



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

Provisional

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New York

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| <i>President:</i> | Ms. Gatt. | (Malta) |
| <i>Members:</i> | Algeria. | Mr. Gaouaoui |
| | China | Mr. Geng Shuang |
| | Ecuador | Mr. De La Gasca |
| | France | Mrs. Paolini |
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| | Japan | Mrs. Shino |
| | Mozambique | Mr. Fernandes |
| | Republic of Korea | Mr. Sangjin Kim |
| | Russian Federation. | Mr. Polyanskiy |
| | Sierra Leone | Mr. Kanu |
| | Slovenia | Mrs. Blokar Drobič |
| | Switzerland | Mrs. Baeriswyl |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . | Dame Barbara Woodward |
| | United States of America. | Mr. Wood |

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. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; and Ms. Wameedh Shakir, Founder and Chairwoman of Itar Foundation for Social Development.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: Allow me to start by wishing Yemenis and Muslims around the world Eid Mubarak.

Needless to say, we meet at a particularly dangerous moment in the Middle East. The need for broader regional de-escalation is acute. I share the Secretary-General's alarm about the very real danger of region-wide escalation and his urging to all parties for maximum restraint. Sustained and enduring efforts towards fostering peaceful and stable relations are imperative for the well-being of the populations in the Middle East. That has long been evident in the case of Yemen and is a rightful demand that the Yemeni people deserve.

We also meet just as the holy month of Ramadan has come to an end. In previous years, Ramadan provided an opportunity for the Yemeni parties to overcome differences, reinforce hope and build confidence. Two years ago, the parties agreed to a much-welcomed nationwide truce, which has since provided relative calm along the Yemeni front lines. And last year, more than 900 detainees were released, allowing them to spend Eid reunited with their families and loved ones.

Regrettably, this year has not witnessed such scenes of celebration. Detainees who we had hoped would be released in time to spend Eid with their loved

ones remain in detention. Roads that we had hoped to see open remain closed. We also witnessed the tragic killing and injury of 16 civilians, including women and children when a residence was demolished by Ansar Allah individuals in Al-Bayda governorate.

I am troubled that, instead of narrowing differences and increased confidence, there is an apparent growing divergence between the parties. On the economic front, the parties are engaging in unilateral actions that risk further bifurcating the economic system. The disintegration of the currency in circulation in Ansar Allah-controlled areas presents a real economic problem for the Yemeni people, but reaching a solution is being severely complicated by the contested authority of the Central Bank of Yemen. The challenges facing the Yemeni economy require, rather, a strategic and coordinated response in line with the long-term settlement of the conflict.

While the country-wide military situation remains contained, in comparison to the situation before April 2022, we have recently seen an escalation of hostilities on several front lines, particularly in Al-Dhale'e and Lahj. Troop movements, intermittent fighting and exchanges of fire have also been reported in Al-Hudaydah, Ma'rib, Sa'ada, Shabwa and Taiz governorates.

What Yemenis ultimately need is a nationwide ceasefire, improved living conditions and the resumption of an inclusive political process that meaningfully engages a wide variety of voices, including women, youth, civil society and marginalized groups. My mediation approach has been focused on delivering exactly that. In December, the parties took an important step by articulating to me their readiness to operationalize a set of commitments through a United Nations road map. Unfortunately, momentum towards an agreement was stalled by regional events that have significantly complicated the mediation space.

The escalation in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, having entered its sixth month, has continued with Ansar Allah targeting commercial and military vessels, and the United States and the United Kingdom carrying out attacks on military targets in Al-Hudaydah, Hajjah, Sana'a and Taiz. In the absence of a ceasefire in Gaza and a complete termination of attacks in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, the threat of further escalation persists.

The recent developments involving Iran and Israel underscore the urgency of this matter. With the support of the international community, the region must seek

avenues for coexistence, based on incremental trust-building, mutual security and a departure from the zero-sum mentality of achieving victory at the expense of others.

While the conflicts in Yemen and the wider region have become undeniably interlinked, I strongly believe that we owe it to the Yemenis to ensure that resolving the conflict in Yemen is not made contingent upon the resolution of other issues. We cannot risk Yemen's chance for peace becoming collateral damage. The Yemeni people, including the 17 million that remain dependent on humanitarian aid for their survival, have already suffered for too long. Peace in Yemen has intrinsic value, and I am convinced that a Yemen at peace with itself and its neighbours would have a positive impact on the regional dynamics.

If we leave Yemen's political process in the waiting room and continue down this path of escalation, the consequences could be catastrophic, not only for Yemen, but also for the wider region. Engagement with the parties on the road map and its elements can help to open space for dialogue. I therefore continue to be in close touch with all sides to build confidence and find solutions. My Office will continue to encourage and help the parties with opening roads, resolving difficult economic differences, making progress on the road map and preparing for its implementation. We will also continue our work on the release of detainees.

