance. We urge all relevant authorities to ensure freedom of movement and access to all humanitarian agents on the ground. It is not just a question of safeguarding the delivery of humanitarian aid, but also a matter of upholding the principles of human rights and dignity. Millions of men, women and children depend on urgent and vital assistance, and we must ensure that all the necessary aid reaches them without hindrance.

We also take this opportunity to address the urgent task of salvaging the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. Brazil commends the dedication shown by the United Nations and all donors in bringing this operation closer to fruition. This initiative is not just about preventing an environmental catastrophe; it is about averting a crisis that could compound the already severe humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

Lastly, in our discussions about peace and stability in Yemen, the goal of spurring development must

not be lost. Sustainable peace requires a thriving economy and opportunities for all. Initiatives that empower the people of Yemen, especially women and youth, including through education and employment opportunities, are decisive. A strong Yemeni society, with resilient institutions and a functioning economy, is key for sustaining peace in the country.

As we continue to strive for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Yemen, Brazil fully supports the promotion of dialogue and cooperation. In navigating this path together, we are confident that, with our collective efforts, we can help Yemen overcome its difficult challenges and achieve peace, development and prosperity.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Ms. Edem Wosornu for their briefings, and I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in today's meeting. I also take note of the briefing delivered by Ms. Yasmeen Al-Eryani.

In recent weeks, we have witnessed concerted efforts to create suitable conditions for a Yemeni-owned and -led comprehensive political process under the auspices of the United Nations. Some welcome steps have already been implemented, such as prisoner exchanges and the maintenance of relative calm for more than a year. However, we look forward to additional confidence-building measures, along with a permanent ceasefire agreement, which remains essential to ensuring the success of the political process.

We commend the central role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in resolving the conflict in Yemen through its initiatives and diplomatic efforts, as well as its engagement with all Yemeni parties in order to reach a comprehensive political solution that meets the aspirations of the Yemeni people. In that regard, we also welcome the recent visit made by the delegations of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Oman to Yemen, which the Security Council recognized as valuable steps towards enabling intra-Yemeni political talks.

We also appreciate the flexibility and constructive engagement of the Yemeni Presidential Leadership Council in the political process. We commend the efforts of the Special Envoy to build on the current momentum, as well as the key role played by the United Nations over the past year, which saw a significant decrease in hostilities.

We call on the Houthis to seize the present opportunity and engage positively with the peace requirements. Any further delays will serve only to prolong the suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people. It has become evident that dialogue remains the sole path to achieving a political settlement. A belligerent stance and reliance on armed coercion are not only unacceptable, but also detrimental to the welfare of the Yemeni people.

While discussions and mediation efforts continue, we must not overlook Yemen's severe humanitarian and economic crises, which require unimpeded assistance delivery to all those in need, economic support and the reopening of major roads. However, we note that improving those conditions in a tangible and sustainable manner cannot be done without ending the conflict.

We stress the importance of lifting the Houthi-imposed restrictions on the work of humanitarian agencies and, particularly, female aid workers. Such restrictions limit women's participation in public life and hinder the access of women and girls to assistance.

We also stress that the children of Yemen must be afforded the opportunity to lead a safe and normal life. They should have access to quality education that prepares them to participate in building Yemen, rather than be coerced into joining Houthi summer camps and centres. These Houthi programmes, with their extremist curriculums, seek to indoctrinate the children with an extremist ideology.

In conclusion, we have a unique opportunity to make real progress towards resolving the crisis in Yemen despite the precarious situation. To that end, we must send a united message prioritizing the interests of the Yemeni people and asserting that a political solution is the only assurance of a brighter future for all Yemenis.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): I would like to thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Director Wosornu and Ms. Al-Eryani for their briefings.

As the Special Envoy underlined today, Yemen finds itself at a critical juncture. In that context, we encourage the parties to continue dialogue and engage constructively in the peace process. It is important to seize this unique opportunity that has been created by the hard work of the United Nations and many regional actors, such as Saudi Arabia and Oman, to achieve lasting peace through an inclusive Yemeni-led process.

