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Seventy-sixth year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Auväärt	(Estonia)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya	Mrs. Toroitich
	Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
	Niger	Mr. Abarry
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. King
	Tunisia	Mr. Ladeb
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ms. Najiba Al Naggar, founding member and Programs Manager of SOS Center for Youth Capabilities Development.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: I want to thank you, Mr. President, and all the members of the Security Council for the privilege that I have had serving as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen over the past three years. This will be my last briefing to the Council in this capacity. I would like to add that I am also particularly grateful to President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour for placing his trust in me in this assignment.

The United Nations has long characterized Yemen as the world's worst man-made humanitarian crisis, as we have so vividly heard from Mark Lowcock over these many months. I want to underline the "man-made" part of that statement. Ending a war is a choice. Yemeni men, women and children are suffering every day because people with power have missed the opportunities presented to them to make the necessary concessions to end the war. As a result, Yemenis are obliged to live under violence, insecurity and fear, with limits to their freedom of movement and freedom of expression. Perhaps most tragically, we are witness to the hopes and aspirations of a generation of young Yemenis for a peaceful future being dashed.

No amount of humanitarian assistance can compensate for the prospect of a brighter future. Only a negotiated political settlement can truly turn

the tide in Yemen. A political settlement that ends the war and ushers in a just and sustainable peace is what is needed. The parties to the conflict need to be courageous enough and willing to choose that path over the continuation of the conflict. Over the past three years of my assignment in Yemen, we have put many opportunities to the parties, but in vain. A mediator is not responsible for the war or for the peace. His, or her, privilege is not to have the power to end the war, despite a common assumption to the contrary. The mediator's privilege is to present to the parties the ways the war can end — and again, in this case, so far, in vain.

I want to thank the members of the Council — united in the purpose they have displayed on Yemen — and in particular the United States as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman and others, for their tireless diplomatic support and the considerable diplomatic firepower that is engaged in support of our efforts in this latest round of mediation. There has been no lack of will or effort.

In that context, allow me to turn to the current negotiations. As members know, for the past year and a half, I have conducted rounds of shuttle diplomacy with the parties on issues that I have often described to the Council and need not repeat here today. It is with deep regret that today I report that, as of now, the parties have not overcome their differences. Let me clearly reiterate to the members of the Council the positions of the parties, as I understand them, for the benefit of the historical record, if nothing else.

Ansar Allah is insisting on a stand-alone agreement on the Al-Hudaydah ports and Sana'a airport as a condition precedent for the ceasefire and the launch of the political process. Indeed, in my recent and useful meeting with Ansar Allah leader Abdelmalik Al-Houthi in Sana'a, he said to me that only after an agreement on ports and the airport were implemented would Ansar Allah begin negotiations on the ceasefire. That was not enough. The Government of Yemen, on the other hand, as we know well, insisted that all those issues — the ports, the airport, the ceasefire and the launching of the political process — be agreed to and implemented as a package, in particular with a focus on getting the ceasefire started. We have offered different solutions to bridge those positions. Unfortunately, as of now, none of those suggestions have been accepted. I very much hope, as I am sure we all do, that the efforts undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman in particular, as well as others, following my own visits to Sana'a and Riyadh

will bear fruit and that we will soon see a different turn of fate for Yemen.

I want to stress — as if it needed to be stressed — that a nationwide ceasefire would have undeniable humanitarian value: it is a humanitarian act to agree to start a ceasefire. It would allow for the silencing of guns, the opening of vital roads, including in Ma'rib, in Taiz and elsewhere, and a return to some sense of security for the people of Yemen, especially for civilians living near the multiple front lines in Yemen. Ma'rib, I should add, is just one of many fronts, but the loss of young lives there this past year is unconscionable. Let me also be clear that the continued closure of Sana'a airport, as well as the extensive restrictions on fuel through the ports of Al-Hudaydah, are unjustifiable and must be addressed urgently. We are already very late to do so, as Mr. Lowcock has reminded us time and again.

In Taiz, a great city in the heart of Yemen, people have experienced six gruelling years of war, and we have seen many courageous accounts of the situation there from journalists. The sniping of children is one of the images that brings it home to me, and I am sure that it is shocking to all of us. These people have suffered regular shelling of their homes and schools. Schools are already difficult to access owing to landmines, which obstruct the roads that lead to schools and places of worship. There are also extraordinary impediments to get to work in order to provide a basic livelihood for families. Nobody should have to live like that, and it is a shame on all of us that agreements made in Stockholm on Taiz have yielded no results whatsoever.

The Stockholm Agreement included the landmark Hodeidah Agreement, which established a ceasefire in that strategically located coastal governorate. It allowed for the distribution of vital goods, including food, arriving through the Red Sea ports, which had previously been disrupted by volatile front lines. The Hodeidah Agreement, sealed in late 2018, also resulted in a dramatic reduction in civilian deaths and injuries by as much as 80 per cent. That is not to say that stark challenges do not persist in Al-Hudaydah. As we will hear from Lieutenant General Abhijit Guha later, ceasefire violations are a daily occurrence. In addition, not enough progress has been achieved on reactivating the joint Redeployment Coordination Committee, a critical component of ensuring the ceasefire since the suspension of the committee in March 2020, despite the tireless efforts of Lieutenant General Guha and his

colleagues in the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement.

The war has also exacerbated divisions in the southern governorates. The situation there has come perilously close on several occasions to all-out conflict. For the sake of the peace process that we discuss here during these monthly briefings and in hope of longer-term stability, the partnership established between the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council — thanks to the exceptional and continuing efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — absolutely must continue to hold. Of course, mistrust runs deep, and there are major differences of opinion on how the future of Yemen should look. But the only way out of this quagmire is for the leadership of the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council to commit — as they did in the Riyadh agreement — to resolve their differences through dialogue now, and through political negotiations in the longer term.

I know that I am painting a bleak picture, but I also want to emphasize, in contrast, the achievements of Yemenis who — as we all know and as I am sure we will hear from our briefer — work every day to open roads and release prisoners, irrespective of the status of diplomatic mediation between their leaders. Yemenis have formed alliances and carried out initiatives that span from non-partisan media platforms to mobilization, organization and activism of civil society and community safety networks. Those courageous efforts are the hope and future of this wonderful and, currently, tragic country. It is our obligation to support them, listen to them and understand their leaders.

I want to take a step back to focus the remainder of my remarks today on what I am trying to learn from the past three years of my assignment.

Yemen is a tale of missed, and then lost, opportunities. That is not because the opportunities to escape from conflict are not frequent or evident. But I want to be clear — these are difficult decisions. Ending a war is a difficult decision requiring a confident leadership prepared to make concessions, which is always an essential part of decisions to be made to move from war to peace. This is a heavy responsibility. In a lifetime of involvement in conflicts of this sort, I have learned that, while opportunities to end war and move towards peace are often present, the courage needed to avail themselves of such opportunities is much rarer.

Yemen is no different. At times — and we have watched it together — leaders have come close to making that crucial choice of peace over war — to silence the guns, to start dialogue. We have seen moments of compromise and opportunity, whether in Stockholm two years ago, in prisoner exchanges — often more effective when carried out by the people themselves without our involvement — or in the de-escalation that happened from time to time on the many fronts of Yemen. But time and time again, when one side is ready to compromise, the other is not. Meanwhile, the polemics from social media and commentary in Yemen and from Yemen, raging against the enemy, the other, drown out the voices of those women, men and children who — as we all would — choose peace daily.

What has been most frustrating during my time as Special Envoy has been the absence of comprehensive peace talks. Of course, I have emphasized time and again the primacy and importance of a political process to negotiate the core political and security issues needed to end the war and ensure peace. I am reminded this week, having visited Kuwait a few days ago, that the last time the parties sat down to discuss these issues was in Kuwait in 2016, five years ago. This is, of course, deeply shocking.

Yemen needs an inclusive political process, and indeed a settlement, if we are to move away from the cycles of violence and conflict that preceded this five-year war. The dialogue, which we hope will start soon, may take a long time. It will be complex and multilayered. It should help Yemenis identify the elements of a peaceful settlement. The guiding principles for that vision, as we have discussed here in the Chamber, are already clear: political partnership, accountable governance, sovereignty, economic and social justice and equal citizenship.

A political settlement will need to reflect the interests of diverse conflict parties. It must guarantee the interests and rights of those most affected by the conflict and not only those who perpetuate and lead the conflict. My engagements with Yemeni civil society, women, local leaders and movements and youth over the past several years — almost certainly not as frequent as they should have been — are of the utmost importance to me and my colleagues. Those actors and champions for peace are the integral partners that we need to define that road map to peace in Yemen.

Time is not on Yemen's side. Over the course of the conflict, armed and political actors have multiplied and fragmented. Foreign interference has grown, not diminished. What was possible in terms of conflict resolution years ago is not possible today, and what is possible today may not be possible in future. I believe that it is possible that an international conversation or process may need to restate the realistic goals for a negotiation process.