In the meantime, I call on the parties to refrain from unilateral escalatory measures, to engage in good-faith dialogue, under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to find common solutions through collaboration and to turn disputes into opportunities to take the path towards common prosperity.

In my recent visits to Washington, Riyadh, Muscat and Moscow I underlined the need for de-escalation in the Red Sea and to remain focused on the long-term objectives for Yemen — namely, an intra-Yemeni political process that results in a sustainable and just peace, addresses human suffering and allows for reconstruction and economic prosperity. I was pleased to hear that, across the board, my interlocutors continue to remain united in their support for those objectives. I will depend on that support and the support of the Council in the months ahead.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Wosornu.

Ms. Wosornu: Allow me to thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his update and for his continued, tireless efforts to help the people of Yemen reach a lasting peace.

This month marks two years since the United Nations-brokered truce was announced, which provided precious relief for the humanitarian situation, long past its expiry. It yielded lower numbers of civilian casualties, eased trade restrictions and boosted imports of essential items, increased road and air connections and enabled some displaced people to return to their homes.

The crisis in and near the Red Sea continues to threaten progress and stability. For now, we are thankful that we have still not seen major implications for the humanitarian situation.

As is well known, the main causes of large-scale needs in Yemen — in particular the deteriorating economy, barely functioning public services and protracted conflict-induced displacement — are yet to be addressed. Public services and institutions have continued to degrade, and economic indicators remain worrisome.

The re-emergence of cholera and growing levels of severe malnutrition are telling indicators of the weakened capacity of social services. Almost one in every two children under five are stunted — more than double the global average — 49 per cent compared to 21.3 per cent.

The most vulnerable people, including women and girls, and marginalized groups, such as the Muhamasheen, internally displaced persons, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and persons with disabilities, still depend on humanitarian assistance to survive.

And as we have often briefed the Council, humanitarians continue to operate in a very difficult environment. From December last year to February this year, aid agencies reported 137 access constraints. The majority were interference in humanitarian programming and movement restrictions in areas controlled by the Houthi de facto authorities, in particular for Yemeni women aid workers. I saw the impacts of those restrictions first-hand when I visited Yemen in March. Inter-governorate movements of our Yemeni female colleagues were denied in Houthi-controlled areas in the absence of a male guardian,

limiting our engagement with women and girls. In areas controlled by the Government of Yemen, insecurity and fragmented administrative requirements, including the approval of sub-agreements, continue to delay our response.

And lastly, we continue to struggle with a concerning deficit in funding for the 2024 humanitarian appeal. Despite extensive work by the humanitarian community to prioritize the response and reduce the appeal from \$4.3 billion in 2023 to \$2.7 billion in 2024, the appeal is only 10 per cent funded as we enter the second quarter of the year.

As we have previously briefed the Council, the humanitarian community in Yemen is transforming its response to adapt to the shifting realities in Yemen. That transformation is taking place in different ways. Please allow me to outline a few.

We are promoting a locally driven response and more sustainable solutions for the people of Yemen, in close collaboration with our development partners and affected communities. We are reviewing the way we operate in Yemen to ensure we remain fit for purpose and able to meet emerging challenges. We are working to further improve targeting to better direct assistance to those in need. The World Food Programme's ongoing retargeting efforts, which I will discuss in more detail shortly, are indeed a critical first step. We are redoubling our efforts to ensure a principled and measured approach to humanitarian action and expand operational space and actively advocating against the politicization of our work. And we are pursuing more structured engagement with all parties and seeking systemic solutions to persistent challenges.

I would like to provide more detail about two particular issues that are most urgent to the humanitarian community today. One of them is cholera, and the other is food and nutrition insecurity.

Since October last year, we have been seeing an alarming resurgence of cholera across the country. The most recent outbreak was in 2019. The response in Government-controlled areas, led by the Government with the support of the humanitarian community, has slowed the spread of the disease and ensured the availability of treatment for people affected. That work was boosted by a Yemen Humanitarian Fund allocation in November and generous donor support for the outbreak response. However, since March, we have seen the outbreak spread rapidly in areas controlled

by the Houthi de facto authorities. As of 7 April, more than 11,000 suspected cases have been reported in those areas, with 75 associated deaths, compared with approximately 3,200 suspected cases in Government-controlled areas also since October.

As shown by the success in curbing the outbreak in Government-controlled areas, a rapid response is absolutely critical. The United Nations and its humanitarian partners are working closely with relevant authorities to scale up the response. However, emergency stocks of essential supplies are almost depleted. Water, sanitation and hygiene support systems need urgent strengthening. We appeal to the international community to help us to fill those urgent gaps, including with critical funding and supplies.

