



# Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

**8441**<sup>st</sup> meeting

Wednesday, 9 January 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

*President:* Mr. Singer Weisinger . . . . . (Dominican Republic)

*Members:*

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Belgium . . . . .  | Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve |
| China . . . . .  | Mr. Ma Zhaoxu              |
| Côte d'Ivoire . . . . .  | Mr. Ipo                    |
| Equatorial Guinea . . . . .                                    | Mr. Edjang Nnaga           |
| France . . . . .   | Mr. Delattre               |
| Germany . . . . .  | Mr. Heusgen                |
| Indonesia . . . . .  | Mr. Djani                  |
| Kuwait . . . . .   | Mr. Alotaibi               |
| Peru . . . . .   | Mr. Meza-Cuadra            |
| Poland . . . . .   | Ms. Wronecka               |
| Russian Federation . . . . .                                   | Mr. Nebenzia               |
| South Africa . . . . .   | Mr. Matjila                |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . . | Ms. Pierce                 |
| United States of America . . . . .                             | Mr. Cohen                  |

## Agenda

### The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on status of implementation of Security Council resolution 2451 (2018) (S/2018/1173)

Report of the Secretary-General on status of implementation of Security Council resolution 2451 (2018) (S/2019/11)

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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**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on status of implementation of Security Council resolution 2451 (2018) (S/2018/1173)**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on status of implementation of Security Council resolution 2451 (2018) (S/2019/11)**

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

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

Mr. Griffiths is joining the meeting via video-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 documents S/2018/1173 and S/2019/11, which contain reports of the Secretary-General on status of implementation of Security Council resolution 2451 (2018).

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

**Mr. Griffiths:** The eyes of the world are focused on the momentum generated at the end of last year for the peace process by the consultations in Stockholm and the hope of the tangible improvement in the situation of the Yemeni people. As I stated to the Security Council immediately after those consultations, the success in Stockholm was its success. I must therefore start by thanking the members of the Security Council for adopting the resolution to which the President has referred (resolution 2451 (2018)), which endorsed the Stockholm Agreement, authorized the deployment of the advance team to support and facilitate

implementation, and expressed support for the continuation of consultations early this year, including on the framework for negotiations. I believe that the resolution adopted last month (see S/PV.8439) sends a very clear signal of the international community's support for the achievements that we were able to bring together in Stockholm and our plans to build subsequently on the momentum gained.

Today I will take all this opportunity to brief the Council on the implementation of the commitments made by the parties in Stockholm, namely, the agreement reached on the city and governorate of Al-Hudaydah and the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa; secondly, the executive mechanism on activating the prisoner-exchange agreement; and thirdly, the statement of understanding on Taiz. I also hope to provide an update on our preparations for the next round of consultations.

Since the Stockholm consultations and in very recent days in this past week, I have had the privilege of meeting with President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, and also, indeed, with the Ansar Allah leader, Abdulmalik al-Houthi. President Hadi Mansour, with whom I met yesterday in Riyadh, warmly welcomed the progress made in Stockholm and the Agreement made there to which he was the key decider, and he confirmed to me in very real and constructive terms his hopes, as we all have, that this is an important first step towards a comprehensive solution to the conflict. I was interested to hear a reflection of exactly those sentiments, when I was in Sana'a on Sunday, in my meetings with Abdulmalik Al-Houthi, who firmly told me in no uncertain terms of the decision and commitment of his movement to implementing all the provisions that were agreed in Stockholm. So they both expressed determination to find a way forward and to build further on the progress made in subsequent rounds. I would like us all to bear that in mind, as I do, when we look at the progress — some of it somewhat difficult — on the implementation of those agreements. But I am grateful to President Hadi Mansour and, of course I am also grateful to Abdulmalik Al-Houthi.

This enthusiasm for actually making Stockholm work and provide tangible differences on the ground for the people of Yemen was also echoed by other concerned parties and key Member States I have had the privilege to meet since Stockholm and, in particular in recent days, and I am grateful for their support and they know who they are.

I am pleased to report that both sides have largely adhered to the ceasefire we agreed in Stockholm in Al-Hudaydah governorate that entered into force on 18 December and that there has been a significant decrease in hostilities since then. Unfortunately, and perhaps unsurprisingly, there has been some violence, including in Al-Hudaydah city and in the southern districts of the governorate. However, this is remarkably limited compared to what we saw in the weeks before the Stockholm consultations, and this relative calm, I believe, indicates the tangible benefit of the Stockholm Agreement for the people of Yemen, and it also illustrates the commitment of both parties to making their agreements work.

Thanks to the swift authorization provided by the Council through resolution 2451 (2018), the United Nations has deployed an advance monitoring team to Al-Hudaydah, under the leadership of my esteemed colleague Major General Patrick Cammaert of the Netherlands, who arrived in Yemen on 22 December. In this context, I should say that I think it is a remarkable achievement that retired Major General Cammaert tore himself away from other commitments and launched himself with his team into the region at very short notice to establish the Redeployment Coordination Committee, the committee that will monitor the agreements in Al-Hudaydah. We are very grateful to General Cammaert.

That rapid deployment has given a clear signal to the parties and the Yemeni people of the international community's desire to turn the Agreement into facts on the ground. General Cammaert has chaired several meetings of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, with the participation of representatives from both parties, to oversee the implementation of the redeployments and the ceasefire, as agreed to in Sweden on Al-Hudaydah. He is working with the parties on the details of the redeployments of forces, again as foreseen in Sweden, the provision of security in the city and the opening of humanitarian access routes, as agreed to in Stockholm.

The activation of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, which has happened since the arrival of General Cammaert in late December, is very welcome. I urge both parties to continue to engage regularly and in good faith with General Cammaert and his team so that the security arrangements — and, crucially, the improvements in humanitarian access — can be implemented swiftly, in line with what was agreed

to in Stockholm. That will build the confidence of the parties, the Yemeni people and the international community that what was talked about in Stockholm can be a reality.

Regarding Taiz, as Council members will recall, the parties agreed in Stockholm to the creation of mechanisms to reach consensus on how to address the situation in that city and governorate. Taiz is of enormous historic significance for Yemen as a whole, and the city and its people have been a driving force in Yemen's economic and cultural life for many years. To give it a sense of proportion, the governorate of Taiz has a population of 2.5 million people, and the city of Taiz has been divided, by virtue of the conflict, for some considerable time. The civilians in Taiz have suffered far too much for far too long, and the destruction in the city has been dreadful. The flow of humanitarian aid, of course, needs to increase and cross the line between the parties, and the people need the chance to rebuild. Those are the issues that we believe that the joint committee, which I will refer to, is there to resolve.

Since Stockholm, I have talked with the parties and many prominent people from Taiz — my office also met the Governor yesterday — and they all want the city to return to calm and for the people to have hope that the city will flourish once again. I am glad that Stockholm provides a potential platform for that.

With the agreement of the parties, we therefore plan to hold the first meeting of that committee as soon as possible, ideally this month. We are also working on a civil society mechanism, including the significant participation of women, to support that joint committee in its endeavours. I am hopeful that what we might plan to see in Taiz is something that we might also see achieved in Al-Hudaydah, which should not be the only beneficiary of the agreements that we made in Sweden.

On the agreement for the exchange of prisoners, we are working with both parties to finalize the lists of prisoners submitted by each in Stockholm. I particularly want to record our appreciation for the invaluable support provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross in that regard. As agreed to in Stockholm, we plan to hold a meeting of the supervisory committee, which includes both parties. I am hopeful that it will take place in Amman, from where I will be speaking on Monday. That will be a step towards the day that we hope to see of an airlift of many thousands of prisoners exchanged and released to return to their families.

I am grateful for the commitment and patience that both parties have shown since Stockholm. Progress on some of the issues has been gradual and, indeed, somewhat tentative, but there is a tangible contribution to peace. There are no doubt many hurdles to be overcome in the days, weeks and months ahead, but I would say here that the parties must not be diverted from their commitments through issues of delays or difficulties, which are unexpected. I ask for the support of the Council in encouraging the parties to stay the course and overcome together any challenges that may be encountered along the way, and reminding them that we are here to help them.