Finally, for most of my time in office, I have been asking the parties to at least provide for the humanitarian needs of their people. But real leadership goes beyond looking to the immediate welfare of the people parties lead and represent to securing the rights and the future of their people. That is the real battle, and it lies ahead.

My worry is not so much about the ceasefire as about the future. Let me be clear: Yemen needs a pluralistic political future, and our political process must reflect that in the most robust and inclusive way.

We know very well what the people of Yemen want. There is no secret in this. It is precisely what the Security Council has always said it also wants: stability based on rights and freedom. For its survival and the welfare of its citizens, Yemen needs a Government that is accountable to its people and united in support of fundamental rights, and it needs an open and prosperous economy linked to the region and beyond. Every day of this war — every day that we do not get that ceasefire — the future is increasingly threatened. Let us, for the sake of Yemen, hope to end this war without delay so that we can begin the real and final battle, which is of course the battle for peace.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Lowcock.

Mr. Lowcock: Several weeks after starting this job, in October 2017, I went to Yemen again because I wanted to see for myself what was going on there and what the world might help. When I came back, I described, including here in the Security Council, what I saw: bombed out buildings, children starving to death, families crowded into tents, surging disease and a collapsing economy. The only way to stop all that suffering, I said, was to end the war. In the meantime, I noted, the world could also do other things that would help right away: better protection for civilians, more access for aid workers, more money for aid agencies

and more support for the Yemeni economy. Those five points will sound familiar. Nearly four years later, they are still the things we ask for every month.

But I believed then, as I do now, that by acting on all five of those issues, the world could make a difference. And over the years, we have seen some important achievements. In 2018 and 2019, for example, we stopped a major famine. There are some early signs that — perhaps — we will manage to stop a big famine again this year as well, although I should emphasize that it is still too early to be sure, and a lot depends on what happens in the next three months.

But two brushes with mass famine in three years is not a success, even if the worst was avoided. It is a failure. Millions of Yemenis can attest to that. Their lives have just kept getting worse.

There is broad agreement on what to do, including in the Security Council. We need to translate that agreement into action. That means everyone — especially the parties to the conflict — must act on all five of those points that we have been discussing in the Security Council for years.

Let us start with the protection of civilians. On average, at least five civilians are now being killed or injured by hostilities in Yemen every single day. May was the deadliest month so far this year, with more than 60 civilians killed across the country. On 10 June, a missile and drone attack, apparently launched by Ansar Allah forces, struck Ma'rib city, causing dozens of civilian casualties. The explosions also damaged a nearby residence for aid workers. The Ansar Allah offensive in Ma'rib continues to pose a direct threat to millions of people, including more than 1 million Yemenis who fled their homes and are sheltering in and around the city. Air strikes, shelling, clashes and other incidents have continued in other parts of Yemen over the past month as well, causing civilian casualties in Sa'ada, Taiz, Al-Hudaydah and elsewhere.

At all times, the parties must take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects throughout military operations. There must also be accountability for serious violations. And, as I have been saying since 2017, Yemen needs a nationwide ceasefire, as Martin Griffiths referred to in his briefing.

I would also like to draw attention once again to the plight of migrants and refugees, because yesterday a boat carrying more than 150 migrants sank off Yemen's

southern coast. Local reports indicate that 25 bodies have already washed up onshore; dozens of people are still missing. Migrants and refugees in Yemen face some of the most dangerous conditions in the world, and they need more support.

The next point is access for aid workers. Aid agencies are now helping more than 10 million people every month in Yemen, but they still face too many obstacles. Most, but not all, of the problems are in areas controlled by Ansar Allah. Senior donor and agency officials discussed all this in an important meeting on 1 June. They welcomed progress over the past year on such issues as assessments, project approvals and biometrics. But they were also clear that much more was needed, particularly to facilitate future assessments, allow aid workers to travel without undue restrictions, and agree standard operating procedures to fast-track project approvals, visas and other routine processes.

Where humanitarian agencies cannot do what they are supposed to do, we can expect funding to decline and aid to decrease. The parties — especially Ansar Allah — need to do more to facilitate the work of humanitarian agencies; that will help convince donors to sustain funding throughout the year.

My next point relates to funding for the humanitarian operations. Since the pledging event on 1 March, the response plan has moved from about 15 per cent funded to 43 per cent funded today. That is substantial progress, and I want to thank the United States, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, the European Union and those others that have stepped up.

As of today, the wider aid operation is on better financial footing. Starting this month, the World Food Programme is resuming full rations for 6 million hungry people whose aid had previously been cut. But the money will soon start running out again. In August, UNICEF will cut fuel support for water and sanitation systems serving 3.4 million people. In September, the World Health Organization will stop providing the minimum-service package that enables health care for 6 million people. The cuts will intensify from there. The dangers of famine, disease, including the coronavirus disease, and displacement have not gone away, and if more money does not come in, more people will die.

I therefore call once again on all donors to pay outstanding pledges right away. More than \$200 million in promises from the March event have still not been paid, including from some of Yemen's biggest donors. I

am also calling on donors to increase their support and ensure funds are distributed in a balanced way across all the sectors where we need activities to be financed.

In September, Sweden and Switzerland will co-host a humanitarian event on Yemen on the margins of the General Assembly. That meeting is intended to follow up on the pledging conference of 1 March, and it is really important that donors use the opportunity to increase their support and announce it that day.

My next point relates to Yemen's economy, which has collapsed as a result of the conflict. It is that economic collapse that is driving many of the most severe needs, including the risk of famine.

As I have often said before, the two fastest ways to help the economy are to free up commercial imports and to bolster the exchange rate. For years, the Security Council has agreed that commercial imports must be able to enter all ports in adequate quantities. But that is still not happening.

Fuel imports into Al-Hudaydah from January to May were one fifth the level — 20 per cent — of those during the equivalent period last year. As a result, fuel prices are going up, which is in turn making food, water and everything else more expensive, too, as well as forcing cuts in essential services.

Increased fuel imports through Aden have not offset the price increases. The Government recently authorized four fuel vessels to enter Al-Hudaydah. All had been previously cleared by the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism. One had been waiting more than six months for Government permission to proceed.

This cycle of shortages and partial relief, a stranglehold being enforced then gradually released, has been going on for a year due to a dispute over revenue. The parties really have to find a solution to that dispute. Mr. Griffiths has offered countless ideas to do that; they need to be taken up. Lifting restrictions on commercial imports, as well as refraining from interference in the domestic market, would help millions of people.

The second measure is strengthening the exchange rate, as this is a key determinant of what people can afford. The rial is now trading around 940 to the United States dollar in Government-held areas — a record low. And in May, food-basket prices exceeded 55,000 rials — a record high. And those two things are linked. The more the exchange rate collapses, the more

expensive food becomes, and so what is needed is what has worked previously: foreign exchange injections into the banking system would help stabilize the rial and bring down prices. And I really hope that Yemen's partners will work closely with the Government to achieve that.

Lastly, I turn to the question of progress towards peace. I strongly support everything Mr. Griffiths just told the Council. There has been no shortage of opportunities to stop the war. But the parties have failed to take those opportunities. As I said at the beginning, I have been calling for a nationwide ceasefire since late 2017. It would give Yemenis a break from the violence and create space for more political engagement. There should be no preconditions. War has solved nothing. I appeal to the parties to try something different and give peace a chance.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Al Naggar.

Ms. Al Naggar (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on Yemen. I do so today on behalf of the SOS Center for Youth Capabilities Development, which is a non-governmental organization that works on governance, peacebuilding, development and human rights.

I am one of the millions of Yemeni women who have suffered the scourge of war. In late March 2015, as mortars and missiles began to fall around us in Aden, my family and I fled to Taiz, in search of shelter. But Taiz was no different: at every sunset, we could hear the rumble of tanks as they passed through our neighbourhood before firing on the city below. We fled again, this time to Sana'a, but unfortunately there too the sound of aerial bombing followed us. I cannot describe to Council members the terror that haunts me and so many other Yemenis like me who have endured untold suffering throughout almost seven years of war.

Yemen today faces multiple crises. With the recent escalation on the frontlines and the challenges in implementing a de-escalation agreement, the country is far from achieving any political, economic or social stability in the near future.

Even prior to the outbreak of war, Yemen was the poorest country in the region, and, to date, the country has lost \$90 billion in economic output. The

alarming decline of the economy and currency since the outbreak of the war, in addition to the devastating impact of the coronavirus disease, have made the lives of millions of ordinary Yemenis more bitter as they face severe shortages of fuel, exorbitant increases in the costs of the necessities of life and no access to the most basic services, such as electricity, water or health care especially for women, who have been considerably affected. To survive, many women reduce how much they eat so that they can give more food to their children. They cut down on the number of meals they take, and they borrow food from friends or relatives. Families are going into debt to meet their most basic needs, and women are under increasingly greater pressure as the number of households headed by women grows.