We welcome the talks among Saudi Arabia, Oman and the Houthis as a means to advance the United Nations-facilitated political process in Yemen. Also, the unity of the Council remains vital for the success of United Nations efforts towards peace and reconciliation in the country. We reiterate our call on the Houthis to stop all attacks and engage in negotiations in good faith. We also encourage the parties to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth in the political processes.

We welcome the fact that Yemen continues to see its longest period of calm since last year's truce agreement, despite some recent clashes. In that context, a comprehensive nationwide ceasefire is an absolute necessity if we are to stop the suffering caused by the war over the past eight years. The humanitarian needs are enormous, and we commend the vital work done by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to provide a lifeline for millions, especially women and children, and fight serious violations, such as gender-based violence and child abuse. We especially value the work of female local humanitarian workers to reach those in dire need, especially girls and children, and deplore all actions that restrict their work or put their lives in danger. We call on all the parties to facilitate the safe, rapid and unimpeded distribution of humanitarian relief to all civilians in need and to protect humanitarian personnel and assets in line with their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Albania deplores all the cases of abduction in Yemen. We reiterate our call for the immediate release of the detained non-governmental organization and the United Nations personnel and other civilians, including Yemenis employed by the United States and the United Nations.

We are encouraged by the arrival of the *Nautica* close to the site and call for a smooth start to the operation of transferring oil from the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. We commend the work of the United Nations Development Programme in undertaking such an operation and all donors for their efforts to ensure the resources necessary to complete this complex operation.

In conclusion, I reaffirm Albania's full support for the work of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism in facilitating the free flow of goods in Yemen. Albania will continue to support all efforts to achieve lasting peace in Yemen through an

inclusive Yemeni-led process under the auspices of the United Nations.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador takes note of and appreciates the information provided by the Special Envoy, Mr. Hans Grundberg, the Deputy Director of Operations and Advocacy of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Edem Wosornu, and the civil society representative, Ms. Yasmeen Al-Eryani. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in the Chamber today.

I acknowledge the efforts of Special Envoy Grundberg and his team in Yemen and the work they have been carrying out to consolidate the political agreements reached in recent months, with the ultimate goal of helping the Yemeni people to overcome the conflict, achieve a sustainable peace and begin the path towards national reconciliation. The context that is taking shape in Yemen is the result of the implementation of strategies in different areas and involving various actors inside and outside the country. In this regard, I refer to the constructive willingness to engage in dialogue among key actors in the local sphere, the proactive attitude of countries in the region, and, of course, the commitment of the international community, which has followed the most critical moments closely and supported a final resolution to the conflict in line with the provisions of resolution 2140 (2014).

However, attacks such as those that occurred in the provinces of Shabwah and Ma'rib during the month of March or unfortunate events such as the stampede in Sana'a in April threaten to undermine the progress achieved in the political negotiations and keep the civilian population on edge. We therefore encourage the parties to give serious consideration to a definitive cessation of hostilities.

We also believe it is important to continue with the second phase of the release of detainees within the framework of the Detainees' Exchange Agreement and with the support of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Such actions open the door to the establishment of a transparent system of justice and accountability, a *sine qua non* for the re-establishment of the rule of law.

Beyond the progress made on the political front, Ecuador expresses its concern for the seriousness of the humanitarian situation facing the Yemeni people.

The eight years of war have left traces that will be very difficult to overcome; they will require the sustained support of the international community. It is also worrying that despite the alarming numbers of displaced Yemenis and those who depend on humanitarian assistance to survive, there are still obstacles hindering the access of humanitarian aid workers, especially women, to the areas of the territory most in need. Moreover, the escalation in the rates of child malnutrition, the increase in cases of polio, measles, diphtheria and whooping cough, the difficulty of reviving the education system due to the destruction of schools, and the number of children killed or maimed as a result of mines and explosive remnants of war are threats that affect Yemeni children and deserve the deployment of immediate and effective actions.

We acknowledge the work of the parties involved in the resolution of the *FSO SAFER* tanker situation, as well as the contributions of committed donors, which will allow, hopefully soon, the start of the first phase of oil transfer, thus obviating the environmental threat that looms over Yemen and the region.