I am under no illusion that these are very sensitive and challenging days for both parties and Yemen as a whole. The war continues in other parts of the country, which is why we need to make progress quickly. I call on the parties to recognize that these first steps need to be protected so that we can reach those other parts of the country in due course. The conflict continues to have a terrible impact on the economy and the overall humanitarian situation, as I know Mr. Lowcock will describe in a minute.

It was unfortunate that we were unable to reach consensus on our way forward on the Central Bank of Yemen while we were together in Sweden, and on the opening of Sana'a airport during those consultations in December. Both of those issues, if resolved, would make a significant contribution to relieving humanitarian suffering. Of course, as we discussed in the Security Council meeting in December (see S/PV.8424), we are continuing to work on finding solutions before the resumption of the next round of consultations.

I should mention that, as ever, the demands of southern groups are also a key part of the solution to the Yemeni equation. I am grateful for the effort exerted by key Yemeni stakeholders and the international community to improve stability in the southern governorates in recent months, which has been a remarkable achievement. As I have always said, I am committed to ensuring the participation of southern groups in the peace process. I am continuing to work with that goal in mind with a range of those groups. Their contribution will be of vital importance in fulfilling the hope of peace.

In conclusion, the message that I have been receiving, particularly from the parties but also from key Member States and those with an interest in peace

in Yemen, has been consistent in these past days. It is that we must implement what was agreed to in Sweden and show substantial progress in those commitments if we are to build the confidence that we have hoped to create from them. There is a sense of tangible hope. There is a sense of optimism, as well as concern. It is my view, and it is shared by the leadership of both parties but also others, that substantial progress, particularly on Al-Hudaydah, is something that we would like to see before we reconvene the next consultations.

Members of the Council will remember that in the Stockholm Agreement there was an agreement to open those consultations without conditions. It is not a matter of conditioning that decision. It is a matter of making progress so that in the next round we will not be dealing with the issues that were experienced in the first. I am therefore still hopeful that we can proceed to a next round of consultations in the near future. I am working with both parties to make sure that it will happen at the earliest possible date, and that in those consultations we will begin both to monitor the progress made out of Sweden and discuss the fundamental issues that need to be addressed to resolve the conflict.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

**Mr. Lowcock**: The Stockholm Agreement and resolution 2451 (2018) are already having an impact. Reports from humanitarian agencies in Al-Hudaydah indicate that civilians are a little more confident and a little less afraid that they will be victims of air strikes or caught in crossfire as they go about their lives. But, as Mr. Griffiths just said, it is very early days, and we must do everything we can to support the Stockholm Agreement. We must keep reminding the parties that international humanitarian law must be respected in all locations and at all times.

I cannot yet report to the Council that the wider humanitarian situation in Yemen is any better. It remains catastrophic. More than 24 million people now need humanitarian assistance — 80 per cent of the population. They include nearly 10 million people just a step away from famine. More than 3.3 million people have been displaced, over 600,000 of them in the past 12 months. Only half of health facilities are fully functioning. Hundreds of thousands of people got sick last year because of poor sanitation and water-borne diseases, including cholera. Needs have

intensified across all sectors. Millions of Yemenis are hungrier, sicker and more vulnerable now than they were a year ago.

Humanitarian agencies, though, are scaling up to meet these needs. In December, the World Food Programme (WFP) reached 9.5 million people with emergency food assistance; that is a record number. In the next few months, the WFP will expand operations to reach 12 million people a month, including the 10 million most at risk of famine and 2 million acutely vulnerable internally displaced persons. Humanitarian agencies continue to roll back cholera, to improve living conditions for displaced families in collective centres and informal camps, and to do everything possible to mitigate hunger and malnutrition for the 240,000 people facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity — at the phase 5 level of the Integrated Phase Classification. Agencies are also preparing for large-scale returns to Al-Hudaydah as and when conditions allow. Altogether, operations in Yemen this year will, if funding is available, reach 15 million people — about half the population.

None of this is problem-free. On 31 December, the WFP issued a statement seeking action from the de facto authorities over diversion of food aid from seven distribution sites in Sana'a. We know that aid diversion and attempted diversion are risks in all conflict settings. We take this extremely seriously; parties to conflict must not misappropriate relief items destined for civilians in need.

Because we are committed to an effective response, we had already contracted independent third-party monitors last autumn. In their first report, they found that 95 per cent of intended food-aid beneficiaries contacted across the country confirmed that they were indeed receiving food aid. In some cases, rations were not always complete. These gaps could potentially be due to funding or access constraints, or other problems. More detailed independent monitoring of this sort is currently under way. It would not surprise me if problems were to emerge in other parts of the country. But we will always act to find solutions when that happens.

It is also important to note that the Sana'a problem itself was identified through existing monitoring mechanisms and that the WFP, with support from the Humanitarian Coordinator, has acted decisively. They and the de facto authorities are having intensive,

constructive discussions on the way forward, and we are optimistic that the right measures will be in place before the next round of distributions is slated to begin. Steps to improve targeting and delivery mechanisms are being taken as we speak.

Resolution 2451 (2018) sets out three main points related to humanitarian issues. I would like to update the Council on where we stand on those today.

The first point is access. The humanitarian scale-up that Yemenis need will not be possible if aid workers and supplies cannot travel safely and freely to where they are needed. Following the Stockholm agreement, an immediate objective was to regain access to the Red Sea Mills and several humanitarian warehouses in Al-Hudaydah. This has not yet happened, but needs to happen quickly. Enough grain for 3.5 million people has now been sitting unused, possibly spoiling, for nearly four months in the Red Sea Mills.

Unfortunately, over the last six weeks, the de facto authorities have blocked humanitarian supplies travelling from areas under their control to Government-held areas. They have also recently informed humanitarian agencies that 72 hours' notice is required ahead of any movements, instead of the usual 48 hours. We are also concerned by administrative restrictions being imposed on international non-governmental organizations as they renew their operating agreements, as well as ongoing challenges with monitoring.

Restrictions are also being tightened on specific types of programming, including protection and support for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Protection work is urgently needed in Yemen, where, to cite one example, verified reports of grave violations of children's rights, including killings, maiming and recruitment to military service, increased by nearly 25 per cent in the last year.

Continuing delays and unacceptable preconditions for the planned medical air bridge from Sana'a airport also mean that thousands of people with medical conditions for which treatment is unavailable in northern Yemen are condemned to suffer.

Taken together, these developments are delaying and interrupting critical humanitarian programmes. But solutions can be agreed. Just today we received confirmation that 56 new visas would be granted to United Nations staff; that is an important step in the right direction.

The resolution also calls for impediments to commercial imports to be lifted. In December, commercial fuel imports through Al-Hudaydah and Saleef were higher than at any time since August 2017, although they remain below estimated requirements. This is a significant improvement, and we hope that fuel imports will continue to increase in the coming months. The number of clearance requests to enter Al-Hudaydah and Saleef ports also more than doubled in December compared with the previous month. We hope that this is a sign of rising commercial confidence following the Stockholm agreement, but, of course, it makes a difference only if those requests are then agreed.

While the situation on fuel imports improved and more ships sought to reach the ports, commercial food imports in December plummeted to just 163,000 metric tons, which in fact is the lowest figure recorded since the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen began monitoring, in July 2016. This is deeply concerning in an environment where a serious threat of famine persists. Overall, average monthly commercial food imports are now 25 per cent lower than they were a year ago. Ongoing import restrictions also mean that no commercial containerized cargo has entered Al-Hudaydah port for more than a year.

Severe congestion at Aden port also remains a problem. Despite some recent progress, the WFP still has nearly 500 containers stuck in Aden port. In some cases, they have had to reroute cargo via Salalah, in Oman, and then overland into Yemen, at considerably greater cost and risk. I hope that the Government of Yemen, the de facto authorities and other stakeholders will take all steps necessary to ensure the smooth, unimpeded flow of commercial and humanitarian imports through all Yemeni ports, as required by resolution 2451 (2018). This should include the reopening of Ras Isa port, which has been closed since June 2017.

