

Supporting a long-term solution to the conflict in Yemen

Thank you, Madam President, and can I start by thanking you, Hans and Ramesh, for your briefings and additionally to thank you Hans for your visit to London earlier this week.

We reiterate our full support to your efforts towards a sustainable long-term solution to the conflict with short-term and medium-term priorities along the way. We share your realism about the challenge ahead, and we see great value in your inclusive approach that engages with a broad range of Yemenis. And we wholeheartedly agree with both you and Ramesh and also Ola about the importance and value of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in peace negotiations and peace building.

But as you've depicted in your briefings today, in the last few weeks, the conflict has escalated, particularly around Marib, Shabwa, Hodeidah and Sana'a. Houthi drone attacks have also increased. And as you know, Ramesh, the consequence is that December saw a significant uptick in civilian casualties. So at a time when de-escalation is critical, the UK would like to extend its welcome to Major-General Michael Beary, who takes on leadership of the UN mission to support the Hodeidah agreement. We look to his vast experience and leadership at this critical time.

As you highlighted, Ramesh, the conflict continues to drive deterioration in the humanitarian situation. The World Food Program has issued a new warning of worsening food insecurity. And Ola's comment about her long journey to physically get to the briefing point today underlined the dangers on the ground. In this context, aid workers must be able to operate without threat of detention, and access must be granted for humanitarian flights to Sana'a airport.

The international community must do all it can to prevent needless suffering and death. The deteriorating humanitarian situation, as Hans said and Ola underlined, have a disproportionate impact on women. All parties to the conflict and the international community must work towards a long term solution that supports equality between women and men.

In the immediate term there is an urgent need to protect women from gender based violence and to tackle insufficient protections in many camps. Women will never be safe unless there is adequate provision of sex-separated facilities for women, including toilets. And peace will not be sustainable without the full inclusion of women.

Finally, the Houthi seizure earlier this month of an Emirati-flagged vessel brings worrying escalation at a time when ordinary Yemenis desperately need the parties to focus on the path to peace. The UK calls on all parties to resolve the issue quickly and for passage rights and freedom of navigation at sea to be respected.

Thank you.