With regard to Yemeni women's leadership, humanitarian relief and peacebuilding, our resilience is close to a breaking point. The conflict has put immense strain on the social fabric of our society. Tensions are high since the outbreak of violent local disputes. Gender-based violence is increasing, and it often goes unreported owing to survivors' fear of being killed, detained or exposed to further violence. Survivors are also silent because of stigma and a lack of security and the rule of law.

Despite this challenging situation, the overwhelming majority — 80 per cent of humanitarian first responders — are women. Yemeni women have been providing life-saving humanitarian assistance, even when the international community has been unable to reach communities desperately in need. When cities were under siege or roads had become unsafe for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, Yemeni women stepped in to negotiate local ceasefires and successfully called on warring parties to open up humanitarian corridors.

In my work, I support the inspiring efforts of young women and men to mediate, resolve conflict and build peace. While the conflict rages at the national level — with women and young people largely marginalized by the parties to the conflict and the United Nations — women are leading the peace agenda in our communities. Women have played an important role in addressing tribal tensions and community strife because they know their own communities; they best understand their needs, as well as the factors that trigger tension and conflict.

Women are doing all that against the odds, challenging gender norms and with far too little backing and resources from national and international actors. Increasingly in the past year, women in the north faced an additional hurdle in their efforts: authorities have imposed *mahram*, whereby women must be accompanied by a male relative when travelling.

Despite the critical role that Yemeni women have played in humanitarian action and peacebuilding, they have been excluded from formal and meaningful roles in the United Nations-led peace process, and, for the first time in two decades, they have been completely excluded from the new Yemeni Government. The United Nations and Yemeni authorities must do more to ensure women's formal and direct participation as stipulated in resolution 1325 (2000). In addition, as the Security Council itself has recognized, politically active women and women human rights defenders face threats, intimidation and attacks for speaking out about violations in their communities. To ensure that Yemeni women can continue to play active roles in public life, it is critical that they can do so without fear of retaliation.

The Yemeni people feel disappointment and abandoned by the international community. We need help from the Security Council, and we need it now. We therefore urge the Council to do the following.

First, the Security Council must redouble efforts to engage conflict parties and their backers to secure a sustainable, inclusive and nationwide ceasefire, in line with resolution 2532 (2020), that would support viable conditions for protecting civilians, including women, and lead to a resumption of peace negotiations. That goes hand in hand with fully enforcing the Riyadh agreement as a steppingstone for achieving stability and safety for the communities living in the southern governorates.

Secondly, the Security Council must undertake more coordination and mobilization with Member States, especially those with influence on the conflict parties, to expedite an inclusive, transparent and accountable peace process, and ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, youth and civil society of all political backgrounds from all regions of Yemen, including the south, in all diplomatic tracks and stages of the peace process, while ensuring a minimum 30 per cent quota for women as a matter of urgency.

Thirdly, the Security Council must call on the leadership of the United Nations Mission to Support the

Hodeidah Agreement and the international community to significantly increase support for local and national Yemeni women-led and women's rights organizations, especially core, flexible and long-term funding, and publicly underscore the crucial and legitimate efforts of women peacebuilders and humanitarians.

Fourthly, the Security Council must initiate and coordinate with Member States the provision of an effective and sustainable economic rescue package for Yemen. The package should include effective and sustainable measures to help stabilize the economy and strengthen the financial system to prevent further increases in food prices and enhance living conditions.

The President: I thank Ms. Al Naggar for her briefing.

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in the Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

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

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): May I start by thanking our briefers for their briefings today, but in particular for their work over the past few years and months. I would also like to thank Mark Lowcock as outgoing Under-Secretary-General, and I look forward to continuing our cooperation with Martin Griffiths in his new role.

Mr. Griffiths recent visit to Sana'a is welcome, but also sadly underlines that the Houthis waited until the last days of his tenure to invite him back to Sana'a for the first time in over a year. I think it is clear that the Houthis do not have the courage to embrace a ceasefire. Instead, last week, they again targeted civilian sites in Ma'rib indiscriminately with ballistic missiles, killing 10 civilians, and, on Sunday, a Houthi attack hit a Saudi school. I strongly condemn those acts as well as the Houthis' continued crackdown on the rights and freedoms of Yemeni women as well as religious and ethnic minorities.

I welcome Ms. Al Naggar's briefing today and clearly hear her call for a ceasefire backed up by the resources and support for women-led organizations for inclusive path to peace. I, and I am sure others, will encourage the new Special Envoy to consider how they

may work closely with you to make the process more inclusive and ensure that the positions of women, youth and minorities are genuinely represented going forward.

I would also like to thank Mr. Lowcock for his tireless efforts. In the past years as conflict has ravaged Yemen, but his and the United Nations efforts have helped support those in most need and save lives.

But the world's worst man-made humanitarian crisis continues. Severe fuel shortages continue to blight Yemen, meaning that the fuel imported into Al-Hudaydah is only one third of what would normally be expected. The United Kingdom calls on the parties to find a permanent solution to that issue. The Houthis must ensure that fuel imports are distributed transparently, and the Government of Yemen must ensure a reliable and sustained flow of fuel into northern Yemen.

Earlier this month the Security Council (see S/PV.8786) met to discuss the perilous situation of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker — a year after the Council first held a dedicated discussion on the *FSO SAFER* (see S/2020/721). Yet the tanker is no closer to being made safe. This issue is in the gift of the Houthis to deliver. We have heard the devastating toll that a worst-case scenario could put 670,000 lives at risk and take decades to clear. Rather than hiding behind endless bureaucratic hurdles, the Houthis must engage substantively to avoid a potential disaster.

Finally, as Mr. Griffiths said, Yemeni people have been paying a high price of lost and missed opportunities over six years. As we heard, a nationwide ceasefire would be a first critical step on the path to a future of stability, rights and freedom.

Mrs. Toroitich (Kenya): I thank Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Lowcock and Ms. Al Naggar for their briefings this morning.

The escalating level of violence in Yemen amid all the de-escalation efforts is unsettling. Kenya strongly condemns the two separate incidents of missile attacks launched in Ma'rib in the past 10 days, resulting in the loss of lives of innocent civilians. We convey our condolences to the affected families, the Government and the people of Yemen for the lives lost in those horrific and despicable attacks. No effort should be spared in bringing to justice the perpetrators of those abhorrent attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The recent explosion in Abyan that claimed six troops belonging to the Southern Transitional Council

is a stark warning of a possible surge in terrorism. We must remain acutely alert to these emerging threats and undertake pre-emptive measures. Otherwise, Yemen could become a net exporter of terrorism and violent extremism to the region and across the Gulf of Aden, to the Horn of Africa and beyond.

It is disappointing that some parties are capitalizing on the intensive diplomatic engagements to scale-up their military interventions with a view to shifting the trajectory of negotiations. We therefore urge all the parties to display sincere and genuine political commitment through the cessation of violence, at the minimum. Kenya hopes that the ongoing diplomatic process will result in an inclusive settlement that takes into consideration the needs of the population.

We strongly recommend that the peace resolution and recovery process incorporate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plus, conducted in a fashion that ensures that reintegrated former fighters do not relapse to armed conflict or become radicalized by terrorist groups.

Peace efforts must also recognize that a generation of Yemeni youth have been denied access to education by virtue of the protracted conflict. The international community must therefore deliberately invest in the young population through capacity-building in order to equip them with skills that would enable them to make a decent living and contribute to national development.

With regard to the dire humanitarian situation, Kenya welcomes the steps taken by donor countries to increase their funding for humanitarian relief efforts. We encourage them to honour and sustain their commitments. On that note, and in line with the Hodeidah Agreement, we urge the relevant authorities to ease the restrictions imposed on fuel imports, which create an additional burden due to their impact on the price of basic commodities, humanitarian operations and essential public services.

Kenya welcomes the discussions between the United Nations Office for Project Services and the Houthi technical team on the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. We hope the talks will lead to the rapid deployment of the inspection team so as to avert a looming environmental catastrophe that would have a devastating impact on Yemen and the surrounding region.

I reiterate that the security of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean is vital to international

trade and commerce and should not be put in jeopardy. In that regard, the world must speak in one voice and take collective action against all threats to the security and commercial viability of those maritime domains.

In conclusion, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Lowcock for their hard work and commitment to Yemen. We look forward to working closely with Mr. Griffiths in his new capacity and wish Mr. Lowcock all the best in his future endeavours.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, for his overview of the situation in Yemen and the steps he has taken to revive the comprehensive negotiation process under the auspices of the United Nations. We also thank Mr. Mark Lowcock for his assessment of the humanitarian situation in the country, and we listened very carefully to Ms. Najiba Al Naggar.