As I told the Council last month (see S/PV.8424), I raised all these access issues with those I met in Sana'a and in Aden in November. I also sent a follow-up letter to the president of the Ansar Allah Supreme Political Council last month. A constructive dialogue is continuing through the Humanitarian Coordinator, and I remain hopeful that the de facto authorities and the Government of Yemen will act quickly to fulfil the strong commitments to humanitarian action that I received.

The second humanitarian point in resolution 2451 (2018) relates to the economy. The resolution calls on the parties to strengthen the economy and the Central Bank, and to pay pensions and civil-servant salaries. The Yemeni rial is again losing value, with the exchange rate now hovering around 520 rial to the dollar. That is, of course, better than the 800-plus rial rate we saw several months ago, but significantly worse than last month's 450-rial rate. It is also more than twice pre-conflict levels.

Without intervention, the International Monetary Fund estimates that the exchange rate is likely to slide to more than 700 rial to the dollar this year. As the Council is aware, because Yemen imports nearly all its food, fuel and medicines, this would be devastating for millions of people.

Foreign currency injections from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been extremely helpful in strengthening the rial since October. But as I discussed with the Prime Minister in Aden, we need regular, predictable injections such as this that will sustainably keep the exchange rate at an affordable level.

The resolution also points out that paying pensions and civil-servant salaries across the country is another key element of strengthening the economy. In November, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates announced \$70 million in funding to UNICEF to cover teachers' allowances. Arrangements have now been agreed to deliver these payments, and they are expected to begin shortly. That should benefit millions of Yemeni children. Martin's team, with the support of the Resident Coordinator, expects to convene discussions on the economy and strengthening the Central Bank soon. I hope that will quickly lead to practical and sustained improvements.

The third humanitarian point is your call, Mr. President, on the international community to consider additional funding for the 2019 United Nations-coordinated humanitarian response plan. We raised \$2.4 billion last year, or 83 per cent of what we required. As humanitarian operations expand this year in response to the deterioration in the situation we have seen, especially over the past six months, humanitarian agencies will obviously need even more money. The 2019 humanitarian response plan will be finalized in the next few weeks, and I expect it will require

approximately \$4 billion — half of which will be just for emergency food assistance.

On 26 February, the Secretary-General will convene a high-level pledging conference in Geneva, co-hosted by the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland. In late November, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates announced that they would contribute an additional \$500 million to combat hunger in Yemen in 2019. Given that we expect that the funds generously provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in 2018 to be fully spent by the end of March, that new pledge is extremely important. We are counting on all our donors to announce more generous funding at the February event.

The important progress we have seen on the political track, which Martin has just briefed the Council on, deserves our full and continuing support, but it does not of itself feed a single starving child. Millions of Yemenis are looking to us for assistance and protection, and we need to see more and faster progress on all the humanitarian elements of the Council's resolution to make any practical difference to their lives.

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

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

**Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom): I thank you very much, Mr. President, for scheduling this meeting. I also thank Martin Griffiths and his team, Mark Lowcock and all the humanitarians. I think it is very good that the Security Council has been able to be united on this very important issue. It is very good that we can have a timely update on the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, but also on wider implementation of resolution 2451 (2018). I am grateful for that.

I think it is very important that the parties accelerate efforts to implement the important steps that they agreed to in Stockholm. Martin set out what those were. I want to reiterate our full support for Martin's efforts. We look to the parties to continue constructive engagement with him, including a commitment to attend the next round of talks once Martin has finished his preparatory work. We look to the parties to facilitate the United Nations work to stand up a team in Al-Hudaydah to support their efforts.

For our part, as penholder, we will take forward work on a short technical draft resolution to mandate the new

United Nations team to support the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement. We will hear bit more on that in consultations from Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Lowcock and retired Major General Cammaert. Of course, the Council will need to continue to follow progress on the ground very closely.

On the humanitarian side, I think we all need at to have that at the forefront of our minds Mark's last words: although all this progress on the political track is absolutely vital, it does not help us feed starving children. That 80 per cent of Yemenis need assistance is quite a shocking figure. We must not let up any of the pressure up to try to help Mark and the humanitarians deliver aid and commercial supplies.

I want to specify very clearly today how important the access issue is — access to the Red Sea Mills, as Mark set out, but also access through the ports and into all the areas of Yemen where people need assistance. The numbers involved are vast, and therefore there is not a day to lose in terms of access. We call on all the parties to address the issues Mark mentioned, in particular in terms of things like notice periods, which should go back down to 48 hours. Access should be unhindered. Commercial supplies should be got through. We have had some good news on visas and fuel imports, but that good news needs to be extended across the commercial and humanitarian supplies needed.

I have kept my remarks short because if I know many people will want to speak and we have consultations following this meeting. But I want to repeat that it is very good news that the Council has been united so far. We hope that the Council can stay united as we follow progress on both the humanitarian and political tracts.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock, for their very precise and enlightening briefings, as well as for their exemplary commitment and that of their teams.

First, I would like to talk about the progress made since the adoption of resolution 2451 (2018), which led to the rapid deployment of the advance team of the United Nations monitoring and oversight mission. On that basis, the Redeployment Coordination Committee held its first meetings in late December and early January, which enabled discussions between the parties on the implementation of the truce and the planned

withdrawals. That is a first concrete step towards de-escalation, which we welcome. Discussions must continue to build on what has been achieved and make progress, in particular on the redeployment of forces from the city and port of Al-Hudaydah in order to strengthen trust between the parties and generate a virtuous cycle. To use a sports metaphor, we must now score a goal.

Secondly, despite that positive momentum, we must not forget that, as Mr. Lowcock rightly said, the humanitarian situation is still very worrisome and there is an urgent need to help the Yemeni population. Yemen is currently facing the most serious humanitarian crisis of our time. More than 24 million people depend upon humanitarian assistance and there are very high risks of famine and epidemics. It is therefore crucial that the positive momentum in action following the Stockholm talks now be translated into action on the ground. That is necessary in itself, but it is also a precondition for success so that the people concerned take ownership of the process that has begun. We recall that all parties must respect international humanitarian law, in particular as it pertains to the protection of civilians, as well as international human rights law.

We welcome Saudi Arabia's deposit of \$200 million in the Central Bank of Yemen. However, the riyal has once again plummeted, as Mark also reminded us. We must therefore continue our efforts on the economic front. That is essential.

Humanitarian and commercial access, as my colleague from the United Kingdom recalled, must also be guaranteed, including the lifeline between Al-Hudaydah and Sana'a. We call on the parties to demonstrate responsibility in the discussions on the reopening of that axis, which have not yet borne fruit.

Finally, access to the Red Sea Mills for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Food Programme is also crucial, as is the unhindered and undiverted flow of foodstuffs to populations in need. By reducing the level of hostilities and strengthening the functioning of the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Issa, the agreement on Al-Hudaydah should facilitate humanitarian aid and access. It is therefore quite literally vital that it be fully implemented for the benefit of the people concerned.

In that context, and this will be my last point, with regard to the Security Council our immediate priority is

to ensure that the observation mission has the mandate it needs to function. In that respect, we echo the sentiments just shared by my British colleague. We support the efforts of the United Kingdom's efforts in that regard, along with the prospect of the Council's speedy adoption of a draft resolution that will enable the mission to fully achieve its deployment. In that context, it is more important than ever that the Council demonstrate its unity and responsiveness in support of the efforts of Martin Griffiths and the effective implementation of the Stockholm Agreement on Al-Hudaydah. Confident in its unity, the Security Council must bring all of its weight to bear. At the same time, we also call on the parties to do their part to facilitate the work of the United Nations mission, including by issuing the necessary visas and authorizations and ensuring the safety of United Nations personnel on the ground.

The considerable progress made in Stockholm and endorsed by resolution 2451 (2018) is a breakthrough. For it to be a genuine turning point in ending the conflict in Yemen, we call for further political discussions to be held as soon as possible under the auspices of Mr. Griffiths, in order to build on the momentum generated in Stockholm and resume discussions on a comprehensive political framework, because we know that that is the only possible lasting solution to the conflict in Yemen. France will continue to extend its full support to that effort, including within the Council.

