

Addressing the urgent humanitarian situation in Yemen

Thank you, Mr President. I'd like to thank my UN colleagues for their briefings and once again to ask them to pass on our gratitude to their teams on the ground who are working tirelessly to try and help the people of Yemen.

I wanted to start, if I may, Mr President, by once more expressing our full support for the Special Envoy, for Martin, and to welcome the recent meeting between him and President Hadi. And to reiterate that Martin has the Council's backing as he tries to advance the broader Yemen political process. And I'm sure that all Members of the Council will wish to express their support as well.

Mr President, something Martin said, but also something Mark said put together, juxtaposed, I think very aptly illustrates the dilemma of Yemen. Martin said the war can end this year. And Mark said there are 30 different front lines. So to have something potentially within reach, but yet which is so difficult on the ground, I think the Council, Mr President, should in its private session try and think of ways that we can turn what's needed into concrete actions. I don't think the answer lies solely in the Council; I have to say that. I think all those Member States in the wider UN with influence, particularly on the Houthis, need to bring that influence to bear. It's so fantastically frustrating to hear the accounts from WFP and OCHA of what could be achieved, but is held up. So I hope we can spend some time in private session looking at action.

I think the first thing we need is for the parties following the RCC meeting to engage constructively with General Lollesgard and the Special Envoy finally to get these outstanding negotiations completed so we can implement Phases 1 and 2 of the Hodeidah agreement. For the United Kingdom's part, we're happy to play whatever role we can in bringing that about.

There are five main issues I wanted to raise today, Mr President. I think we risk a perfect storm on the ground of various of these strands not coming together.

The first thing I'd like to say is on the military dimension. I want to condemn the persistent attacks by the Houthis on airports and infrastructure in Saudi Arabia. It's vital that all parties avoid provocative actions that could lead to escalation. Such actions obviously undermine trust and they risk threatening undermining the political process. And I wanted also to note the reports of the Emirati withdrawal, starting from Hodeidah, and say how welcome it is to see efforts to de-escalate the conflict in Yemen.

I wanted to turn to the humanitarian access and the WFP situation. I was going to be quite critical, but I think David's point about this agreement having been reached over Sana'a, even if it's not been signed, that's obviously very welcome. We don't want to do anything that might impede the

signature of that. So good luck with that, David, over the coming days.

But I do remain concerned, Mr President, that the underlying fundamentals aren't changing. And as Mark said, there is a risk of this escalating and that we take two steps forward and three back. So I don't think we can take our eye off any of these aspects, because, as I said, they risk a perfect storm if we can't stop making more and faster progress. And the risk of the cholera returning is horrific. And we need to do everything we can to stop that. Obviously, we want all the parties to comply with Resolution 2451 and facilitate unhindered humanitarian access.

My third point was around funding disbursements. I think this is really shocking for what is the worst humanitarian crisis that the UN has dealt with in recent years; 43 percent, 60 percent funded, is simply not enough. So I'd like to urge other donors to rapidly disburse their funds to the UN-led appeal.

I'd also like, if I may, to talk about the economy. We heard a little bit about that. What WFP said about the link between food supplies and the stabilization of the currency is obviously important, but I think we want both parties to be able to build on the revenue sharing and the salary payment talks that they've started in Oman. Neither side can be allowed to undermine the economic elements of the Hodeidah agreement. It's key that that isn't an add on. It's obvious, I think, from what we heard today, that that's a fundamental part of being able to stabilise the situation. So we look to progress to be made on those.

And then finally on human rights, Mr President, to echo what Martin said about the reports – and some of these reports have come from Amnesty International – that the Houthis' specialized criminal court has handed down 30 death sentences on political prisoners. Now, we belong to those states who condemned the death penalty in all circumstances. But in this particular case, given what this might risk doing on the ground, I want to take this opportunity, Mr President, to condemn the Houthis – not a legitimate government – and urge them to revoke immediately these sentences.

So there are a number of actions there, Mr President, on implementation of the political process, on unhindered food and humanitarian access, over the tanker access that Mark mentioned. All UN Member States with influence, whether they're on the Council or outside the Council, need to use it. We need an end to attacks on Saudi Arabia and her neighbours. We need funding disbursements to be done as pledged in full and we need human rights to be respected.

And I hope we can follow up these areas in our private session.

Thank you very much.