The Russian Federation is closely following the situation in Yemen, which is in its seventh year of acute military and political crisis. We have consistently advocated for the parties in Yemen to end the violence as soon as possible and move towards a peaceful resolution of their differences. There is no alternative to inter-Yemeni talks that take into account the interests and concerns of all.

In that regard, we reaffirm our support for the relevant United Nations efforts on this issue. We are grateful to Mr. Griffiths for his work in Yemen over the years and for his attempts to find solutions and launch negotiations between the parties. It has always been a difficult task, and there is still too much work to be done to bring about peace. We are concerned about the ongoing violence in various parts of the country. At the same time, we see a common goal — a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the many problems besetting Yemen, its people and, to a large extent, its neighbours in the region.

Finding a solution to the Yemeni crisis was discussed in detail during talks held in Sochi on 26 May between Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Ahmed Binmubarak, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Yemen, who was in Russia on a working visit. We will continue to actively encourage the official Yemeni authorities, the Ansar Allah movement and other Yemeni forces to adopt a constructive approach and be ready to compromise when considering their

differences. We welcome the constructive role of regional States in mediation efforts.

We are convinced that the cessation of hostilities should be accompanied by a series of confidence-building measures in the political, military and socioeconomic spheres, which would help to alleviate the dire situation of the Yemeni people, which the United Nations characterizes as the greatest humanitarian crisis in the world.

In that connection, we call on donors to provide the necessary financial support for United Nations humanitarian assistance. We also stress the need to fully lift the naval, land and air blockade of Yemen and the restrictions on the delivery of food, medicine, fuel and other essential goods. We recall that the assistance provided must not be biased or discriminatory.

We are convinced that a mutually acceptable solution, free from hidden political agendas, can also be found to the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. We call on the parties concerned, including the United Nations Office for Project Services, to take constructive action.

In conclusion, I would like to once again call on our colleagues to cooperate in the common interest of general de-escalation in the region, including on the basis of relevant resolution 598 (1987), as well as the Russian concept for collective security in the Persian Gulf region.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): First, I would like to thank Ms. Najiba Al Naggar for her frank and very inspiring words this morning. Listening to her reminds us clearly why a solution is urgently needed to the conflict in Yemen. After six years of war, the people of her country deserve a peaceful and prosperous future. That is what we keep saying when we meet here. All Yemenis, regardless of gender or age, must be afforded every opportunity to play a substantial role in shaping that future.

I would like to tell Ms. Al Naggar that Yemen needs women like her at the table, both in the peace talks and in the Government. We truly regret the exclusion of women from the current Government. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women can unlock inclusive paths to building peace for ordinary Yemenis and for their children, rebuilding infrastructure and institutions, and, as Ms. Al Naggar said this morning, working at the community level to defuse tensions and, against the odds, build the peace that we keep talking

about. Evidence shows us that women at the peace table can at least help to produce a more sustainable peace. That has been our experience on the island of Ireland in the last 20 years.

To the parties in Yemen, I would like to say that women's direct representation is not optional; it is actually their right. The Security Council has been united in calling for this.

Grass-roots peacebuilders like Ms. Al Naggar and civil society organizations can have a powerful impact in sustaining ceasefire implementation and building lasting peace.

Here is a striking figure: young people represent 70 per cent of the population. They also deserve their place in this discussion; they should be at the table when it comes to issues that critically affect their futures. We are relying on them, of course, to carry forward today's peacebuilding work into their future.

I want to salute Ms. Al Naggar's courage and the honesty of the message she brought to us. We know that much clearly remains to be done, but her very forward and concrete ideas this morning can one day become a reality. All of us at this table today must finish that work so that the Yemeni people can have an opportunity for real peace.

I want to sincerely thank Martin Griffiths, who, as he told us, is concluding his service as Special Envoy after three challenging years. We very much look forward to working with him in his new role as Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs. We know that he will bring to that role and its new responsibilities the same energy and dedication he brought to the post he is leaving. Despite the overall rather "bleak picture" that Mr. Griffiths painted for us this morning, we were nonetheless encouraged by his visit to Sana'a for the first time in a year and by the sustained diplomatic momentum generated by efforts of regional and international actors to bring an end to this conflict.

However difficult the decisions may be, moving from war to peace remains the only option, as Mr. Griffiths put it. We cannot escape the simple reality that what is needed now is decisive political will among the parties to the conflict and that they once and for all put the Yemeni people first and bring a conclusive end to the unconscionable violence on the basis of an inclusive political dialogue for the future of the country.

We reiterate our call for a nationwide ceasefire, and in particular we call on the Houthis to immediately halt the deadly offensive on Ma'rib, which continues to cause, as we have heard, widespread suffering, especially for those in informal camp settings.

We condemn in the strongest terms the attacks earlier this month on Ma'rib city, whose victims included children. We call on all parties to adhere to their responsibilities under international humanitarian and human rights law in terms of protecting civilians. Ireland fully supports the work of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen and calls for enabling full and unfettered access for the Group to carry out its work.

I also want to thank Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for his briefing today and for his outstanding and dedicated service at the United Nations. We know that this morning's meeting is his final appearance before the Council to discuss the situation in Yemen. During his tenure, he has shone a much-needed spotlight on this tragic humanitarian crisis. We all owe him a debt of appreciation for paying attention to this tragedy.

Regrettably, as we heard this morning, food insecurity persists at crisis levels throughout the country. The economic impact of the conflict continues to bring about dire humanitarian consequences. It is shocking to hear that the cost of food has reached record highs. Basic food items are out of reach for millions living with chronic and acute hunger. There should be no better incentive for stopping the war than ending this indefensible suffering.

Finally, earlier this month, the Council discussed the decaying *FSO SAFER* tanker, which poses an undeniable humanitarian and environmental threat. Ireland welcomes renewed efforts to reach agreement on access for a United Nations inspection team. We once again reiterate our call on the Houthis and the United Nations to reach an agreement on that issue as soon as possible.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Special Envoy Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock and Ms. Al Naggar for their detailed briefings. We also wish to convey Mexico's greetings to the Yemeni delegation.

My country, Mexico, notes with great concern the significant rise in humanitarian needs, in contrast with the limited resources available for a comprehensive response.

The disproportionate impact of the conflict in Yemen on vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, makes it essential to break the cycle of conflict and food insecurity. Some 12 million people are already in a state of dire need, 16 million are dependent on humanitarian assistance for their livelihoods, and these numbers continue to rise. Another example of this vicious cycle is the growing number of internally displaced persons as a result of the Houthi offensive in Ma'rib.

Mexico strongly condemns the attacks on a gas station and a residential neighbourhood in Ma'rib and on the Thabit Brothers industrial compound in Al-Hudaydah, as well as the attack on an ambulance and humanitarian personnel. We deplore any action that results in fatalities and injuries, especially those that hinder the laudable work of the medical corps. Mexico also condemns the orchestrated attacks against Saudi targets.

We call on the Houthi militias to cease hostilities immediately. Attacks against civilian targets are a serious violation of international humanitarian law, which, in addition to causing unnecessary death and injury, inhibit peace efforts and affect the stability of the region. We urgently call for these attacks to be investigated and for the perpetrators to be identified and brought to justice. We also call for the cessation of all arms transfers to parties to the conflict.

We welcome the hosting of the third Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting by Sweden and the European Commission on 1 June. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the Government of Mexico will contribute \$50,000 to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 for Yemen. We also reiterate our call on donors to continue to meet their obligations.

We note with concern the obstacles to the authorization of humanitarian operations, and we call on both Ansar Allah and the Government of Yemen to facilitate unrestricted access and expedite permits for humanitarian programmes.

Mexico supports the efforts of the Special Envoy aimed at promoting a ceasefire, the opening of ports and airports and, eventually, a political transition. We recall that a cessation of violence and freedom of movement are essential for humanitarian operations. We appreciate hearing the details of the Special Envoy's discussions with the Houthi leadership, as well as the

results of his recent meetings in Riyadh and Tehran to make progress on the ceasefire and the political process.

We also reiterate our support for the work of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hedaydah Agreement. We recognize that the Mission's performance is essential to the full implementation of the Agreement, which is a cornerstone for the stability of the city and port operations. We urge the parties, and in particular Ansar Allah, to maintain close cooperation with the Mission and ensure its free movement.

We also welcome the Special Envoy's recent meetings with representatives of civil society. The full, equal and substantive participation of women has proved crucial, for example, in the release of detainees. We therefore underscore that broad social participation is indispensable for the success of the political transition.

Before concluding, we would once again like to express our concern about the threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. We regret the fact that, in spite of the Security Council's call, Ansar Allah has still not authorized its inspection by the United Nations. We reiterate that any accident will significantly affect civilians, including the Houthis themselves.

(spoke in English)

Last but certainly not least, allow me to express my recognition of Mr. Griffiths' tireless efforts as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen. On behalf of my delegation, I wish him great success in his new role and look forward to continuing to work with him in that capacity. I would also like to thank Mr. Lowcock for his tireless efforts, his dedication and his sense of responsibility. I wish him every success in the future.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): We also thank Martin Griffiths and Mark Lowcock for their briefings. We very much welcome the insightful remarks of Ms. Najiba Al Naggar. Her activism is indispensable to achieving lasting peace in Yemen.