**Mr. Ma Zhaoxu** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their briefings.

We are pleased to note that the parties in Yemen have generally observed the ceasefire agreement, which has led to a lessening of hostilities in the past few days. The Redeployment Coordination Committee, which is led by the United Nations and includes all Yemeni parties, is working in an orderly fashion, with ongoing discussions on issues related to redeployment, such as the timetable, location and modalities of verification and supervision. Work has also begun on implementing the agreement on the exchange of prisoners and settling the situation in Taiz. However, while the overall situation in Yemen is heading in a positive direction, challenges remain. Persistent crossfire continues in Al-Hudaydah governorate and the overall humanitarian situation across the country is still severe. The Yemeni parties agreed to reopen the Al-Hudaydah-Sana'a road, but the



agreement has not yet been honoured. Impediments to humanitarian access remain. The parties concerned must implement the Stockholm Agreement and resolution 2451 (2018) in earnest and continue to work on the following three areas.

First, the parties should strictly implement the Al-Hudaydah ceasefire agreement and complete the redeployment of their armed forces within the established time frame. We have noted the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a mission in Yemen to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the agreement, and China is ready to engage with all parties on the matter. We hope that the Secretariat will strengthen consultations with Council members on specific arrangements pertaining to the proposed mission while giving the views of the host country and the countries of the region full consideration and respect.

Secondly, it is imperative to push for a sustained and effective process of dialogue and negotiation, while preserving the gains achieved so far. The Yemeni parties should meet each other halfway and demonstrate greater goodwill towards one another. Under the auspices of the Redeployment Coordination Committee they should agree on confidence-building measures without delay, including by making progress on the prisoner-exchange agreement and other issues. We look forward to seeing the next round of peace talks convened without incident so that consensus can be reached on the framework document for the political negotiations and an inclusive solution arrived at as soon as possible.

Thirdly, it is essential that the United Nations continue to play its role as the primary mediator. We would like to see the Yemeni parties working more closely with Mr. Griffiths and remaining engaged in the negotiating progress. The international community must step up humanitarian assistance to Yemen, help the country improve the humanitarian situation in a sustained manner, meet the basic needs of the Yemeni people and continue to create conditions that are conducive to negotiations. The Yemeni parties must work more closely with the United Nations to effectively guarantee the safety and security of international personnel in Yemen.

Political means are the only way to resolve the Yemeni issue. All parties must safeguard the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial

integrity of Yemen and — based on resolution 2216 (2015) and other resolutions, the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanism, as well as the outcome document of the National Dialogue Conference — support efforts to reach a broad and inclusive political solution through dialogue and consultation. Together with all the parties concerned, China is ready to continue to play a constructive role in promoting the settlement of the Yemen issue.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor in the Council this year, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on the Dominican Republic's presidency for this month. We are sure you will carry out your duties with distinction.

We are grateful to Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, for his briefing on the changes in the military and political situation in Yemen in the light of the Stockholm Agreement. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for his assessment of the humanitarian situation, which makes it clear that Yemen and its people are experiencing a terrible humanitarian disaster. It is obvious that it is impossible to end a conflict of many years' standing in the few weeks that have passed since the start of the implementation of the Agreement, which many of us helped the Special Envoy to conclude in Sweden. We are not expecting instant results, and we will continue to work with Mr. Griffiths and the parties to the conflict in Yemen with a view to implementing it as soon as possible.

The groundwork has been laid. The Redeployment Coordination Committee, headed by retired Major General Cammaert, has been established. The Committee's meetings are not going very smoothly, but they are taking place and the results can be seen in the lower level of violence around the city and port of Al-Hudaydah. Further discussions are being held on the methodology for implementing mutual understanding on the prisoner exchange and on de-escalation in Taiz. We endorse the mobilization of the United Nations presence in Yemen and the efforts to expand it. We support the Secretary-General's initiative on setting up a new mission to support the implementation of the Al-Hudaydah agreement. We believe it will help Mr. Griffiths with his mediation efforts, including in terms of organizing a new round of consultations.

In our view it will be important to ensure the Government of the Republic of Yemen and the Ansar Allah movement maintain their resolve to reach compromises on their existing disagreements, including on the political issues that the parties have barely begun to consider. Needless to say, much depends on sticking to the agreements already reached. It is essential that we all continue our collective and bilateral efforts to support Mr. Griffiths' work on the political front. However, we must also maintain our parallel efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which continues to deteriorate daily, as Mr. Lowcock reminded us today. Millions of Yemenis are starving, with no way to get essential medicines or services, and are in need of assistance in one form or another. The cost of rebuilding the country's devastated infrastructure continues to rise incrementally.

Russia, like many other States Members of the United Nations, including Yemen's nearest neighbours, continues to make its contribution to assisting the people of Yemen. However, we are doing it on a non-discriminatory basis. Humanitarian assistance must be provided to everyone in Yemen who needs it, regardless of who controls the territory where they live. We assume that this principle is guiding other humanitarian partners in Yemen as well.

In conclusion, we want to once again draw attention to the potential benefit that improving the overall atmosphere in the region could bring to settling the situation in Yemen and the other crises in the Middle East and northern Africa. Policies of confrontation and aggressive competition must give way to dialogue and mutual understanding, including through the creation of a unified security architecture. It is our shared duty to help the stakeholders in the region get that process under way. In our opinion, Russia's concept for security and confidence in the Persian Gulf continues to represent a sound basis for joint efforts in that regard.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this meeting and the important briefings by Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock, who have both described a scenario that requires the urgent support of the international community and, in particular, of a united Security Council. We would like to express our gratitude and full support for the efforts they are making in their fields to put an end to the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today and bring the parties closer to an inclusive political solution.

We also salute the Yemeni parties for their willingness to negotiate and hold a dialogue, which has made it possible for the Redeployment Coordination Committee to meet three times and for some progress to be made in the operational implementation of the agreements reached in Sweden. We stress that this progress is still preliminary and must necessarily be complemented by urgent new measures, such as defining the parameters for what constitutes a ceasefire violation for the parties and determining the modalities of the process. We should emphasize that the agreements reached in Sweden constitute a turning point in the bloody and prolonged conflict in Yemen, and that in no circumstances should possible delays or breaches serve as justification for abandoning commitments under the Stockholm Agreement.

We therefore urge the Yemeni parties to reaffirm their commitment to the inclusive political solution that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General has launched and to tackle the difficulties that this complex process may bring carefully and in good faith, while avoiding unilateral action that runs counter to the positive spirit that should accompany it. We also encourage them to continue to work on confidence-building measures that contribute to a better climate of understanding. We therefore welcome President Hadi's decision to pay the salaries of the civil servants in Al-Hudaydah and look forward to further developments in the area of prisoner exchanges and the opening of land and sea routes. We also look forward to a new round of consultations this month and emphasize the importance of increasing the participation of women and young people.

All of those efforts are all the more important, as Mr. Lowcock reminded us, when many of the needs of the people are still unmet and the risk of famine and the spread of diseases such as cholera persists. We must remain steadfast in honouring our responsibility to support and protect them. That includes removing all bureaucratic obstacles that restrict access to essential goods. Humanitarian aid and access to it cannot and must not be made conditional on any military objective.

We would like to conclude by highlighting the professionalism and sense of duty of the humanitarian personnel of the United Nations and other agencies deployed in Yemen, and by underlining the importance of ensuring that the parties guarantee their security and provide the facilities they need for their work, including the timely issuance of the appropriate visas. Peru remains committed to achieving a political solution

to the conflict that brings the ongoing humanitarian disaster to an end, ensures accountability for the atrocious crimes that have been committed, improves regional stability and makes it possible to achieve sustainable peace in Yemen.

**Mr. Alotaibi** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their briefings today.

The Stockholm Agreement has given the international community and the Yemeni people a glimmer of hope for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Yemen. The Security Council should therefore consolidate those gains and work on implementing the Agreement. All Yemeni parties must honour their obligations under it and cooperate with the United Nations, especially the Special Envoy and his team, retired Major General Patrick Cammaert and United Nations humanitarian agencies, to reach a sustainable solution in Al-Hudaydah port and governorate and thereby ensure the supply of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

I would also like to commend the efforts of the Special Envoy since he and his team took office to move the peace process forward in Yemen, as well as Major General Cammaert's positive steps to implement the Stockholm Agreement. In addition, I want to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to those working in the humanitarian field for their efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We stress the importance of all parties working to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel in order to enable them to carry out their work effectively.