The road map to overcoming the consequences of the war in Yemen must be drawn on the basis of an approach that is comprehensive, pluralistic and long term. In accordance with resolution 2140 (2014), Ecuador encourages all stages in the negotiation and peacekeeping process to include the participation of women, taking advantage of their experience as peacebuilders and human rights defenders.

Finally, we reiterate the importance of engaging the efforts of all actors in support of coordinating a Yemeni-led political transition under the auspices of the United Nations, with a view to ensuring conditions of economic well-being and development for Yemen and its people.

Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank our briefers for their briefings.

On the ground, the *de facto* truce continues to hold, which is positive, although the volatility of the situation calls for continued vigilance. With regard to the truce, we welcome the current momentum. The context is suitable for establishing the foundations of trust between the parties. We must take advantage of this favourable context to formalize an agreement on a lasting nationwide ceasefire. France calls on the parties, and particularly the Houthis, to make the necessary efforts to reach such an agreement.

The agreement reached on 20 March in Geneva on prisoner exchanges is encouraging, and we call for continued discussions in Switzerland on this subject in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations. I would also like to stress the importance of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism, which could stop functioning this summer due to a lack of funding; it is an indispensable mechanism for building confidence between the parties and allowing Yemen to continue importing essential goods. Further, France will continue its commitment to maritime security in the area.

At the diplomatic level, France welcomes the actions of Saudi Arabia, Oman and other regional actors in enabling the resumption of a political process under the auspices of the United Nations. France reiterates its full support for the work of the Special Envoy, whose efforts we commend, to reach a peace plan. Only a comprehensive and inclusive political solution that takes into account the concerns and interests of all Yemenis will make it possible to end the conflict. France stresses the importance of the participation of Yemeni women politicians in the negotiations; they must be involved in the current discussions starting now.

The hope of a lasting ceasefire must not make us forget the seriousness of the humanitarian situation. Thanks to the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the World Food Programme has sent Ukrainian grain to Yemen. France has contributed financially to an operation to this end, in the amount of €6 million.

While the Yemeni population is still in need of food aid and public services, the working and security conditions of humanitarian actors continue to deteriorate, particularly in areas controlled by the Houthis. We reiterate our call on the Houthis to put an end to the restrictions imposed on these actors, including and in particular those targeting female humanitarian workers.

With regard to the *FSO SAFER* tanker, we welcome the imminent implementation of the rescue operation. We thank the United Kingdom and the Netherlands for organizing a donor conference on 4 May, at which we announced a new contribution of €1 million, bringing our total contributions to nearly €3.3 million. We call on States Members of the United Nations and the private sector to redouble their efforts to bridge the budget gap

as the rescue tanker *Nautica* will soon arrive in the Red Sea.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Director Wosornu and Ms. Yasmee Al-Eryani for their briefings today.

Malta is encouraged to hear that Yemen is continuing to experience the longest period of relative calm since the beginning of the war, with critical aspects of the truce continuing to hold, despite its lapse in October. Last month, we witnessed tangible progress in the form of a prisoner exchange, a significant step in confidence-building from both sides. We call on the parties to use this momentum and period of calm to continue meaningful and inclusive dialogue towards a permanent ceasefire.

Malta acknowledges the coordinated efforts of regional partners in their support for peace in Yemen and stresses the importance of Yemeni ownership in negotiating sustainable peace.

We are concerned to hear that women remain marginal to the intra-Yemeni dialogue and multitrack negotiations and urge their full, equal and meaningful participation at all levels.

All parties to the conflict must abide by international humanitarian and human rights law and allow for independent and impartial human rights monitoring to bring justice and accountability for victims.

Alleviating the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen must remain a priority in any negotiations among the parties to the conflict and for the Security Council. As highlighted again today, the Yemeni people continue to suffer extreme hardship owing to the protracted conflict. Two thirds of Yemen's population, over 21 million people, need humanitarian assistance, with over 4 million internally displaced. Landmines are a leading cause of civilian deaths, particularly among children, and demining efforts must be urgently ramped up.

Movement restrictions continue to cause hardship for the population, particularly women, and we call for greater freedom of movement for people across Yemen, as well as renewed efforts to open the roads in Taiz and other governorates. Movement restrictions and other bureaucratic impediments obstruct humanitarian access to populations in need. We reiterate our call for the immediate lifting of the mahram requirements which prevent female Yemeni staff from delivering

critical services that only women can deliver. We also call for the immediate release of all United Nations staff and humanitarian workers who have been abducted or detained.