The conflict in Yemen is a multidimensional and toxic mix of continued fighting, a catastrophic humanitarian situation and economic collapse, all existing simultaneously against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease pandemic. We condemn the unabated fighting that has resulted in May being one of the deadliest months for civilians in the conflict for 2021. Also unacceptable is the impact of the fighting on the region, as recently exemplified by the drone attack

against a school in the region of Asir, Saudi Arabia. Those continued attacks, which constitute a violation of international law, have denied more than 2 million children access to education. We strongly urge the parties to work with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to establish an action plan to end and prevent the grave violations of children's rights.

The recent announcement by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition to end attacks is a much-welcomed initiative, which is necessary to create an environment conducive to the peace process. Without a nationwide ceasefire and a resumption of political talks, civilians in Yemen will continue to carry the burden of that conflict. It is therefore critical that the parties honour their obligations under international humanitarian law, which demands the rapid and unimpeded passage of impartial humanitarian relief for civilians in need. In a country where malnutrition rates among women and children remain the highest in the world, humanitarian assistance is the difference between life and death.

To that end, while we welcome the improved operating environment, the increase in funding for the humanitarian response plan and the World Food Programme's announcement to resume monthly distributions to approximately 6 million people in areas with the highest rates of food insecurity, the situation remains so dire that we must collectively redouble our efforts. We must also pay close attention to the plight of the migrants and refugees living in Yemen or using it as a transit point.

While the humanitarian situation needs our attention, another issue is the economy. The decreased purchasing power of Yemeni households makes basic goods and services inaccessible to many. We echo Under-Secretary-General Lowcock's appeals for support to the economy and call for a lifting of restrictions on civilian commercial imports.

The only way to achieve durable peace in Yemen is to resume political negotiations. For that to be successful, certain prerequisites are needed.

First, the political process must be inclusive of all groups within Yemen, including women and civil society organizations, who play a critical role in local mediation and peacebuilding.

Secondly, discussions must account for, and sufficiently reflect, the plurality of voices that exist within Yemen.

Thirdly the process must be Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned. An absence of political will would render all efforts to achieve peace futile.

Ms. Al Naggar underscored that Yemen is at a breaking point. She also emphasized that the Yemeni people feel abandoned by the international community. We must be mindful of that. We therefore echo Mr. Griffith's assessment that time is not on Yemen's side.

Before concluding, we turn our attention to the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. Our appeals for concrete progress on that issue and for the parties and relevant stakeholders to avoid its politicization must not become mere platitudes. We must continue to exert pressure on the parties, both bilaterally and multilaterally, until there is an adequate resolution. The potential impact of a spill or explosion is far too grave for us to relent.

In conclusion, we commend the diplomatic engagement and the commitment displayed by the international community and various humanitarian organizations to the people of Yemen. I have no doubt that this commitment, coupled with political will from the parties, will result in a political solution that limits the multigenerational impact of the conflict and results in a stable, peaceful and prosperous Yemen. As Mr. Lowcock so aptly concluded earlier, war has solved nothing. It is indeed time to give peace a chance.

I cannot cede the floor before conveying our heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Griffiths for his dedication to this file and to the people of Yemen. His will leave big shoes to fill, for he has poured his heart and soul into finding a solution. We will miss him, and we wish him well in his next assignment. We also thank Mr. Lowcock for his unwavering efforts, dedication and service and wish him all the best as he moves on. I wish them both profound peace.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their comprehensive briefings. I also thank Ms. Najiba Al Naggar for sharing her views. I welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to our meeting today.

There have been no significant changes in Yemen's peace process despite the tireless and resilient efforts

of the regional and international communities. In recent months, the military escalation in many parts of Yemen has continued, especially in Ma'rib, Taiz and Al-Hudaydah. People continue to be killed every day.

We share the view expressed by other Member States that there is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen. The only way out is for all parties to cease military hostilities and spare no effort to work with the Special Envoys, regional partners and the international community to secure the acceptance of the United Nations-led peace proposal for Yemen.

On the humanitarian issue, we welcome the improvement of humanitarian work in comparison with the same period last year. Thanks to recent funding from donors, the World Food Programme has resumed its monthly distributions to 6 million Yemenis in the areas with the highest rates of food insecurity. However, more funding and progress are required to ensure the smooth operation and stability of aid activities in the remaining months of this year.

Furthermore, increased hostilities and subsequent displacement, economic crisis, fuel shortages, food insecurity, starvation and the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic remain grave concerns. More than 20 million people rely on life-saving programmes, and at least 3 million people, including 1.58 million children, have been internally displaced. In addition, the education of about 1.4 million children has been disrupted owing to school closures in 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Against that backdrop, we would like to reiterate our call for prompt, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to Yemenis in need, especially in the north. In addition, we stress the urgency of further lifting the sea blockade to ensure predictable food and fuel supplies. All parties must also comply with international humanitarian law and implement resolution 2573 (2021), including the protection of civilian infrastructure, which is critical to the delivery of humanitarian aid. Moreover, it is crucial to ensure the provision of education and related services for children.

On the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker issue, we reiterate our deep concern over the grave threat the tanker poses to the environment, the economy and the people in the region. There is an urgent need to turn commitments into actions. The United Nations technical team should be allowed to perform its tasks and conduct the necessary repairs to the tanker without further delay.

Last but not least, we reiterate our support for the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and the Riyadh agreement.

As today is the last briefing by Special Envoy Griffiths, I would like to thank him for his tireless efforts and contributions to the promotion of peace, security and stability in Yemen and the region. I wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Mr. Ladeb (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I 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 valuable briefings on the situation developments in Yemen. I also welcome the participation in the meeting of Ms. Najiba Al Naggar and took careful note of her briefing.

Diplomatic efforts have continued to convince the parties to the conflict to agree on a ceasefire and resume the peace process. There is no alternative to an inclusive negotiated solution that takes into account the interests of all Yemenis, without any exception, exclusion or marginalization.

The conflict has lasted too long. The events and tragedies that have afflicted the Yemeni people have shown that military approaches to impose a *fait accompli* by force have resulted in more victims, destruction, displacement and threats to millions of people and have undermined opportunities for peace. We believe that this situation is unacceptable, especially given the grave deterioration in the humanitarian situation. Tunisia therefore supports once again the efforts of the United Nations and the contributions of the international community to end the conflict and resume the political process with the aim of achieving a peaceful solution that puts an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people, preserves the sovereignty, independence and unity of Yemen and restores its security and stability.

In that context, we call on the parties to the conflict to effectively engage in the political process, declare a comprehensive ceasefire and uphold the best interests of Yemen and its people. We also commend the efforts of Mr. Griffiths to build trust between the parties to the conflict and facilitate communication with a view to launching the peace process and enhancing women's participation in it.

We condemn the continued attack on Ma'rib, which further complicates the situation and undermines efforts to end the crisis and exacerbates the humanitarian crisis. We once again reiterate the need for the parties to the conflict to commit themselves to saving civilians and civilian facilities and respecting international law and international human rights law. In that context, my country's delegation reiterates its condemnation of the continuing attacks against the territory of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the targeting of civilians in that country. We call on the Houthis to put an end to such actions.

Yemen is facing the gravest humanitarian crisis in the world, which has been exacerbated by continuous military operations, the deterioration of economic and living conditions and a lack of relief assistance, as well as the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic. According to international reports, millions of people are threatened by famine and 54 per cent of Yemenis require food assistance.

In that regard, we renew our call to facilitate the provision of unhindered humanitarian and medical assistance to those in need, lift port restrictions and open airports. Sufficient financing for humanitarian operations must be provided in order to allow humanitarian assistance for the Yemeni people to continue and their urgent needs to be met.

At the beginning of this month, the Security Council devoted an entire meeting to the issue of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker (see S/PV.8786), which seriously threatens to bring about an unprecedented environmental, economic and humanitarian catastrophe that could paralyse the movement of more than 20,000 ships in the Red Sea, one of the busiest shipping channels in the world. We therefore reiterate our call for the necessary measures to be concluded to allow United Nations experts to access the tanker and carry out the much-needed maintenance as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I once again express my thanks and appreciation to Mr. Griffiths for his efforts during his time in office as Special Envoy at the helm of the United Nations Office in Yemen. I also thank Mr. Lowcock for his valuable efforts in the humanitarian field, which unfortunately has become the most prominent feature of most crises in the world. I wish them both every success in their future endeavours.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I would like to start this month with a special thank you

to our briefers. I thank Special Envoy Griffiths for his work to end the war in Yemen. He has spent more than three years working to bring the parties together to end this conflict and improve the humanitarian situation. The United States appreciates its close cooperation with Mr. Griffiths. We look forward to continuing that cooperation as he takes up his new role.