We will unquestionably face many obstacles on our path to achieving a comprehensive and permanent peace in Yemen if we continue to fail to push decisively for the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015). It is therefore crucial to ensure their implementation. The Stockholm Agreement and resolution 2451 (2018) are important steps on the path to peace, and we must focus on confidence-building measures to promote them.

We must begin with gradual steps to build and enhance trust between the Yemeni parties. An important concrete measure that would alleviate the suffering of many Yemeni families is the exchange of prisoners and detainees. We encourage the Yemeni parties to continue their efforts to achieve that goal

and to prioritize the national interests and the security and safety of the Yemeni people above all other considerations. All parties must work diligently to implement the Stockholm Agreement, starting with respecting the ceasefire, refraining from hindering the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need, removing all obstacles to the work of the Redeployment Coordination Committee and issuing the necessary visas and permits to United Nations personnel. All of those steps are essential to ensuring the Agreement's successful implementation. In that regard, I commend the announcement by the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen that it remains committed to the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah governorate, which entered into force on 18 December. The coalition also remains committed to implementing the Stockholm Agreement and is continuing to coordinate with Major General Cammaert. We look forward to the Secretary-General's proposal on the ways in which the United Nations should support the Stockholm Agreement, pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2451 (2018), so that the Council can discuss the matter and reach agreement on it.

On the humanitarian front, last year the international community came together to alleviate the suffering in Yemen. This year we must redouble our efforts by funding the projected 2019 United Nations humanitarian response plan. The countries of the coalition, notably Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, were among the largest supporters of the Yemen humanitarian response plan in 2018, alongside the United States and the United Kingdom. The support of those five countries basically covered 83 per cent of the Yemen humanitarian response plan in 2018.

We once again welcome the Secretary-General's determination to hold an international pledging conference in Geneva on 26 February to support the humanitarian response plan. The State of Kuwait looks forward to participating in that conference, in keeping with its humanitarian policy and in support of efforts to alleviate the suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people.

In conclusion, Yemen is passing through a complex and decisive stage in its contemporary history. Our brotherly people in Yemen now have an historic opportunity to take important steps towards achieving peace. It is in no one's interest for the conflict to linger, especially in the light of the fact that those most affected by the conflict are the Yemeni people. We call once again on the Yemeni parties to implement the Stockholm Agreement on Al-Hudaydah and its ports,

the prisoner exchange agreement and the declaration of understanding on Taiz. We hope that the parties will be committed to the full implementation of the agreements in order to complement the efforts of Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, so that he can hold the upcoming round of negotiations and reach a political solution based on the three agreed terms of references, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2216 (2015). That would end the crisis in brotherly Yemen, maintain its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and ensure non-interference in its internal affairs.

**Mr. Heusgen (Germany):** At the outset, I too would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths for his work and what he achieved in Stockholm. In addition, I would like to thank not only Mr. Mark Lowcock for his briefing on what he has done, but also, through him, all the humanitarian aid workers on the ground, as we must not forget that this is the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world today. All of their efforts are very important.

I listened very carefully to Martin Griffiths's briefing. He said that the Stockholm Agreement has been largely adhered to. I believe that that is very encouraging. I agree with his statement that progress can be only gradual, and of course we support everything that he is trying to do there. At the same time, I would like to endorse the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom to the effect that we have to take accelerated steps, not content ourselves with where we stand and continue our work in that regard. I very much welcome the fact that she is proposing a technical draft resolution so that the people on the ground can be safe.

I would also encourage acting in accordance with what Martin Griffiths and others around the table have said, namely, that, starting from the local ceasefire situation in Al-Hudaydah, we have to go further, address the fundamental issues and come to an overall agreement. In that regard, as Ambassador Delattre said earlier, I believe that it is important that the Security Council remain united as it was in its adoption of the earlier resolution regarding Yemen and that we stick to that path in order to move forward.

In the process, I would highlight something that is very dear to our heart, as echoed by Ambassador Meza-Cuadra. In the peace process, I would ask

Martin Griffiths to involve women and young people in negotiations. They are the most effective in that regard, and they should have a seat at the negotiating table on the way forward. In that regard, I would like to highlight the fact that Germany and Peru are co-chairing the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, in close coordination with the United Kingdom. We have decided to focus the first meeting of this year on the situation of women in Yemen.

Concerning the humanitarian situation, Mark Lowcock mentioned some of the progress that has been made, but he also said that the situation is still catastrophic. In a German newspaper, the UNICEF regional director was quoted as saying that Yemen for children is hell on Earth and that approximately 100,000 children are close to starvation in Yemen. We therefore have to do everything possible to improve the situation. In that connection, Mark Lowcock mentioned the obstruction of the mills and harbours and cases of diversion. I believe that that is unacceptable and a scandal. We must spare no effort to stop it. Concerning what Mark Lowcock said with regard to the water situation, which is a nightmare in Yemen, where we are up against cases of cholera. We once again see the effect of climate change on security. It is necessary to drill 1,500 metres deep to reach water in Yemen, which accounts for yet another dreadful situation.

Germany stands ready to support the political process. We are one of the major donors in terms of humanitarian aid. We also look beyond immediate humanitarian aid towards stabilization to increase our chances of success in negotiations and the stabilization dimension of Yemen.

**Mr. Edjang Nnaga (Equatorial Guinea)** (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their very detailed briefings and congratulate them on the tremendous work that they are doing in Yemen.

At the last Security Council meeting on Yemen held in 2018 (see S/PV.8439), we were convinced that we had turned a new page in the conflict and that the constant years-long hard work of the Council and the international community had paid off. My delegation is grateful to Mr. Griffiths for his leadership and to all those who enabled the parties to meet and reach initial agreements, which have facilitated the opening of a political process to find a sustainable solution to the conflict.

We commend the timely reaction of the Council, which, in keeping with the spirit of ensuring compliance with the Stockholm agreements, unanimously adopted resolution 2451 (2018) on 21 December 2018, which authorizes, *inter alia*, sending a team to monitor, support and facilitate the immediate implementation of the commitments undertaken in of Stockholm, which include a ceasefire in the strategic city of Al-Hudaydah and other parts of the country. In that regard, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea calls on the warring and all other parties concerned in Yemen to strictly observe the terms of the truce. We nevertheless welcome the fact that, to a certain extent, the parties have begun to fulfil their commitments, as demonstrated by the gradual reopening of the city of Al-Hudaydah.

We warmly welcome the historic meeting of the representatives of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, the Government of Yemen and the Houthis, and encourage the national parties to pool their efforts to carry out the Committee's mandates and thereby foster the trust necessary to better facilitate the implementation of the agreement on Al-Hudaydah. My delegation shares all the concerns of those who have reported on the real need to move the Yemen process forward, especially those contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of resolution 2451 (2018) (S/2019/11). There are crucial aspects that require immediate responses from the warring parties, such as the opening of specific highways to ensure the mobilization of humanitarian teams and the expedited issuance of visas to humanitarian personnel so that they can enter the country, as well as addressing other regulations hindering access. I call on the Yemeni Government and the Houthis to prevent the diversion of food and other basic supplies from the country's most vulnerable people, who are in dire need of them.

Lastly, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea expresses its full support for the efforts of the United Nations in Yemen, in the hope that the achievements of 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 other intermediaries in that country to continue working to find a political solution to the conflict.

**Mr. Pecsteen de Buyswerve** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the United Kingdom for requesting this briefing on the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. I would also like to thank

the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock, for their briefings and their efforts.

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor in the Security Council on the subject of Yemen, we would first like to welcome the agreement reached in Stockholm. It is a remarkable achievement, and I congratulate Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and assure him of our full support. It is essential that the agreement now be respected and implemented within realistic deadlines. In view of the humanitarian emergency, the agreement on the port of Al-Hudaydah is of particular importance. That port is the lifeline for the rest of the country in terms of access to humanitarian aid and the import of commercial goods. It is essential that the operation of the port be ensured.