We have repeatedly voiced our strong concerns about food and nutrition insecurity in Yemen this year. Ramadan and Eid festivities have seen some small, temporary, but welcome relief, with *zakat*, Islamic charity obligations; remittances and community-led mechanisms providing more people with access to essential items and the ability to purchase food in the markets. We expect food and nutrition security to worsen further though, as the lean season begins in the coming weeks. Our efforts to address the situation continue apace. The World Food Programme's pilot retargeting exercise is now under way in Houthi-controlled areas, and we expect to see positive results by the end of the month.

Until food assistance starts flowing, the humanitarian country team and its partners are doing what they can to mitigate the most severe impacts of the pause in general food distribution and protect the most vulnerable. Nutrition interventions will be scaled up in 34 districts assessed to be the worst affected. With the support of a \$6 million allocation from the Yemen Humanitarian Fund, non-governmental organizations will distribute prepositioned nutrition supplies in those districts. The needs, however, remain tremendous, and the United Nations and its partners require significantly more to keep hunger at bay.

Yemen needs three things today.

First, we must keep front of mind how easily progress achieved since the truce could be lost and how much more there is to do in a complex operating environment. I urge the Security Council to redouble its efforts to secure lasting peace and stability in Yemen.

Secondly, with food and malnutrition rates rising and the cholera outbreak quickly worsening, we must be able to act quickly to minimize suffering and prevent further deterioration of conditions. The active, united support of Council members is crucial to create an enabling environment to help us carry out that work.

And finally, I urge Council members to do what they can to provide urgently needed funding to aid the programme in Yemen to ensure the well-being of millions of Yemenis and support the steps the humanitarian community is taking to improve the effectiveness of its response.

In conclusion, allow me also to warmly wish *Eid Mubarak* to all those who celebrate in Yemen and around the world today.

The President: I thank Ms. Wosornu for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Shakir.

Ms. Shakir (*spoke in Arabic*): My name is Wameedh Shakir, and I am the Chair of the Itar Foundation for Social Development, a Yemeni non-governmental organization dedicated to developing the civil society sector by empowering women and youth, building peace and achieving social equality. I stand before the Council today with a heavy heart, pleading for members' attention to the crisis in Yemen, which has been ongoing for so long because of the war, which has caused enormous devastation to many Yemenis, particularly women, girls and children. My remarks today will highlight three main points: first, the impact of the humanitarian and economic crisis on the lives of women and children; secondly, the impacts of climate change, particularly on women and children; and thirdly, the role of civil society, including women's rights and women-led organizations, and the importance of their effective participation in the peace and political processes.

The conflict in Yemen has unleashed a devastating humanitarian crisis, leaving 17 million Yemenis suffering from food insecurity, with 6 million on the precipice of famine. Women and children are bearing the brunt of that crisis, making up 80 per cent of those in need of humanitarian assistance. Meanwhile, the value of the currency has dropped, causing food prices to increase by more than 300 per cent — 400 per cent for wheat alone. Today more than half of the households in Yemen cannot provide for their daily necessities. Power outages, water scarcity and unpaid wages are exacerbating the situation.

The economic collapse significantly burdens Yemeni women. Soaring food prices and dwindling resources force women to skip meals or sell their belongings. Malnutrition threatens more than 1.5 million pregnant and breastfeeding women. The stalled peace talks and the ongoing fighting worsen the situation. Women are excluded from decision-making. Although they bear the brunt of the conflict, they have no voice in ending it.

Skipping meals, dropping out of school, child marriage, child labour and begging on the streets are just some examples of the high-risk strategies to which millions in Yemen have had to resort in order to survive. Millions of girls have had to drop out of school to work to provide food for their families. Of the 10.7 million school-age children in Yemen, 4.5 million are out of school, 70 per cent of whom are girls. Displaced children are twice as likely to drop out as their peers. The lack of access to education for girls has raised the rates of forced early child marriage, particularly for displaced girls — one in five displaced girls 10 to 19 years of age is currently married, significantly higher than the typical rate in the community.

Urgent funding is crucial to preventing a humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen. Donors must support local civil society, especially women's organizations, with long-term funding. That empowers local leaders to reach the most vulnerable.

Climate change adds another layer of devastation to the humanitarian catastrophe. Yemen's vulnerability to climate change translates into food insecurity, water scarcity and displacement. Erratic rainfall patterns, rising temperatures and declining groundwater levels threaten food security for millions of people who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. A third of Yemen's groundwater and surface water is on the verge of depletion, with wells reaching a depth of over 700 metres. All of that doubles the effect on women and girls, who play a principal role in food production and household water collection for house management. The fact that women own less than 1 per cent of farmland hinders their ability to adapt to climate change and to access resources. In 2023, climate change affected over 300,000 people in Yemen, mostly internally displaced persons who had fled conflict areas and then lost their shelters, income and any form of livelihood.