As this is also Under-Secretary-General Lowcock's last scheduled briefing to the Security Council, we wish to offer our most sincere thanks to him for shining a light on the world's most difficult, challenging corners. On Yemen and beyond, over the past three and half years he has stood up for humanity, given voice to those most in need and spurred the Security Council to action. We wish him the very best in his next chapter.

We thank our civil society breifer, Ms. Najiba Al Naggar, for her work advocating for women and young people's meaningful participation in peacebuilding efforts.

Over the past year, Special Envoy Griffiths has negotiated a proposal that would ease restrictions at Al-Hudaydah port and Sana'a airport — a key Houthi demand — establish a ceasefire and begin inclusive political talks. The Saudi and Yemeni Governments have expressed their willingness to commit to that proposal. By contrast, the Houthis have refused to engage meaningfully on a ceasefire or take steps to resolve the nearly seven-year-long conflict. They refuse to even discuss the question of a ceasefire with Special Envoy Griffiths. Instead, the Houthis proceed with their devastating offensive on Ma'rib.

On 6 June, the Houthis callously struck a gasoline station, killing 21 Yemenis, including a young girl who was burned beyond recognition. We condemn these and other egregious actions by the Houthis, who continue to inflict lasting and irreversible damage on the Yemeni people. Each day that the Houthis keep up their offensive in Ma'rib, they ignore the Council's calls for them to stop the violence and enter negotiations.

Houthi intransigence is not the only impediment to lasting peace in Yemen. We call on the Yemeni Government and the Southern Transitional Council to put the interests of the Yemeni people first and resolve their differences. Time is of the essence. The people of Yemen need a unified Government that can provide services and exert leadership through this time of crisis. The Government and the Southern Transitional Council are restarting negotiations on implementing the Riyadh

Agreement, and we hope those negotiations will bear fruit. We wish to thank the Saudi Government for its continued facilitation of those discussions.

Meanwhile, Yemen remains one of the world's largest humanitarian emergencies, with an estimated 20.7 million people — 66 per cent of the population — in need of humanitarian assistance this year. There is only one way to permanently address the humanitarian crisis in Yemen — a lasting ceasefire and an inclusive political solution. Until then, the international community, especially our partners in the Gulf, must step up to fund the humanitarian response without delay. We urge all parties to permit the free flow of both commercial and humanitarian commodities through the Red Sea ports. Otherwise, conditions for the 70 per cent of the Yemeni population living in Houthi-controlled areas are certain to deteriorate.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker. As we heard earlier this month (see S/PV.8786), the risks of a catastrophic spill or explosion grow daily. Yet there has been no significant progress since the Council's previous meeting dedicated to the issue (see S/2020/721), almost a year ago. The Houthis have ignored the Council's renewed call for action earlier this month and continue to obstruct a United Nations assessment while lives and livelihoods hang in the balance. We call on the Houthis to allow the United Nations unconditional and safe access to conduct the assessment and initial repair mission without further delay. The responsibility for this impending humanitarian, economic and environment disaster lies with the Houthis — and the Houthis alone.

Turning to the upcoming mandate renewal for the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), I want to note the Mission's important role in monitoring the implementation of the governorate-wide ceasefire agreed to in Stockholm in December 2018. Despite the significant challenges over the past year, the ceasefire and UNMHA have contributed to an overall reduction in violence across the governorate and the safety and partial functioning of the Red Sea ports, thus enabling the receiving and offloading of vessels and conditions that permit some economic activity and humanitarian access. We look forward to UNMHA's renewal.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their briefings and for their strenuous efforts over the past

few years. Since it is Mr. Griffiths' last briefing, let me thank him wholeheartedly for doing an impressive job under extremely difficult circumstances and welcome him to his new position at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I also extend a warm and special welcome to Ms. Najiba Al Naggar and thank her for joining us today and sharing her important perspectives. She demonstrates how ensuring the meaningful participation of civil society groups is not just the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do.

We stand at a crossroads. Negotiations on the four-point plan have been going on for more than a year. Regrettably, the Houthis have signalled that they would like to limit the deal to humanitarian measures — opening the airport in Sana'a and the port of Al-Hudaydah — before any negotiations on the ceasefire. We stress, however, that a nationwide ceasefire is indeed a humanitarian measure. This is a man-made crisis caused by the armed conflict. According to the World Food Programme, 400,000 children in Yemen under the age of 5 are likely to die of starvation in 2021, an unthinkable tragedy. The Houthis will carry a very heavy responsibility if they continue to reject a nationwide ceasefire deal and ignore parties that are ready for peace. That opportunity might not come again. We call on all parties to engage in unconditional talks to end the suffering of the Yemeni people.

We all heard from Ms. Al Naggar the importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women. As we have done several times in the Security Council, Norway will continue to advocate for an inclusive political process. Women and civil society groups in Yemen have considerable experience in brokering local truces, reopening roads and freeing prisoners. Nevertheless, they still face significant barriers to meaningful engagement in peace and security processes and are subject to harassment and intimidation. We must empower those most affected by conflict to be at the centre of shaping solutions. Participation should not be limited to those who resort to violence. There are other groups with important influence in Yemen, including political parties, tribes and local authorities.

Negotiations will also need to address the root causes of conflict. The process must be Yemeni-owned and Yemeni-led, and regional actors must play an important role. With that in mind, we are deeply concerned about signs of increasing unrest and destabilization in the south. We urge regional actors with influence over the parties to use it towards a solution.

Regarding the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker and the growing Houthi demands, it is clearly unrealistic to repair the ship and make it operational again due to its dilapidated condition. Even if the United Nations were to repair the ship, it would first have to be inspected to assess its needs and condition, and then a mutual agreement would have to be reached. As Council members, we should call on the Houthi leaders to act responsibly and reach an agreement. It is unacceptable to put the blame on the United Nations. Given the urgency of the matter, the United Nations needs to focus on sustainable contingency planning and other possible solutions as soon as possible.

Alarmingly, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. The number of deaths due to the coronavirus disease are clearly underreported, and more vaccines are urgently needed in the north. In addition, the shortage of fuel continues to impact the situation. Reports of serious violations of humanitarian law, particularly in Ma'rib, also continue. We are particularly appalled by reports that the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict is openly taking place. Norway would welcome a detailed analysis on this in the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict. Echoing others, we are deeply concerned about reports of recent attacks in Ma'rib, causing civilian casualties, including children.

As I noted earlier, we stand at a crossroads for the people of Yemen, and we have heard voices calling for peace — as we did this morning. We hope the Council will also add its voice.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): I join others in thanking Special Envoy Martin Griffiths for his efforts for more than three years to secure peace in Yemen. We look forward to working with him in his new role as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for his briefing and his service as head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and wish him the best in his future endeavours. I also thank Ms. Najiba Al Naggar for her briefing and for bringing a civil society perspective to today's meeting.

The ongoing fighting in several parts of Yemen, including the continued attacks in Ma'rib by Ansar Allah, has undermined the prospects for peace in the country. Despite intense regional and international diplomatic efforts, including by the United Nations, a

breakthrough to end hostilities has unfortunately not yet been achieved. With every passing day, the human toll of the conflict is increasing, especially among Yemeni children, as witnessed recently during the attacks in Ma'rib city.

We call on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to take concrete steps towards de-escalation in order to avoid further suffering for the Yemeni people. It is clear that there cannot be a military solution to the conflict. Prolonging the hostilities will not benefit anyone except terrorist groups like Al-Qaida, who will exploit the situation for their own benefit, thereby further aggravating the humanitarian and security situation.

We are also witnessing the resumption of attacks arising out of Yemen on commercial ships navigating the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. India is deeply worried by this trend, which threatens not only the safe passage of commercial vessels but also maritime security in the region as a whole. We also condemn the cross-border attacks on critical civilian and energy infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, which threaten regional security and stability. Strict implementation of the arms embargo envisaged in resolution 2216 (2015) and its effective monitoring are necessary to the elimination of such threats in future.

There is no long-term solution to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen without ending the conflict. A nationwide ceasefire is the starting point for a full cessation of hostilities, and India strongly supports all efforts to achieve such a ceasefire.

Restrictions on the flow of essential commodities into Yemen and impediments to internal movement of humanitarian aid are also exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. We appreciate the recent clearances for entry into Al-Hudaydah port issued to fuel ships by the Government of Yemen, which will ease the pressure on fuel availability in the country. A sustainable solution to this issue that also addresses the proper handling of oil-related revenues is an urgent requirement.

The 2021 humanitarian response plan for Yemen is only 43 per cent funded. The lack of funding for humanitarian agencies will soon result in a scaling down or termination of aid operations. We commend the emergency-funding response of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to fill in the gaps in delivery of critical aid, particularly to those displaced in Ma'rib and Al Jawf. However, a more durable solution through sustained donor funding

is required in order to enable the continuation of life-saving humanitarian operations.