The situation is fragile and mistrust between the parties remains strong. There have been incidents, but we call on all parties to exercise restraint, to abstain from heated rhetoric in the media and mutual accusations of ceasefire violations, and to focus on the implementation of the agreement in good faith. In addition, the parties should try to reach a common understanding on the implementation of the agreement on Al-Hudaydah, including modalities. They must also agree on a monitoring mechanism within the framework of the Redeployment Coordination Committee.

In order to enable the United Nations to monitor the implementation of the agreement, it is important that the parties issue visas to United Nations personnel in a timely manner and allow the Redeployment Coordination Committee access to the entire territory of Al-Hudaydah governorate. In addition, the security of United Nations personnel must be ensured.

Belgium supports the adoption of a resolution as soon as possible in order to provide a legal basis for a United Nations mission, and we will contribute constructively to the adoption of such a resolution.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, as we have heard from Mark Lowcock, efforts are still needed to improve it. It is essential that all parties facilitate access to humanitarian aid throughout the country, and the bureaucratic obstacles to such access must be removed.

Finally, we hope that the Stockholm Agreement can serve as a basis for building an agreement on a negotiating framework for future talks and for launching an inclusive political process.

**Ms. Wronecka** (Poland): At the outset, let me thank the briefers for their valuable inputs in today's discussion. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths; the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock; and retired Major General Patrick Cammaert. We express our appreciation for the work of United Nations personnel in Yemen.

The year 2018 ended with the prospect of relaunching a formal political process thanks to the agreement reached by the parties in Stockholm and the adoption of resolution 2451 (2018), which establishes a mechanism to oversee its implementation. We welcome the swift instalment of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, the assumption of the role of its Chairman by Major General Cammaert, and the progress made by the parties in relation to establishing the organizational structure of the Committee. We are also encouraged by the decision of President Hadi to instruct that the salaries for all civil servants in Al-Hudaydah governorate be paid.

The compliance of the parties with the provisions of the Stockholm Agreement is now crucial and will determine the future of the peace process in Yemen. The ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah governorate must be upheld. We are concerned about reports of breaches of ceasefire on both sides, and we urge the parties to show restraint. We also encourage them to show goodwill, to continue to advance confidence-building measures, especially those directly related to the humanitarian situation, and to carry on their engagement with the Special Envoy. We look forward to the next round of consultations. In that vein, we would like to underscore the need to include all relevant stakeholders and underrepresented groups, including women and youth, in the political process.

We also call upon the parties to continue to cooperate closely with the Redeployment Coordination Committee and to extend all support for United Nations personnel in Yemen, including through bureaucratic assistance in advancing the additional deployment of United Nations staff and equipment. The safety and

security of United Nations personnel must be ensured at all times.

Despite the progress made on the political track, much remains to be done with relation to the humanitarian situation in Yemen. Urgent actions are still required in order to improve the living conditions of the Yemeni population, ensure their protection and avert the prospect of famine. We therefore urge the parties to do their utmost to advance confidence-building measures so that the humanitarian operations can be carried out unimpeded and without delay. To that end, the Al-Hudaydah-Sana'a highway must be urgently reopened in order to allow the functioning of the humanitarian corridor. We underscore the urgent need to lift all bureaucratic restrictions on humanitarian access into and across Yemen.

We are pleased that the Security Council is united, and we hope that it will stay united in order to help our Yemeni friends to implement the agreement. We are also very supportive of the efforts of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to prepare a technical resolution.

**Mr. Cohen** (United States of America): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, for their briefings and for their excellent work to achieve and implement the agreements reached in Stockholm. We also deeply appreciate retired Major General Cammaert's work in establishing the Redeployment Coordination Committee in Al-Hudaydah, which is an essential element in implementing the Stockholm Agreement, and the work of the Resident Coordinator in Yemen, Ms. Lise Grande, to amplify the message of the enormous and critical humanitarian needs of Yemenis on the ground.

The Secretary-General's 7 January report (S/2019/11) on the status of implementation of resolution 2451 (2018) notes the important progress made to date, particularly the swift establishment of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, demonstrating the parties' desire to turn the page. It is significant that the Republic of Yemen Government and Houthi representatives have shown a willingness to forge a political settlement, and we stand by the Secretary-General's assertion that we should not take for granted that progress in trying to bring to a conclusion years of war, suffering and hunger.

But if we share the Secretary-General's measured optimism, we also share his concerns regarding the complexity of the task ahead. In particular, despite those promising efforts, the situation on the ground for millions of Yemenis remains dire. According to a report from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued just Monday, prices of basic commodities, including food and petrol, are up 137 per cent and 261 per cent, respectively. There has been only one containerized shipment to Al-Hudaydah since 2017, as we heard this morning, and all parties need to lift the wide range of bureaucratic obstacles that stand in the way of delivering assistance.

We are concerned by the World Food Programme's reports of Houthi food aid diversion and call for a thorough investigation to identify and hold accountable those responsible for this shameful theft. Interference with United Nations relief efforts can only prolong the misery of Yemeni citizens. We call on all sides to ensure that food aid reaches those who need it most. We also call on all parties to fully honour the ceasefire in Al-Hudaydah and to ensure that the redeployments agreed to in Sweden proceed in due course. Credible redeployments are critical to sustaining peace in Al-Hudaydah and to restoring a functioning port to the country.

We, and indeed the Council, have long held that only a political solution will lead to the sustained and stable peace that the people of Yemen deserve. In that regard, the United States will continue to strongly support the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths.

Finally, we express our appreciation to the United Kingdom for its leadership in crafting the resolutions needed to affirm the Council's support for the agreement reached in Sweden and, now, to establish a United Nations mission in Al-Hudaydah. The United States will do its utmost to ensure that all United Nations efforts, including those to oversee the ceasefire, are successful and contribute to a peaceful solution, which is long overdue.

**Mr. Ipo** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this briefing on the implementation of the provisions of the Stockholm Agreement, concluded on 13 December 2018 between the Yemeni parties. We would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief

Coordinator, respectively, whose briefings update the Security Council on the status of implementation of the Agreement, which it endorsed through resolution 2451 (2018).

Côte d'Ivoire would once again like to congratulate the Secretary-General on his tireless efforts that led to the conclusion of a ceasefire — a prerequisite to the establishment of an inclusive dialogue towards a lasting solution to the crisis in Yemen. My country also welcomes the spirit of compromise of the parties to the conflict and urges them to work harder so that the hope for peace generated by the Agreement becomes a reality. In that way, the Yemeni people, devastated by several years of war, will at last be able to find peace, stability and prosperity.

Côte d'Ivoire strongly hopes that the unity of the Council, embodied in the unanimous adoption of resolution 2451 (2018), will be further strengthened at this crucial stage in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. To achieve that, each actor will have to demonstrate his goodwill and commitment to building on that significant gain in terms of resolving the Yemeni crisis. In that regard, my country calls on all parties to fully cooperate with the United Nations in the diligent implementation of the Agreement, the three main points of which, it should be recalled, concern the ceasefire in the city of Al-Hudaydah, which came into force on 18 December 2018, followed by the mutual redeployment of the belligerent forces outside the ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Issa; the mechanism for implementing the agreement on the exchange of nearly 15,000 prisoners; and the statement of understanding on the city of Taiz, with a view to the opening of humanitarian corridors.

Given the serious humanitarian crisis affecting more than 20 million Yemenis, 4 million of whom face the risk of famine, the international community must provide urgent and appropriate responses that meet the needs. Côte d'Ivoire believes that the removal of administrative obstacles and the adoption of measures to relaunch port activities will facilitate the transport and delivery of humanitarian assistance and the resumption of economic and commercial activities. We also recall that any impediment of the provision of humanitarian assistance is a violation of international humanitarian law and human rights. My country therefore urges the Yemeni parties to work with the United Nations specialized agencies to protect and deliver humanitarian assistance to the affected areas

and populations. To that end, we welcome the statement made by the Houthi leader following the request of the World Food Programme to investigate the diversion of nearly 12,000 tons of humanitarian aid in the Yemeni capital in August and September 2018.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the positive momentum generated by the Stockholm Agreement and the operationalization of the Redeployment Coordination Committee. We therefore call on Yemeni stakeholders to refrain from any action likely to lead to a resumption of hostilities and to continue their cooperation with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in order to consolidate the gains made in Stockholm.