That is the effect of climate change in Yemen, in the light of the current crisis. It exacerbates displacement, forcing millions to flee their homes in search of water,

food and safety. There are 4.5 million Yemenis who are internally displaced owing to natural disasters. Women and girls are affected more than others by climate change, violence and disease.

At the Itar Foundation, we recently worked with 460 internally displaced women, who informed us that sewage overflow, swamps, heavy rainfall, flooding and industrial pollution, especially by oil companies, are the most frequent issues in their areas. Communities, especially women, are forced to adopt negative coping mechanisms to survive, such as reducing spending on health needs, moving to safer places and resorting to borrowing. Those women said that their three highest aspirations were shelter, sustainable services and lasting peace.

Despite its devastating effects, authorities do not consider climate change a priority. Mitigating the effects of climate change requires long-term development programmes, abundant funding and specialized expertise, all of which are almost entirely absent and impossible to achieve in Yemen, owing to the conflict and political fragility. Although existing climate change adaptation plans do recognize the need for civil society and local community engagement, they lack gender and youth-responsive implementation mechanisms. It is imperative that policies and projects to address climate change reflect the needs, expertise and aspirations of women and girls.

Women play a critical role in peacebuilding and social cohesion. Nevertheless, their voices are not included in the decision-making process. The negotiating parties have a dismal record when it comes to women's inclusion. Alarming, the representation of women is declining at all levels, and their participation in the peace process remains negligible. Women have been underrepresented in or absent from the political entities of the Government and political parties, including those engaged in the settlement of the conflict at the regional and international levels. Moreover, women's level of leadership within civil society organizations is low, and they face difficulties in accessing funding and capacity-building.

Yemeni society, especially women's organizations, is the backbone of Yemeni humanitarian, peace and development efforts. Those organizations provide essential humanitarian assistance, advocate for just and inclusive peace and empower women and youth. However, their working space is continuously shrinking,

as the ongoing conflict, restrictions on movement and the sharp decline in funding further undermine their contributions. Prioritizing gender equality and local women's leadership in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts is crucial.

Yemeni men and women desperately need a lasting peace that protects their human rights. Renewed efforts towards peacebuilding, with civil society and women's organizations at the forefront, are crucial. That can pave the way for a secure future for all Yemenis.

Therefore, I urge the Security Council to do the following.

The Council must call on all parties to respect and protect the human rights of all Yemeni men and women, in accordance with international law.

The Council must hold United Nations Member States accountable for upholding women's rights, peace and security of women and youth while creating an environment conducive to enabling civil society to participate in decision-making on peace and security at all levels and ensuring the effective participation of all Yemenis.

The Council must urge donors to fund the humanitarian response plan urgently and fully in Yemen, with direct, flexible and multi-year funding for women's organizations.

The Council must urge all parties to take concrete steps to address the ongoing economic crisis, alleviate poverty and preserve the safety of the Yemeni people.

The Council must urge the parties in Yemen to lift all restrictions on the movements of Yemeni women and female workers in humanitarian and peacebuilding areas. That includes facilitating the work of local and international organizations.

The Council must urge all parties to the conflict in Yemen to address the climate crisis thoughtfully, including by enhancing good governance, building institutional capacity and empowering the participation of civil society.

The President: I thank Ms. Shakir for her briefing.

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

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): Let me start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg and Director Wosornu for their briefings. I am also

grateful to Ms. Shakir for highlighting the connections between climate, peace and security, as well as the stark humanitarian situation in Yemen. As she said and as we have heard, Yemen is facing stark environmental challenges on top of the ongoing conflict, and addressing those challenges now as part of any discussion of peace will be critical to Yemen's future sustainability.

We also share Ms. Wosornu and Ms. Shakir's concerns about the humanitarian situation in Yemen, and in particular the access constraints preventing women aid workers from delivering vital assistance. We reiterate our call for all parties to facilitate unhindered access for humanitarian workers and welcome the proposals of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for adaptive measures, which Ms. Wosornu just outlined. The United Kingdom has given more than \$1.2 billion in humanitarian aid since the crisis started. We gave \$110 million last year, and we expect to increase our contribution this year. We also continue to fully support Mr. Grundberg's ongoing efforts to make progress on a road map towards a United Nations-led Yemeni-Yemeni dialogue. As we have said before, an inclusive political settlement is the only way to bring sustainable peace and long-term stability to Yemen and address the worsening humanitarian crisis.