The *FSO SAFER* tanker issue remains unresolved, and we urge Ansar Allah to provide early access and facilitation to the United Nations team to inspect the vessel and conduct any essential repairs without further delay.

A peaceful resolution of the conflict in Yemen depends on the political will of the conflicting parties themselves. The countries in the region have a major role to play in influencing Yemeni parties to stop the fighting and pursue initiatives for peace and reconciliation. The full implementation of the Riyadh and Stockholm agreements will also contribute to stability and peace in Yemen.

The Security Council should send a strong and clear signal on the need to cease violence and commence political negotiations. India fully supports a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process that includes the meaningful participation of women with the goal of achieving an inclusive and peacefully negotiated settlement to the conflict.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like, through you, to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock for their briefings on the situation in Yemen. My thanks also go to Ms. Najiba Al Naggar for her poignant testimony. Her struggle, like that of her compatriot Shaikha Saida, is part of the rich history of the struggle being led by Yemeni women. I also welcome the presence of Ambassador Ali Fadhel Al-Saadi at today's meeting.

Over the six years of conflict in Yemen, we have had moments of hope, but, unfortunately, they have often been short-lived. The signing of the Stockholm agreement, the Riyadh agreement and the exchange of prisoners in October 2020 gave us hope that the Yemeni parties would take a patriotic step forward in the political process to end the conflict. Alas, these signs of hope quickly faded with the resumption of hostilities, demonstrating that the parties believe in military victory rather than a negotiated political solution.

While the coalition's outstretched hand and the strong diplomatic involvement at the regional and international levels are real reasons to continue to believe that the peace talks can be revitalized, the recent ballistic-missile and drone-bomb attacks that targeted a gas station in Ma'rib are very regrettable.

The Niger condemns these attacks in the strongest terms. They have caused the tragic death of more than a dozen people, including a young girl, and left many injured. The Niger further condemns all the heinous crimes perpetrated in Yemen against the civilian population. This violence is unacceptable and contrary to international humanitarian law; it seriously undermines efforts to restart the political process in the country, and it must stop immediately.

We call on the Houthis to end their offensive on Ma'rib and comply with the coalition's ceasefire proposals. My delegation remains convinced that a final and lasting solution to the crisis in Yemen can be found only through dialogue. We call on the Houthis and the Government to follow up on the proposals of Special Envoy Griffiths.

Further, we call on the international community, actors from the region and members of the Security Council to continue to exert the pressure needed to bring the ceasefire talks that will put an end to the long-standing tragedy in Yemen to a successful conclusion as soon as possible. It is equally crucial to continue to work for the lifting of the blockades that are contributing to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the Yemeni people's already difficult living conditions.

While the war goes on, the humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate today as it reaches unsustainable dimensions for the population, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the lack of funding for assistance programmes, the ongoing fighting in the country, and food insecurity. Today, more than 50,000 people are living in near-starvation conditions, and 5 million people are still at risk. The food rations that are sustaining thousands of Yemenis cannot be maintained at a steady pace without sustainable and predictable funding. The removal of obstructions to the flow of humanitarian aid into the country, particularly through the port of Al-Hudaydah and the airport in Sana'a, remains crucial to prevent Yemen from falling into large-scale famine.

With regard to the situation of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, my delegation regrets that the United Nations team has still not obtained the necessary security guarantees for access to the tanker. The lack of response from the Houthis to the many requests from the United Nations is delaying the start of the inspection of the vessel and bringing us inexorably closer to the scenario of an oil spill or an explosion of the vessel. The current

state of the *FSO SAFER* and the serious risks involved require urgent measures to prevent such a catastrophe.

In conclusion, I would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Mark Lowcock as they prepare to leave their posts. May they be assured that their efforts will have contributed greatly to the cause of peace in Yemen.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank the briefers for their briefings. The war in Yemen has been raging for six years. According to World Bank estimates, the many years of war have severely damaged infrastructure in major cities in Yemen, causing losses between \$6.9 billion and \$8.5 billion and making Yemen the country with the world's fourth largest population of displaced persons.

Yemen is a major birthplace of the Arabic and Islamic civilizations. Seeing it suffer such trauma from the conflict is truly harrowing. Taking into consideration the earlier briefings, I would like to make the following points.

Hostilities must stop immediately, and secure conditions for the peace process in Yemen created. The offensive on Ma'rib city has led to a large number of civilian casualties and displacement. In Al-Hudaydah and Al-Jawf governorates, the recent escalation of hostilities between the two parties has become an issue of great concern.

The conflict situation on the ground clearly shows that neither party to the conflict could succeed with a winner-takes-all posture, and the persistence of the conflict leads only to more civilian casualties in the respective ethnic groups. China calls on the parties to the conflict in Yemen to heed the appeal of the international community to immediately stop hostilities and violence in order to avoid further harming innocent civilians.

China condemns any attacks on civilians or civilian infrastructure, including fuel stations, residential areas and mosques. We strongly call on all parties to the conflict to honour their obligations under international humanitarian law and protect civilians, in particular women, children and other vulnerable groups, as well as to mobilize all stakeholders to promote peace and dialogue and facilitate the parties in Yemen launching political negotiations.

Special Envoy Griffiths made frequent visits recently to Riyadh, Muscat, Sana'a and Tehran and consulted with relevant parties on the Yemeni peace

initiative. China commends the Special Envoy's efforts. The countries of the region, including Oman and Kuwait, have maintained engagement with parties in Yemen. The meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council being held this week will focus its deliberations on Yemen. China supports the efforts of countries in the Gulf region to ease regional tension and hopes that such efforts will create a positive momentum for the political settlement of the issue of Yemen. Parties to the conflict in Yemen should respond to the efforts of the countries of the region and the international community and resume political negotiations at an early date.

In that regard, China welcomes the political will demonstrated by the Yemeni Government, upholds a people-centred approach and makes every effort to mitigate the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The people of Yemen are experiencing multiple crises of hunger, a pandemic, fuel shortages and currency devaluation. The international community has the obligation to provide assistance and save lives. Recently, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization and the World Bank increased their humanitarian assistance to Yemen. We hope those emergency actions will help alleviate the suffering of the people in the country.

China welcomes the approval by the Yemeni Government granting access to the port of Al-Hudaydah for several commercial oil tankers and the provision to Yemen of petroleum products by Saudi Arabia. China will also continue to provide humanitarian assistance based on the needs of the Yemeni people. We urge the parties to the conflict to guarantee safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and unrestricted commercial imports.

With regard to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, the Security Council held a briefing dedicated to that issue earlier this month (see S/PV.8786) and issued a press release. China once again urges the Houthis to allow access to the United Nations technical team as soon as possible to avoid a catastrophe and maintain regional and environmental safety and the safety of international shipping lanes.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate Special Envoy Griffiths on his appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. We look forward to working with him in his new role on humanitarian issues, including

the issue of Yemen. I would also like to thank and commend Under-Secretary-General Lowcock for his great efforts and contribution over the years to the mitigation of the global humanitarian situation and his significant achievements. We wish him all the best.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock for their briefings. I would also like to thank Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Lowcock for their tireless efforts on this issue throughout their terms of office and wish them every success.

The Houthis must make peace in Yemen. We welcome the recent statements by the coalition Government, as well as the peace initiative for Yemen presented by Saudi Arabia in March. We also welcome the efforts of the Special Envoy and those of the United States and Oman to achieve a political solution.

The Houthis must renounce the military option, which only exacerbates the suffering of the Yemeni people. It is civilians, including children, who are paying the price, especially in Ma'rib. That must cease. The Houthis must also stop their attacks on Saudi territory.

In that regard, I would like to once again call for the full implementation of the conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. Yemeni children have been subjected for years to the six grave violations defined by the Security Council. They represent a quarter of the civilian casualties in the country in the past three years. That is inhumane. We condemn the widespread recruitment and use of children by the Houthis in Ma'rib, and we call on the Houthis to put an end to that.

We also ask them to give the United Nations immediate and unconditional access to the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which represents a major ecological, economic and humanitarian risk for the country and the entire region.

We ask them to choose the path of negotiation, without which the Council will have to consider the necessary measures. They must continue their exchanges with Oman and engage in a constructive dialogue with the Special Envoy with a view to reaching an agreement, the parameters of which are known full well: the conclusion of, and respect for, a countrywide ceasefire throughout the country. That ceasefire should happen at the same time as the reopening of

the Al-Hudaydah port and the Sana'a airport and the resumption of discussions on the outlines of a political solution. That solution must include the various Yemeni parties and allow for the significant participation of Yemeni women and youth. Only that political solution will sustainably bring the conflict to an end.

We must also do everything possible to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni population in the immediate future, in particular for the more than 4 million displaced persons. The risk of large-scale famine is growing every day. We have a collective responsibility and moral duty to avoid such humanitarian tragedy.