My country notes with satisfaction that, in accordance with resolution 2451 (2018), the United Nations monitoring team, headed by retired Major General Patrick Cammaert and responsible for consolidating the ceasefire, is operational. We welcome the holding in Al-Hudaydah of the first joint meeting of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, which is responsible for overseeing the ceasefire. The meeting led to constructive discussions on the mandate of the Committee and on the main priorities in terms of maintaining the ceasefire, humanitarian access and the redeployment of military forces. Côte d'Ivoire therefore notes with satisfaction the commitment of the warring parties to implementing the Stockholm Agreement.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its support to Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock, as well as Major General Patrick Cammaert and his monitoring team, whose rapid deployment, particularly in the cities of Aden, Sana'a and Al-Hudaydah, illustrates the international community's commitment to resolving the crisis. We reiterate our appeal to the parties to the conflict to exercise restraint and calls on them to respect their commitment to the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement in order to give peace and stability in Yemen a chance.

**Mr. Matjila** (South Africa): Allow me first to thank the briefers — Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock — for their briefings. South Africa would like to make the following points with regard to the situation in Yemen.

South Africa remains concerned about the impact of the conflict in Yemen, which has resulted in a deteriorating humanitarian crisis. We support the need to address the political and security concerns as part

of dealing with that humanitarian crisis. The conflict in Yemen has already led to unspeakable tragedy for millions of people. Innocent civilians, in particular women and children, have been most affected by the effects of that devastating war, which has become one of the world's largest humanitarian crises.

We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, to convene the meeting in Sweden last month. We are pleased that the Yemeni Government and the Houthis participated in the discussions that led to the Stockholm Agreement. We are also pleased that the Security Council was able to rapidly show unity of purpose following the Stockholm meeting and adopt resolution 2451 (2018).

We note the proposal by the Secretary-General regarding the modalities for the monitoring mechanism. We also note the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of the resolution (S/2019/11). We are pleased that the Redeployment Coordination Committee has met, bringing together representatives of the Government and the Houthis. It is important that the parties agree on confidence-building measures to overcome the trust deficit that exists.

However, we are concerned that, during the reporting period, there were mutual allegations of ceasefire violations by both sides. It is imperative that the resolution and the Stockholm Agreement be implemented by all parties and that there be a cessation of hostilities. We wish to reiterate that the only sustainable solution lies in negotiations and a Yemen-led political settlement that is inclusive and fair and that puts the interests and well-being of all the citizens of Yemen first.

We wish to remind the parties to the conflict that they have an obligation to fully facilitate sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access, as required by international humanitarian law. We further call on the parties to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers and of United Nations personnel, and we call for the speedy facilitation of visas and other logistical support. We welcome the granting of 56 visas as a positive step. However, that should not be a one-off event. We look forward to the meeting scheduled in Amman next week, as Mr. Griffiths indicated, to discuss the long-awaited exchange of prisoners by both sides.

In conclusion, we appeal to both sides to spare the lives of women and children in Yemen.



**Mr. Djani** (Indonesia): As the last speaker before you take the floor, Mr. President, I can safely assume that all of us share the same views, namely, that, first of all, the situation is grave — it is dire — and that Yemen is in crisis and needs urgent action. In connection with that, there is a need for the Security Council to keep track of progress and monitor the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement.

I appreciate the briefings that were given by Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock, which give us a clear understanding of what is happening on the ground. I also appreciate the fact that the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2451 (2018). As many have stated, the unanimous adoption of the resolution underlines the Council's unity on this issue. I think we should capitalize on this unity and move the ball forward. We should ensure that the Stockholm Agreement is followed up with further concrete action from the Council. What is most important is that the Council took immediate action to address the plight of the Yemeni people.

As many have said, the people of Yemen have suffered for far too long from famine, disease and economic recession exacerbated by the armed conflict, as we heard from Mr. Lowcock just now. In this context, my delegation wishes to support whatever action the Secretary-General would like to take to ensure that we address the situation appropriately.

I would like to highlight several other points. First, we welcome the appointment of Major General Patrick Cammaert as the Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee. We are happy to learn that Major General Cammaert and the advance team are already playing an active role in meeting and engaging with both parties to implement the Stockholm Agreement. It is important that the Committee finalize the modalities for the redeployment of forces, including time frames, and identify a suitable and secure location and units for deployment. Consequently, the two-phased redeployment of forces envisioned in the Stockholm Agreement could be implemented immediately, thus providing critical access for the delivery of humanitarian necessities.

Secondly, Indonesia welcomes the proposal to establish a United Nations mission to support the implementation of the agreement on the city of Al-Hudaydah and ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa. The mission will play an important

role in monitoring the redeployment of forces from both parties to implement the ceasefire in the city of Al-Hudaydah and the ports. With this mission, we hope that humanitarian assistance can be delivered in a timely manner to the people of Yemen, which is in dire need of such assistance. The mission will also contribute to sustaining the political process launched by the Special Envoy last year.

This is the heart of the Stockholm Agreement, and Indonesia stands ready to support any efforts aimed at alleviating Yemen's grave humanitarian crisis. We believe that a medical air bridge should be opened and that deliveries made unabated. We think that any efforts aimed at meeting the humanitarian needs of the people should be ensured. We would also like to emphasize that the safety and security of United Nations personnel is of paramount importance. Accordingly, it is very important to put in place safety measures and infrastructure prior to the establishment of the mission. It is crucial to have a full assessment of the situation on the ground.

Thirdly, my delegation also regrets that the humanitarian situation in Yemen remains grave. We are hopeful that the current political solution under way will bring immediate relief and gradual improvement to the humanitarian situation. We hope that it will be possible for commercial activities and economic development to proceed unhindered, which would help to alleviate the suffering of the people. Concerted efforts by United Nations entities must continue to be geared towards humanitarian relief for the people of Yemen.

In conclusion, it is our fervent hope that the positive momentum will be maintained and continued through the engagement of all parties in inclusive dialogue involving all relevant stakeholders, in particular to implement measures that build confidence for all. All parties need confidence, and we should ensure that the Stockholm Agreement is duly implemented and that progress is achieved in Al-Hudaydah. The peace that is attained needs to be replicated and multiplied across all of Yemen.

I would reiterate what Mr. Griffiths mentioned in his briefing. Al-Hudaydah should not be the last stop: we should ensure that there is success there so that it can be reproduced in other parts of the country. Like others, Indonesia naturally stands ready to support the Secretary-General's proposal to provide United Nations support and any efforts aimed at ensuring peace and

stability for the sake of the people of Yemen. That should be the top priority of the Security Council.

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

I thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their comprehensive briefings on the humanitarian and political situation in Yemen in the light of the most recent developments in the country's peace process.

For the Dominican Republic, it is of the utmost importance to recognize the invaluable and fruitful political consultations held in early December under the auspices of the United Nations and with the assistance of several Member States in the search for a rapprochement between the parties. The Stockholm agreements are a step forward in ending one of the most terrible conflicts in our recent history, which has left millions of people, mainly children, in a situation of hunger and malnutrition with truly regrettable long-term effects.

I acknowledge Mr. Griffiths for his brilliant diplomatic and mediation work with the parties. The Dominican Republic will do everything in its power to contribute to the realization and strengthening of the Stockholm agreements and, through the Council, to support the work of the Redeployment Coordination Committee in implementing those agreements as well as the work of the Special Envoy. However, we regret that during the visit to Sana'a, it was not possible to reach agreement on future rounds of consultations that could pave the way for the resumption of formal negotiations towards a political solution. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to and recognize the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, which, in the most unimaginable of circumstances, have assisted the Yemeni people and continue to attend to their needs with a view to alleviating their suffering.

A tribute needs to be extended to United Nations partners, including international non-governmental organizations and Yemenis who, day after day, contribute to the arduous task of providing much-needed humanitarian assistance. However, for my country, it is crucial that, in the light of progress being made towards peace in Yemen, all efforts towards seeking a political solution should be sustained, including through the meaningful participation of women and young people in conflict resolution processes, and to keep protection

and humanitarian assistance accessible to the millions of people who would otherwise not be able to survive.

