

Speech: Addressing starvation and the humanitarian crisis in Yemen

Thank you very much Mr President. Thank you for scheduling this session. Thank you to Martin and his team and to Mark and all the humanitarians.

I think it's very good that the Council has been able to be united on this very important issue and it's very good that we can have a timely update on implementation of Stockholm but also wider implementation of Security Council Resolution 2451, so thank you for that.

I think it is very important that the parties accelerate efforts to implement the important steps they agreed to in Stockholm. Martin set out what those were. I just want to reiterate our full support for Martin's efforts. We look to the parties to continue constructive engagement with him, and that includes a commitment to attend the next round of talks when Martin has finished his preparatory work. And we look to the parties to facilitate the UN's work to stand up a team in Hodeidah to support their efforts.

For our part Mr President, as penholder, we will take forward work on a short technical resolution to mandate the new UN team to support implementation of the Hodeidah agreement. We will hear a bit more on that in consultations from Martin, Mark and General Cammaert, and of course the Council will need to continue to follow progress on the ground very closely.

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

I want to just specify very clearly today Mr President how important the access issue is. This is access to the Red Sea mills, as Mark set out, but it's also access through the ports and into all those areas of Yemen where people need assistance. And the numbers involved are vast, so there isn't a day to lose in terms of that access. And we call on all the parties to address the issues Mark has mentioned, particularly in terms of things like notice. The notice period should go down, back down to 48 hours. Access should be unhindered; commercial supplies should be got through.

We have had some good news on visas and fuel imports, but that good news needs to be extended Mr. President, right the way across the commercial and humanitarian supplies needed.

I've kept my remarks short as I know lots people want to speak and we have a session to follow. But it's just to repeat, it's very good news that the Council has been united so far. We hope that the Council can stay united as we follow progress on both the humanitarian and political tracks.