Every effort must also be made to accelerate the coronavirus disease vaccination campaign and provide equitable access to this vaccine.

It is more crucial than ever to ensure rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need, in particular in areas controlled by the Houthis. We can never repeat enough: the protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical personnel, must remain an absolute imperative. In that regard, violations of international humanitarian law will not go unpunished.

Peace in Yemen is possible. The Houthis must seize the opportunity to stop being the problem and become part of the solution. They must finally act as a responsible actor for a people who have suffered too much. France will remain fully committed to putting an end to that suffering and in favour of dialogue and de-escalation in the region.

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

I thank Special Envoy Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Lowcock and Ms. Al Naggar for their briefings. I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Griffiths for his tireless efforts and dedication to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen. I wish him every success in his new posting. I also acknowledge the efforts of Mr. Lowcock in support of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, as this is the last time for him to brief the Security Council on this item in his current role.

Although there has been a relative decrease in the intensity of fighting, it is deplorable that the hostilities and civilian casualties continue, especially when taking into account all the efforts made to establish a ceasefire, which several international and regional stakeholders

have supported. We repeat our call upon all parties to immediately put an end to hostilities, including the Houthis' assault on Ma'rib and the cross-border attacks on the territory of Saudi Arabia. The parties must show willingness to compromise and agree to a sustainable and nationwide ceasefire in order to move forward with an inclusive political process. We look forward to the continuation of regional efforts in close cooperation with the new Special Envoy, whenever he or she takes office.

We have taken careful note of the points made by Ms. Al Naggar. We consider the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, without fear of violence and reprisals, in the peace efforts, as well as the role of women in the humanitarian response, to be essential.

More attention should be paid to the vulnerability of women and children to the protection risks related to worsening economic and humanitarian conditions. It is also worrisome that children continue to pay a particularly heavy price owing to the hostilities, as over the past three years almost one in four civilian casualties in Yemen have been children.

We remind all parties of their duty to abide by their obligations under international law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We also call for accountability for alleged violations. We call on the Government of Yemen and the Houthis to allow the Group of Eminent Experts access to Yemen.

In conclusion, we welcome the third meeting of leaders held on 1 June, which has drawn attention to the increasing humanitarian challenges that Yemenis are facing. We fully support the calls for unimpeded access for humanitarian actors as well as the need to find a long-term agreement on the import of fuel and commercial inputs through the port of Al-Hudaydah.

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*): I thank Mr. Mark Lowcock for his briefing and wish him every success in his new endeavours. I also thank Mr. Martin Griffiths for his briefing. Since he is leaving us, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for all his efforts. We look forward to working with him in his new tasks and wish him every success. I also thank my dear sister, Ms. Najiba Al Naggar, for her briefing.

We were hoping that she would mention the violations against Yemeni women living in areas under the control of Houthi militias, who are subjected to sexual violence, arbitrary detention and torture. She mentioned only the *mahram* issue.

For more than six years, our Yemeni people have suffered from the Houthi coup against the State, the legitimate authorities and the aspirations and choices of our people. The conflict has taken a heavy toll on our nation and the Yemeni community as a whole. The human suffering of Yemenis is the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. It has painfully affected the economic, social and living conditions of the people, who must suffer the repercussions of this crisis caused by the unjust war waged by those militias.

The Yemeni Government reiterates its full support for the current initiative to end the conflict and its support for all the efforts of the United Nations through Special Envoy Griffiths and the efforts of the United States Administration through its Special Envoy, Mr. Tim Lenderking. We also welcome the recent initiative by the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to end the Yemeni crisis.

We further value the role of the sisterly Sultanate of Oman, which is based on a comprehensive ceasefire as the key humanitarian step to address all humanitarian and economic issues, including the reopening of Sana'a airport, facilitating access to oil derivatives through the ports of Al-Hudaydah under the Stockholm Agreement and the resumption of the peace process to end the war.

The Government has also positively engaged with those proposals and with all diplomatic and political efforts. We have demonstrated great flexibility and offered compromises, one after another, in order to save Yemeni blood and end the suffering of the Yemenis with a view to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace based on the parameters of the political solution, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the Comprehensive National Dialogue and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

While the Yemeni Government has welcomed and supported those efforts in order to achieve a comprehensive and inclusive peace and national reconciliation, the Houthi militias have responded to that positive engagement with further escalation and brutal attacks on the city of Ma'rib, which now hosts the largest concentration of displaced persons and

continues to suffer attacks with ballistic missiles, drones and other forms of heavy weaponry.

In addition, civilian targets in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been targeted. The Houthis have refused to accept a comprehensive ceasefire, as called for by the Secretary-General and welcomed by the Yemeni Government and the coalition. This escalation reflects the criminal, terrorist behaviour of these militias and their allegiance to the Iranian regime, which aims to create chaos, wars and crises. Their actions demonstrate their determination to sabotage the efforts of the international community and the Security Council in recent months that seek to end the war and the suffering of the Yemeni people.

The Yemeni Government holds the Houthis fully responsible for obstructing those efforts for peace and for continuing this meaningless war. However, we will continue to extend our hand in peace because we believe that the great Yemeni people deserve to live in security, peace, stability and prosperity.

Now I think of the charred corpse of the 5-year-old girl who fell victim to the ballistic missiles launched by the Houthis at a fuel station in Ma'rib while dozens of cars were waiting for fuel — an attack that claimed the lives of 21 civilians, including children and women. I apologize for showing the charred corpse of the innocent girl killed in this attack.

These crimes testify to the brutal atrocities of the Houthi militias and are an extension of their intentional attacks against residential neighbourhoods and internally displaced persons' camps in Ma'rib. They are seeking to kill as many civilians as possible, in a clear response to sabotage all efforts to end the war.

The Houthi attack against Ma'rib must not obscure the atrocious situation in other Yemeni cities, including Taiz and Al-Hudaydah, which were both included in the 2018 Stockholm Agreement. Taiz has endured more than six years of Houthi siege, and its inhabitants are unable to move around freely and struggle to meet their basic needs. In Al-Hudaydah, the port receives about 80 per cent of humanitarian assistance, and the humanitarian situation there is worse than it was before the adoption of the Stockholm Agreement. The security and military situation has deteriorated significantly, and the Houthis are exploiting the city to manufacture mines and launch drones and boats loaded with bombs in order to extend the war and threaten the security and stability of Yemen and the region and of maritime navigation.

The militias have also abused the Agreement to reinforce their forces and attack Ma'rib and Al-Jawf governorates and to impose restrictions on the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA). The Yemeni Government reiterates once again the need for UNMHA to move to an area outside Houthi control in order to discharge its mandate, including by investigating the killing of Colonel Mohammed Slahi of the Government team.

The Yemeni Government is addressing all the challenges and difficulties that have arisen from this war, which was not of our choosing. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and international partners to mitigate the suffering of Yemen despite the lack of funding for the humanitarian response plan.

We call on the international community to continue its generous support in order to address the humanitarian and economic challenges in Yemen by supporting the plans and programmes of the Government with a view to providing the basic needs of citizens and implementing development projects. There is also a need to establish a mechanism to manage donor funds for relief efforts in Yemen through the Yemeni Central Bank. That would help to stabilize the value of the national currency and support the national economy.

The Houthi militias continue to recruit thousands of children in the areas under their control. They force them out of their homes and schools and send them to a deadly fate at various front lines. They have established so-called summer camps to instil in thousands of children a culture of hatred and terrorism. We call on the international community to stop being silent and comprehend the magnitude of the crisis and the crimes that threaten the present and future fate of Yemeni children living in areas under the Houthis control. We call on it to put an end to this unprecedented grave violation of all laws and international conventions related to the rights of children.

Past experience and discussions with the Houthi militias confirm that they fail to understand the language of dialogue and do not care about the international community and the Security Council's appeals. They continue to ignore the environmental, economic and humanitarian catastrophe waiting to happen should the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker explode, sink or leak. Over the past years and months, those militias have sabotaged every effort by the United Nations to allow access for an inspection team to assess the damage, repair the tanker and empty it. They have repeatedly reneged on their commitments. They continue to use the issue as a means of bargaining and blackmailing.

The Security Council plays an important role and shoulders great responsibility in preventing the impending disaster, which would damage the ecosystems in the Red Sea, lead to a collapse in the fishing sector, pollute groundwater and affect global shipping and economy. We once again call on the Council to exert maximum pressure on the Houthis to prevent a catastrophe that would be the worst of its kind in history and affect millions of people. Yemen, the region and the world would pay the price for generations to come.

In conclusion, it is time to silence the guns and ring the bells of peace, and for the Houthi militias to take advantage of the opportunity to bring about peace and engage with international, United Nations and regional initiatives to end the war. They must come to the negotiation table and prioritize the interests of the Yemeni people and end this conflict.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion in closed consultations.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.