In this regard, with everyone's permission, I would like to emphasize the following. Mr. Lowcock noted that the number of people with acute humanitarian needs in Yemen is estimated to reach 24 million by 2019, far more than in any other country in the world today. It is really a challenge from many points of view, including that of financing, and one that forces us to keep on the table and not lose sight of the most pressing needs of the affected population in Yemen, but also one with a view to creating the necessary foundations for the re-establishment of the economy, livelihoods and development in Yemen, by and for Yemenis. Therefore, with a complementary and inclusive approach, we must at all costs avoid an intensification of needs, which would prolong the emergency situation longer than necessary, and give way to a process of rehabilitation and sustainable development in the country.

We are concerned that, despite the reduction in hostilities, there are still serious limitations on humanitarian access in several regions of the country due to bureaucratic procedures. We emphasize the need to expedite provisions that allow the entry and distribution of humanitarian assistance to affected populations without further delay. We have received a very clear message from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other actors on the ground about the sense of anguish of many Yemeni families, particularly internally displaced persons, which must be avoided. People's sense of hope must be restored. Only then will the country be able to stand up and move towards a new future.

In a reality as overwhelming as the one before us, the Dominican Republic urges all actors on the ground to adhere to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in order to achieve effective and transparent humanitarian assistance that can access the affected populations and bring so many people out of despair and hunger.

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 greet you, Mr. President, and all the elected members of the Security Council for the period 2019-2020, as well as to wish them and

their delegations success. I also congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Singer Weisinger on presiding over the work of the Council this month. I wish you and the friendly delegation of the Dominican Republic every success.

I would furthermore like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths for his efforts to find a political solution to put an end to the conflict and bring lasting peace to Yemen, based upon the agreed terms of reference. I also thank Mr. Mark Lowcock for his briefing and efforts and those of his team in the field. They seek to mitigate the suffering of the Yemeni people, caused by the coup d'état of the Houthi militias. I also thank retired Major General Patrick Cammaert for his important and effective role in enhancing the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and strengthening the role of the Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) in the city of Al-Hudaydah.

The Yemeni Government welcomed resolution 2451 (2018), on the Stockholm Agreement. We have undertaken to implement the Agreement in line with the timelines set out, including the withdrawal of the Houthi militias from the city and ports of Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa, as well as the implementation of the mechanism under the prisoner exchange agreement and the declaration of understanding on Taiz.

Since the ceasefire was announced on 18 December, the Houthi militias have continued to carry out ongoing violations of the ceasefire agreement and the redeployment agreement in the city of Al-Hudaydah. Up until 7 January, there were 434 such violations, leading to major losses, the killing of 33 martyrs and injuries to 263 persons. Snipers have been used, as have mortar fire and medium-range ballistic missiles. Those violations can no longer be considered individual acts. They were surely systematic provocations by the Houthi leaders who want to undermine the Stockholm Agreement. The Houthi militias are not satisfied with just hampering the withdrawal from the ports and city of Al-Hudaydah, but over the past three weeks have set up 109 new earthen barriers and dug 51 additional trenches, which have made the movement of the citizens in the city more difficult while also impeding relief assistance.

The Yemeni Government reiterates its support for the Chair of the RCC to fully carry out his role, namely, to implement the Stockholm Agreement on Al-Hudaydah, in line with the agreed upon provisions.

The redeployment concept is clear pursuant to the Stockholm Agreement and resolution 2451 (2018). The Yemeni Government stresses that any delays or any extension of the timeline stipulated in the Agreement should not be permitted as a tactic of the Houthi militias that want to hinder the implementation of the Agreement.

In that regard, the Yemeni Government underscores the important and effective role of the Security Council and the international community in implementing the Agreement, while also monitoring the situation in the city of Al-Hudaydah. We urge the Council to shoulder its responsibilities and condemn the violations committed by the Houthi militias and take the necessary measures to punish the perpetrators of those violations.

The implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and respect for the withdrawal and redeployment, according to the agreed upon time frame, are absolutely crucial. That needs to take place before a new round of consultations is started.

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Yemen has reiterated on numerous occasions the clear position of Yemen regarding its support for the Special Envoy to Yemen, the last of which was stated during their meeting recently. He said that our country is ready to provide all the facilities to ensure that the Special Envoy can fully carry out his work. My country's Government once again confirms its full commitment to actively participate in any political consultations convened by the United Nations, as long as the objective, mechanism and framework are clear and in line with the agreed upon terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the Yemeni National Dialogue Conference and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). We would like to reiterate in that regard that Yemen's President is keen to mitigate the suffering of our Yemeni people as a result of the coup carried out by the Houthi militias. He has ordered the Government to pay the salaries of employees in Al-Hudaydah governorate so as to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the people in that province.

The Stockholm Agreement is clear and straightforward. It cannot be reinterpreted, especially concerning the confirmation that the responsibility to maintain security in the ports and the city of Al-Hudaydah rests on local security forces, in

accordance with Yemeni law. The appropriate judicial processes therefore need to be respected. International law, the Charter of the United Nations and Yemeni law all recognize just one Yemeni Government, which is the legitimate Government headed by President Hadi. That Government is responsible for local forces, local authority and the institutions of the Yemeni State.

However, the Houthi militias are not satisfied with just carrying out violations, but rather they are seeking to impede humanitarian action. On 5 January, the militias seized 72 relief trucks of the World Food Programme (WFP) headed for Ibb governorate. The Yemeni Government called on the United Nations to intervene urgently and exert pressure on the Houthi militias to immediately release the trucks and to condemn those barbaric acts, which have aggravated the situation in militia-controlled areas and contributed to the suffering of the Yemeni people. The militias also seized more than 88 rescue and commercial ships as well as oil tankers, preventing them from entering Al-Hudaydah and Saleef ports in Al-Hudaydah governorate between May 2015 and December 2018, from which 34 ships were seized for more than six months, to the point where their cargo had spoiled. During that same period, the militias plundered and seized 697 relief trucks on the road that connects the governorates of Al-Hudaydah, Sana'a, Ibb, Taiz, Hajjah and Dhamar and in other militia-controlled governorates.

The most recent incident involved the seizing on 29 December 2018 of a 32 ton-truck in Al-Hudaydah port that had been headed for Sana'a governorate. The militias contravened the agreement in relation to permitting that truck to pass through which was made in the presence of the Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee. In October 2018, Houthi militias seized 51 tons of wheat provided by the WFP, which would have fed more than 3.7 million people for over four months.

The seizure of the last four rescue ships and oil tankers by the Houthi militias in Al-Hudaydah and Saleef ports occurred in September 2018. Their overall cargo was 25,050 tons of food supplies, 25,980 tons of diesel oil and 9,025 tons of oil. Houthi militias also bombed a garage containing four aid trucks transporting assistance provided by the King Salman

Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, which had been headed for Al-Bayda governorate. Those militias also set fire to WFP depots, burned more than 4,000 tons of wheat in Al-Hudaydah and attacked WFP warehouses four times in several areas of the governorate. They used neighbouring buildings as military barracks, as made clear in the letter from the Executive Director of the WFP dated 28 December 2018.

Those militias also detained an assistance convoy sent by the Yemeni Government, in agreement with the Houthi militias and overseen and organized by General Cammaert, Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, as well as in accordance with confidence-building measures and Stockholm Agreement. At the last minute, those militias aborted the agreement, in total disregard for the lives of the Yemeni people who are suffering because of the war imposed on them by those militias.

My Government hopes that the United Nations and the international community will play a more decisive role in deterring those uncontrolled militias so as to prevent them from defying the international resolutions and the agreements they have signed. The suffering of the Yemeni people must stop. International efforts to reweave the fabric of Yemeni society must not be undermined.

Lasting peace in Yemen requires an end to the illegal coup d'état against legality, national consensus and the political process as a whole, during which national institutions were taken hostage. Achieving lasting peace depends on the agreed terms of reference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). That resolution stipulates, inter alia, the withdrawal of Houthi militias from all cities and State institutions, the laying down of their arms and preventing the Houthi militias backed by Iran from ignoring the Council's resolutions and blackmailing the international community with the aim of prolonging the war and increasing the suffering of the Yemeni people.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.*