On the human rights front, we are alarmed by reports of forced and early marriage and sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation. Grave violations against boys and girls continue unabated, including killing and maiming, recruitment and disruptions to education.

Yemen's fragile economy continues to be impaired by competing economic institutions and the depreciation of the Yemeni rial. That is leading to inflation and high food prices, thereby exacerbating food insecurity, which impacts 17 million Yemenis. More must be done to stabilize Yemen's economy, as well as to protect the flow of commercial goods both into and within Yemen.

I conclude by commending the progress made in the implementation of the United Nations-coordinated plan regarding the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. We are very pleased to see the replacement vessel, the *Nautica*, approach its destination in the Red Sea. That is a critical step towards removing the imminent threat of an environmental, economic and humanitarian disaster, and we hope to see the transfer of oil begin as soon as possible. Ensuring the project is fully funded to allow for immediate and uninterrupted implementation is crucial. In that spirit, Malta made a financial contribution at the pledging conference hosted by the Netherlands and the United Kingdom earlier this month. We echo the United Nations call for further donations to fill the budgetary gap.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Director Wosornu and Ms. Al-Eryani for their briefings.

We are encouraged to hear of the valuable steps taken towards a comprehensive ceasefire and inclusive Yemeni political talks under the auspices of the United Nations. Japan echoes the Security Council press statement last month (SC/15272) in welcoming the Saudi Arabian and Omani delegations' recent visit to Sana'a.

It is important to ensure that efforts made by the parties to the conflict and regional countries will feed into a United Nations-mediated and Yemeni-owned political process towards a durable peace in Yemen. In that light, we support the critical role of the Special

Envoy and his efforts to work with Yemeni and regional stakeholders. Inclusivity in communications among the parties is crucially important, and we commend efforts being made by all the Yemeni stakeholders to transcend their different political and historical backgrounds.

In addition to inclusivity, the implementation in good faith of the agreement made during the United Nations-mediated and Yemeni-owned political process is essential to achieving long-term stability. The Security Council should consider how best it can ensure such implementation going forward.

As we talk about progress on the political track, let us not look away from the suffering of the Yemeni people who are enduring the world's worst humanitarian crisis. I would like to recall the fact that the Group of Seven (G-7) Foreign Ministers called on the Houthis to lift any impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially with regard to women and girls. The Security Council should underscore the importance of the continuing humanitarian assistance to Yemen. As political stability needs to be underpinned by economic stability, the international community must effectively contribute to achieving stability and economic recovery.

Regarding the *FSO SAFER*, we appreciate the initiatives of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in hosting the pledging conference on 4 May. In the G-7 Foreign Ministers' communiqué issued in April, we, as Chair, joined our fellow G-7 countries in calling on all relevant parties and the international community to support the implementation of the *FSO SAFER* plan. We commend the work of the United Nations Development Programme in accelerating the project thus far and ask other United Nations agencies to further collaborate in order to fill the financial gap, since we all have a stake in preventing a potential disaster.

Now is the time to make critical progress in bringing this environmental, humanitarian and global economic crisis to an end at last. We must seize the momentum and not let this chance slip away.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to our briefers today.

The current situation in Yemen is grounds for cautious optimism. We note the progress on resolving the years-long military and political crisis in Yemen achieved by the Yemeni parties with support from the United Nations and regional forces.

On the military front, the situation is calm on the whole. The fact that there are no large-scale hostilities, even though there is no official truce at present, says a great deal about the Yemeni parties' determination to engage in a genuine search for appropriate solutions to put an end to the conflict once and for all and to transform the Yemeni settlement process into a fully fledged political dialogue. Another telling example is the successful large-scale exchange of prisoners and detainees last month. As a result, there were releases on both sides, amounting to roughly 900 people in total.