We unequivocally condemn the Iranian strikes against Israel over the weekend, which have done nothing to advance the prospects for peace in Gaza. The United Kingdom has long been clear about Iran's unacceptable role in destabilizing the region, including by supporting the Houthis in Yemen. We understand that the Houthis contributed to this latest attack. Their reckless actions continue to risk seriously undermining the efforts to bring peace to the Yemeni people. The Houthis continue to risk further escalation with their ongoing attacks on shipping in the Red Sea. The Security Council has been clear, through its adoption of resolution 2722 (2024) on 10 January, that it condemns the Houthi attacks, which threaten innocent lives and endanger aid delivery to Yemen and the region. We also reaffirm our condemnation of a Houthi attack on a home in Rada'a last month, which led to a tragic loss of life and injury, and we express our deepest condolences to the families of those who were killed or injured. Furthermore, the decision to issue counterfeit currency in Yemen threatens to destabilize the banking sector and deepen divisions in the country's already fragile economy.

Finally, we call on the Houthis to prioritize the interests of the Yemeni people, engage with United Nations efforts to resolve economic fragmentation and cease provocations in order to preserve space for an intra-Yemeni peace process. In short, we call on them to stop their attacks and return to the peace talks.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council, namely, Algeria, Mozambique and my own country, Sierra Leone, as well as Guyana (A3+).

We thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Director Edem Wosornu for their briefings. We also thank Ms. Wameedh Shakir for the information she provided.

The A3+ reiterates its support for a resumption of a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned peace process based on the agreed references for a political settlement. The attainment of an inclusive nationwide ceasefire is therefore an imperative for the peace process to thrive. That priority must be pursued. In that context, sustained initiatives and the mutual exchange of prisoners, for instance, can rekindle efforts to build confidence and leverage the parties to honour their commitment to the peace process.

We are of the view that the Special Envoy's vision for a bottom-up approach by canvassing much-needed support from the relevant stakeholders will be a linchpin in the mediation efforts. The facilitating role of Saudi Arabia and Oman, and the active involvement of the parties, civil society, women's groups and young people, are crucial to achieving that aspiration. We call on the parties to ensure that the escalating situation in the Red Sea does not distract attention from the effective implementation of the peace process. We urge the Houthis to resume their engagement and to participate constructively in the ongoing efforts led by the Special Envoy and other regional and international initiatives to successfully implement the peace process. Concrete gains made by the Government and the Houthis, such as the opening of roads in Taiz governorate, are key to cementing future collaborations. Furthermore, we call on the Houthis to refrain from any measures that may have a negative impact on economic activity in Yemen and to provide assurances that allow traders the freedom to import commodities through all Yemeni ports. Facilitating the free movement of goods would significantly mitigate the humanitarian crisis and

allow the Government to properly fulfil its duties for the benefit of all Yemeni people, including through the payment of salaries.

Yemen is facing a dire humanitarian situation, with growing food insecurity and malnutrition. In Government-controlled areas, the numbers of people receiving aid and the scale of food rations have fallen, but the humanitarian needs remain widespread. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), 18.6 million Yemenis will need humanitarian assistance in 2024, and 17 million are food-insecure. The WFP estimates that it will need \$2.9 billion in 2024 to meet those needs. We welcomed the Central Emergency Revolving Fund's allocation of \$7 million last month to bridge the WFP funding gap and tackle the urgent food security and malnutrition challenges in Yemen. The A3+ therefore calls on the international community and non-traditional donors, such as philanthropic organizations, to scale up their funding in support of the efforts of the WFP in order to cover the remaining \$100 million funding gap so that the agency can resume and sustain food distributions across Yemen. We also call for the establishment of sustainable financing programmes, such as women-led microcredit schemes, that can stimulate economic growth and support small and medium-sized enterprises, including through enhanced support for women-owned businesses, as well as facilitating trade between north and south.

The A3+ members are appalled by the attack on civilians and the destruction of residential homes in Rada'a in Al-Bayda governorate during the holy month of Ramadan that resulted in the deaths of 12 people and injuries to 35. The A3+ calls for the Houthis to cease their military attacks in various areas of Yemen, including on commercial and merchant vessels in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The A3+ also calls for assurances for the safety of ships that are carrying humanitarian aid and foodstuffs to Yemeni ports to alleviate the humanitarian crisis facing the people of Yemen. We stress the need to address the root causes of the conflict and urge all the actors concerned to exercise maximum restraint and prioritize political and diplomatic means over military options in resolving the conflict in order to ensure lasting peace in Yemen and the region.

In conclusion, it is imperative to avoid a regional spillover of the Gaza conflict and to de-escalate tensions in the wider Middle East, including in Yemen. We call on all relevant stakeholders to build on efforts

for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. The people of Yemen deserve a united country that is at peace and thriving economically.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I thank today's briefers, Special Envoy Grundberg, Executive Director Wosornu and Ms. Shakir. I also take note of the presence with us today of the Yemeni Ambassador.