The establishment of conducive conditions for a settlement is also being fostered by the regional stabilization. It is important for that process not to stall. Yemen's leadership should take more active steps to find compromise solutions. Achieving peace in the country will be problematic unless both sides make constructive concessions. We therefore appreciate the ongoing mediation efforts by regional Powers, including Saudi Arabia and Oman. Thanks to them, the Yemenis have come closer to agreeing on a number of military and political issues, which should bolster the cessation of hostilities and ease the acute humanitarian crisis.

For our part, we will continue to assist the international mediation efforts in Yemen by maintaining contact with all the leading political forces in the country and trying to ensure that they take a constructive approach. The international community's common goal for Yemen is achieving a comprehensive settlement rather than anyone's individual agenda, including in the energy sector. First and foremost, we need to work towards resolving the many fundamental issues that are impeding a settlement of the Yemeni crisis and affecting not just Yemen but its neighbouring States. We support the work of Special Envoy Grundberg and hope that his active shuttle diplomacy will enable us to reach a sustainable long-term ceasefire, creating opportunities for the launch of a full-fledged, inclusive national dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations. At a certain stage, we will have to consider updating the international legal foundations of such a settlement so that they reflect the real situation on the ground.

While the lengthy period of calm has provided some respite for ordinary Yemenis in their daily lives, the humanitarian situation in the country remains dire. Many areas continue to experience shortages in basic necessities, including food and medical supplies, but those must continue to be provided to the Yemeni

people on a non-discriminatory basis. We support the ongoing operation of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen, whose role cannot be overstated. We remain convinced that any restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as any obstacles to the work of humanitarian personnel, are unacceptable.

In conclusion, we would like to once again recall resolution 598 (1987) and other initiatives aimed at regional stabilization, including Russia's updated concept of collective security.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Ms. Wosornu and Ms. Al-Eryani for their briefings.

This is a hopeful moment for Yemen. There continues to be a window of opportunity for achieving a more durable and lasting peace built on the groundwork laid by the United Nations-brokered truce and the intensive negotiations of the past year. We recognize the efforts of regional partners, particularly Saudi Arabia and Oman. The visit of Saudi and Omani delegations to Sana'a last month and the release of almost 900 detainees from all sides of the conflict represented important steps forward. We also commend the contribution of the Government of the Republic of Yemen to that progress.

The parties now have a chance to bring peace to Yemen. We urge them to seize that momentum and intensify their efforts to bridge the remaining gaps and reach a more comprehensive agreement. We note that such an agreement must lead to a resumption of Government oil exports and pave the way for an inclusive intra-Yemeni political process. That process should also include the voices of civil society, women and members of marginalized groups and should address Yemenis' calls for justice, accountability and redress for human rights abuses and violations. As we have said before, that is the only way to achieve a lasting peace in Yemen. The leadership of the United Nations will continue to be critical to the success of such a political process. The international community, and the Security Council in particular, stands behind Special Envoy Grundberg and commends his unflagging commitment to peacefully resolving the conflict. We urge the parties to continue to engage closely with him on United Nations-led peace efforts in order to build on the progress achieved so far.

Despite that progress towards peace and the now 13 months of de-escalation, the humanitarian situation remains dire, as we heard today. We urge donors to give

generously to Yemen's humanitarian appeal. A funding gap of more than \$3 billion remains — funds that are necessary to assist more than 21.6 million Yemenis, or approximately two thirds of Yemen's total population. We were deeply saddened by the stampede in Sana'a over the holy month of Ramadan, which left at least 78 people dead and scores more injured. We express our condolences to the families of the deceased and everyone affected by that tragic event. We also call for the immediate and unconditional release of our Yemeni staff in Sana'a, who have been forcibly detained for nearly 18 months.

Finally, along with the opportunity to make progress towards a sustainable peace, this is also a unique moment to address the threat posed to Yemen and the region by the *FSO SAFER* tanker. The procurement by the United Nations of a replacement vessel, the *Nautica*, was a critical step. The arrival of the *Nautica* in the Red Sea earlier this month marked another important milestone in the project's implementation. We commend the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Yemen, David Gressly, for their efforts to address the very real and imminent threat posed by the *FSO SAFER*, and look forward to the launch of the operation later this month. While we celebrate that progress, the United Nations still needs to raise additional funds for that effort. We call on Member States to contribute and to encourage private sector and environmental groups to help close the funding gap so that this critical operation can move forward.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that this is a hopeful moment for Yemen and a moment of opportunity. I would emphasize that hopeful moments like these are not guaranteed. We therefore continue to urge the parties to seize the moment, come together and bring lasting peace to the people of Yemen.