I would like to begin by once again stating Slovenia's commitment to long-term peace in Yemen and our support for the ongoing United Nations efforts to that end. The vision of the Special Envoy for a ceasefire and a road map leading to an inclusive political process in Yemen represents the best possible chance for achieving peace after nine long years of war. We must not lose sight of the ultimate aim. We call on all parties to engage constructively with the Special Envoy and to prioritize de-escalation and dialogue at a very fragile time for Yemen and the region, amid the turmoil from the catastrophe unfolding in Gaza.

We reiterate our support for the internationally recognized Government of Yemen and congratulate Mr. Zindani on his appointment as Foreign Minister. We also emphasize the importance of an effective and united Presidential Leadership Council. All parties must actively prepare for an intra-Yemeni political process, which we hope can commence in the very near future — a process in which women will participate fully, equally and meaningfully. And as demanded in resolution 2722 (2023), we once again call loudly for an immediate end to the Houthi attacks, which have continued in the Red Sea and are undermining peace efforts. The attacks reported on civilian homes in Al-Bayda governorate in recent weeks are also deeply shocking and should be fully investigated.

We heard today that the humanitarian needs in Yemen remain alarmingly high. While Ramadan brought some respite, food insecurity and malnutrition have surged in recent months, posing a real threat to the lives and well-being of millions of Yemenis, particularly women and children. Ensuring that humanitarian aid is available and accessible is a top priority. We welcome the start of a pilot retargeting exercise by the World Food Programme and hope that it will be possible to resume broader food distribution soon. We reiterate our strong support for the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other agencies on the ground, as well as for the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen, which is crucial

in ensuring that Yemenis have access to the food they so desperately need. Meeting Yemen's humanitarian needs is a necessary first step that must be followed by long-term sustainable solutions, underpinned by lasting peace.

Our civil society briefer today made it abundantly clear that climate change is exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation, affecting the availability of critical resources for Yemenis, displacing them time and time again and driving local-level tensions and conflict. With the rainy season fast approaching, we know that Yemenis like Ms. Shakir are once again fearing terrible flooding of the kind witnessed in recent years. Meanwhile, every drop of water is precious in Yemen, one of the world's most water-scarce countries. Regrettably, the lack of appropriate infrastructure means that rainwater is not harvested for water supplies. That is why the European Union is supporting sustainable initiatives on the ground to improve access to water and humanitarian efforts that prioritize emergency preparedness and response. We call on the Government of Yemen to ensure that its policies, including at the local level, are inclusive and sensitive to the management of natural resources and the many climate and water-related challenges that the country is facing.

In conclusion, we hope that with the political will of all actors in Yemen and with much-needed de-escalation in the region, the momentum needed to once again move forward on a path to peace in Yemen can soon be restored.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): To begin with, I too would like to thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Director Wosornu of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Shakir, founder of the Itar Foundation, for their briefings today, which help inform our understanding of recent developments on the ground in Yemen.

Our efforts to advance a political solution in Yemen have slowed since October, despite the Special Envoy's continued endeavours towards a political settlement in Yemen. The situation in the Red Sea is affecting our endeavours to achieve peace in Yemen and is intensively impacted by the recent heightened tensions in the broader region, where escalation is very acute right now. Unfortunately, the Houthis are aggravating tensions beyond the Red Sea. Regrettably, and despite the fact that the Special Envoy has urged a reset in assessing the issues in Yemen, there have been no major changes in Yemen in the past month.

With progress stalled, as our briefers said, civilians have continued to suffer as a result of the ongoing security and economic crises, in addition to the environmental issues that have recently emerged. My delegation reiterates its consistent commitment to supporting the Special Envoy and notes the vital importance of ensuring that all Member States fully implement resolution 2722 (2023). In order to assist our overall efforts, the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) will continue to closely monitor the sanctions regime, particularly the arms embargo under resolution 2216 (2015), with the support and cooperation of the Panel of Experts on Yemen.

Apart from the political and security situation in Yemen, we must also be aware of the deteriorating humanitarian situation. The overall picture remains deeply worrisome, given that humanitarian agencies are short of funds and malnutrition figures remain high, especially for children under the age of 2. Food insecurity and a lack of nutrition are jeopardizing the survival of vulnerable groups in the country, particularly in Houthi-controlled areas. I also listened very seriously to the information about the cholera outbreak in Yemen. In that regard, my delegation has high expectations for the World Food Programme pilot exercise to provide relief for the hardships facing the Yemeni people, which are expected to worsen until August.

Economic issues are inherently interconnected with security issues, as we see with the Houthis' attempt to obstruct the Government's oil production, which in turn has worsened the Government's ability to pay civil servants. With contradictory economic policies on both sides, the viability of the entire economy is being adversely affected, and we need to advance solutions to address that.