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

I would like to start by joining my colleagues in thanking Special Envoy Grundberg and the Director of Operations and Advocacy of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Wosornu, for their briefings and their efforts in favour of peace and the protection of civilians in Yemen. My thanks also go to Ms. Al-Eryani for her statement and recommendations to the members of the Council. And I

welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Yemen at this meeting.

We have been informed in recent months of the progress in the ongoing peace negotiations. It is important to remain focused on the legitimate aspirations of the civilian population and to continue to meet their immediate humanitarian needs. In that context, Switzerland would like to echo the appeal made by the more than 100 non-governmental organizations that have called on the Yemeni parties

“to maintain sharp focus on reaching a new truce deal and initiating steps towards a real, long-lasting and inclusive Yemeni peace process.”

Switzerland would like to highlight the following three points. First, we welcome all continuing peace efforts and the commitment of Oman and Saudi Arabia in particular. We emphasize the importance of achieving rapid and tangible progress that will benefit all the people. It is crucial to capitalize on the current momentum. We therefore call on all the parties involved to do their utmost to bring the ongoing dialogues to a successful conclusion. At the same time, we encourage all parties to agree without delay on new confidence-building measures, such as the recent release of prisoners. The joy of those families reunited as they celebrated Eid is still fresh in our minds.

Secondly, that positive momentum must be manifested in the realization of an inclusive intra-Yemeni political settlement under the auspices of the United Nations. Civil society, especially women, must be part of it. Their voices count and must be heard. In that regard, it is essential that they can participate fully, equally and meaningfully, free from threats or reprisals. We must spare no effort in promoting women's freedoms. In that context, we echo the pertinent recommendations proposed by Ms. Al-Eryani at the start of our meeting.

Thirdly, we share our deep concern about the difficult social and economic situation facing the civilian population in Yemen as we enter the ninth year of the conflict. We therefore firmly condemn all restrictions on humanitarian organizations and especially women humanitarian workers. We remind all the parties of their obligation under international humanitarian law to allow and facilitate, including through the provision of necessary documentation to humanitarian personnel, the rapid, safe and unhindered delivery of aid.

Furthermore, in the absence of a lasting peace, the protection of children from conflict-related violence remains a great challenge, as shown by the increase in incidents involving children who have fallen victim to mines and explosive remnants of war. We therefore call on all parties to fully and swiftly implement their action plans and uphold their other commitments to end and prevent grave violations against children. Continued efforts must be made for future generations.

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*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you and your delegation every success in your work. I also thank your predecessor, the Russian Federation, for ably presiding over the Council last month, as well as Mr. Grundberg, Ms. Wosornu and Ms. Yasmeen Al-Eryani for their briefings.

My Government appreciates all regional and international efforts, including those of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the mediation efforts made by our brethren in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman, aimed at renewing the truce, ending the conflict and achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace based on the principles of the agreed political solution emanating from the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially, resolution 2216 (2015). We stress the need for the Security Council to support such regional efforts to overcome the current crisis. The Yemeni Government also stresses its commitment to opting for peace and engaging positively and constructively with all efforts to reach a comprehensive ceasefire, as well as to relaunching a Yemeni-owned political process that is led by the United Nations and realizes the legitimate aspirations of the Yemeni people to achieve security, stability and development.

However, what we see today is that the Houthis militias, which have chosen to fan the flames of the conflict, continue to ignore the suffering of the Yemeni people and their hopes for peace, security, stability and freedom. The actions of the militias have repeatedly demonstrated that they are not serious

about responsibly engaging in peace efforts. They continue to wield the threat of war, relaunch the conflict, shed more Yemeni blood and exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. They persist in violating the norms of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. They continue restricting rights and freedoms, including by intentionally creating chaos and depriving Yemeni women of their fundamental rights and effective participation in building and developing Yemeni society. They are arresting journalists and targeting civilian neighbourhoods, which has led to the deaths of civilians, most of them women and children, and internal displacement. The militias also deploy their fighters on the front lines, and they are organizing military summer camps to attract and recruit hundreds of thousands of children to send them to the front lines in the largest recruitment campaign that humankind has ever known, in plain sight of the international community. While our children are being recruited in Yemen, the militias are planting mines and explosives on our land, which kill Yemenis on a daily basis.

They are starving and impoverishing our communities, and they are preventing businesses and charities from doing their work, which led to the heinous crime that resulted in the killing of more than 80 people and dozens of injured people in Sana'a last month. For more than eight years, the city of Taiz and its 4 million inhabitants have lived under the ongoing suffocating siege imposed by the Houthis, as the latter have ignored their commitments under the ceasefire agreement and the Stockholm Agreement. The militias persist in their attacks and attempts to tighten even further the unjust siege, including by repeatedly targeting infrastructure, including the targeting with missiles and drones of the vital Al-Kadha-Taiz road on 5 May, while it was under construction to alleviate the suffering of inhabitants. The Yemeni Government calls on the international community and the Security Council to live up to their commitments and exert further pressure on the Houthi militias and on Iran, which supports them, to choose peace and engage positively with peace efforts to end the prolonged humanitarian suffering. We also stress the need to monitor the behaviour of the militias in order to successfully end the conflict.

In the light of all the current humanitarian and economic challenges and the economic impact of the Houthi militias' attacks on the oil sector, the plundering of tax revenues, the refusal to pay salaries, the increased infliction of suffering and intransigence on citizens, the

Yemeni Government will spare no effort to alleviate the suffering of our people and meet their basic needs by providing essential services, despite scarce resources and dire economic circumstances. Under the guidance of the Presidential Leadership Council, the Government is implementing administrative, financial and economic reforms in the governmental sectors in collaboration with our brethren in the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in order to address weak institutional performance at the central and local levels, owing to the complex nature of the circumstances and challenges.

In that context, the Yemeni Government appreciates the leading role of our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in implementing many development projects and crucial humanitarian interventions, transitioning them to sustainable development projects, which attests to the strategic partnership and the brotherly ties between their peoples. Yemen calls on all friendly States and international donor organizations to step up humanitarian, development and economic assistance to Yemen in order to contribute to its economic stability, overcome the current challenges and alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people.

We all remember the touching images of the released detainees. We all remember them shedding tears of joy and celebrating their freedom. Their release would not have happened if it had not been for the flexibility shown by the governmental negotiating team and the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Special Envoy and the International Committee of the Red Cross to end the suffering of thousands of Yemeni people. The Yemeni Government reaffirms its consistent position on the need to end the suffering of all detainees, prisoners and kidnapped individuals and to close the humanitarian dossier by finalizing the detainees exchange agreement, based on the "all for all" principle, as stipulated in the Stockholm Agreement. We call on our partners to exert further pressure on the Houthi militias to refrain from using the humanitarian dossier as political blackmail and to uphold their commitments under the Stockholm Agreement, including with respect to joint visits to each other's detention centres and shedding light on the fate of the thousands of kidnapped and disappeared persons in the militias' prisons, including Mohammad Qahtan, as set forth in resolution 2216 (2015).

The Yemeni Government commends the progress made in the safe rescue operation of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. We also commend the United Kingdom and the

Kingdom of the Netherlands for their efforts to bridge the funding gap in order to start the implementation of the rescue plan led by the United Nations. We call on donor States and organizations, as well as friends of the environment and the private sector, to contribute to bridging the funding gap. We also urge the implementing agencies to adhere to the time frame and to the strict environmental requirements for the rescue operation, in accordance with local and international laws and regulations. We need sustainable solutions if Yemen and the region are to be protected from future risks. We reaffirm our readiness to provide all the facilities required to implement the rescue plan with a view to

avoiding the serious repercussions of an imminent environmental, economic and humanitarian disaster.

In conclusion, the Yemeni people yearn for peace and look forward to a future of security, stability and development. They do not want further suffering and continued conflict, and neither do they wish to see more drones, ballistic missiles or landmines.

The President (*spoke in French*): 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 11.40 a.m.