We have noted the current environmental issues in Yemen, including the case in March of the *MV Rubymar* in the Red Sea. The civil society briefing today also helped us understand the immediate actions we should take in Yemen. Environmental issues cannot be remedied by excluding key civil society stakeholders, and the cooperation of the international community is also needed. We commend the United Nations for dispatching experts to examine the sunken *MV Rubymar*. Member States and the United Nations should maintain a sharp focus on the ongoing and emerging environmental issues in Yemen.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg, Director Wosornu of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Ms. Shakir for their briefings. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Shaya Mohsin Zindani on his appointment as Yemen's Foreign Minister. We welcome his commitment to Yemen's unity and to reviving a United Nations-led Yemeni-Yemeni political process that consults civil society and is aimed at bringing the conflict in Yemen to an end.

The Houthis' reckless attacks in the Red Sea and the worsening situation for the Yemeni people caused by Houthi actions continue to be alarming and undermine the prospects for peace in Yemen.

Mr. Lenderking, the United States Special Envoy for Yemen, travelled to Saudi Arabia and Oman earlier this month to continue the intensive diplomatic efforts of the United States to halt the attacks in the Red Sea. In addition to the impact on global shipping, those continued Houthi attacks also impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance to 11.2 million Yemenis and to people in dire need in other countries. Tightening supplies and skyrocketing freight and insurance prices translate directly into rising costs for the Yemeni people.

In carrying out those attacks, the Houthis are trying to distract attention from their many failures and human rights abuses, putting their own interests ahead of those of average Yemenis. In addition to the attacks in the Red Sea, attacks on Yemenis are continuing. The Houthis continue to lay siege to the city of Taiz, restricting water access and repeatedly firing sniper rounds into the city, killing and injuring children.

We were disturbed by clashes last month in the capital after Houthi forces reportedly forced worshippers at a mosque to listen to their televised propaganda instead of traditional prayers. We were also disturbed by reports that so-called Houthi courts sentenced nine people to death earlier this year on dubious charges of sodomy, with punishments including crucifixion and stoning. The group's ongoing, cruel detention of members of vulnerable religious minority communities is unacceptable. The grim reality is that the Houthis are willing to not only condemn millions of men, women and children in Yemen to hunger to advance their Iran-backed agenda, but also to use violence and terror for control.

We must continue our efforts to demand that the Houthis cease their attacks, consistent with resolution 2722 (2024). We must also do more to underscore the Council's concern regarding the Iranian origin of weapons used by the Houthis and the ongoing violations of the arms embargo.

It is no secret that Iran provides weapons to the Houthis in violation of the United Nations arms embargo. We therefore repeat our call for Iran to stop those illegal weapons transfers and to stop all activities that facilitate the Houthis' reckless attacks. Iran's continuous efforts to foment instability and terror in the region, as demonstrated by this weekend's unprecedented attacks by Iran against the State of Israel, need to be strongly condemned by the Council.

The United States reiterates its request that the Secretary-General's monthly report, submitted to the Council in accordance with resolution 2722 (2024), include information regarding the types of weapons used in each incident and, where appropriate, the likely origin of such weapons. Ongoing violations should not be tolerated. Member States should identify and designate violators for the imposition of sanctions, and the Security Council should strengthen existing mechanisms and authorities in order to address escalating violence in the Red Sea.

We look forward to continued discussions about ways to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen to inspect vessels bound for Houthi-controlled ports so as to ensure compliance with the arms embargo and prevent the import of weapons. We also look forward to the upcoming report of the Panel of Experts of the 2140 Sanctions Committee, concerning Yemen, and hope to address their findings and recommendations in a future meeting.

Despite those regional and domestic challenges, we continue to believe that negotiations towards an inclusive Yemeni-Yemeni peace process, under United Nations auspices, ultimately remain the best path to stability — one that we hope could lead to a durable end to the conflict — while addressing Yemeni calls for justice, accountability and redress for human rights abuses and violations.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy at the Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for their briefings. I would also like to welcome Ms. Wameedh Shakir and salute her resolute commitment to the Yemeni people.

On 26 March some 60 civil society organizations issued a statement reminding us that four of five Yemenis are currently living in poverty. That is the case for Entisar Qara'ah, a 35-year-old woman from Al-Sawad, Dhamar governorate. Despite the many daily obstacles she faces, Entisar assures us that she will "never stop striving for a better life". Echoing those optimistic words, Switzerland would like to highlight several points.

First, the progress made in the Yemeni peace talks must be preserved. It is critical that the talks be brought to a rapid and concrete fruition. The parties must refrain from any action that could jeopardize the implementation of the road map, including undertaking financial measures that could affect the country's economic health. In that respect, we reaffirm the important rights and freedoms of navigation in the Red Sea. We condemn all attacks on merchant vessels and call for the immediate release of the 25 crew members of the *MV Galaxy Leader*. The crimes recently perpetrated in Rada'a attest to the high price paid by the civilian population as a result of this spiralling conflict.

Furthermore, we would like to reiterate the appeal we made yesterday in the Council (see S/PV.9602) — the spiral of escalation must stop immediately. All attacks must stop, both in the Red Sea and in Yemen. Against the backdrop of the ongoing catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza, the region must not sink into an even wider and deadlier conflict. De-escalation must be the top priority.

Secondly, we note with concern that the humanitarian environment in Yemen is becoming increasingly complex and dangerous. In that context, we welcome the commitment of humanitarian and United Nations personnel, including national and locally recruited staff, and recall that they are protected by international humanitarian law. As we have just heard from OCHA's Director of Operations and Advocacy, the economic situation in Yemen is significantly affecting food security and malnutrition. We cannot remain idle and do nothing. We are also concerned about the increase in cholera cases and reiterate the importance of investing in sanitation projects.

Thirdly, climate change is exacerbating the social and political vulnerabilities already riddling Yemen. Natural disasters have displaced more than 700,000 people since

2008, thus increasing tensions over water, food and basic services in host regions. A recent study by a Swiss-funded Yemeni non-governmental organization showed that more than half of those already displaced had to change shelter due to natural disasters. In addition, stress factors such as droughts and floods, which continue to intensify as a result of climate change, cause agricultural losses and increase livelihood insecurity.

Against that backdrop, Switzerland wishes to highlight the essential role played by women in alleviating tensions linked to natural resources. The Council must support those efforts within the framework of its mandate and ensure good collaboration between the United Nations entities present in Yemen.

The situation depicted today should encourage us to redouble our efforts. The Yemeni people can count on Switzerland's full support.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for the information provided by the briefers and welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting.

Ecuador is following with concern the impact that the escalation of hostilities in the Red Sea is having on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which is considered one of the gravest crises.

As the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations warned in a recent report, if the interruption of maritime transport in the Red Sea continues, the food insecurity situation in Yemen, where 5 million people already suffer from acute food insecurity, will continue to deteriorate. That is compounded by the impact of climate change and the effects of military operations, which may lead to the destruction of infrastructure, including ports and storage facilities, thus hampering food distribution and storage.

The conflict in the Red Sea threatens to not only reverse the limited progress that had been made in restoring the livelihoods of Yemenis, but also to alter the willingness of the parties to advance the peace process.

While hostilities have remained at relatively low levels, recent months have seen clashes and troop movements in different regions of the country. The parties also continue to publicly threaten to return to war.

We cannot wait for an escalation in internal fighting. We must demonstrate that the Council remains united in supporting the peace process and coordinating efforts to reduce tensions. For that reason, my country reiterates the need to implement resolution 2722 (2024), whose fundamental pillar is the cessation of attacks against commercial vessels by the Houthis, which have no justification or legitimacy whatsoever. We must also safeguard the progress made in reaching an agreement that lays the foundation for an end to the conflict and continue to support Special Envoy Grundberg's mediation efforts, which are facing increasing challenges. My delegation supports the Special Envoy's efforts to maintain regional and international support for the implementation of the road map, as well as to keep the channels of communication open with all actors.

Finally, Ecuador encourages the Mine Action Service to continue cooperating with the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement and the United Nations Development Programme in locating and deactivating landmines and explosive remnants in Yemen, which represent a latent danger for civilians, in particular for women and children in rural areas.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): We appreciate Special Envoy Grundberg and Director Wosornu for their informative briefings. Our appreciation also goes to Ms. Shakir for her briefing on the impacts of climate change in Yemen.

Today I wish to address three points.

First, with regard to the ongoing threats to maritime security by the Houthis, Japan welcomes Security Council press statement SC/15631, issued last month, in which the 15 Council members spoke with one voice that the Houthis' attacks on vessels are unacceptable. Unfortunately, however, the Houthis are continuing their dangerous military activities and disrupting the free and safe navigation of international shipping and the global economy. Moreover, the Houthis are still detaining 25 innocent multinational crew members together with the Japanese-operated *MV Galaxy Leader*. Nearly 150 days have passed since they were illegally seized by the Houthis. Once again, Japan strongly demands that the Houthis comply with the Council's repeated warnings, including in resolution 2722 (2024); immediately cease their reckless conduct; and release the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew. As Council members, we should remain united in tackling that challenge to our vitally important shipping lanes, a global problem affecting all of us.

Secondly, with regard to the security situation in Yemen, Japan would like to reiterate its unwavering support to the work of the Special Envoy to bring lasting peace to Yemen. However, Japan regrets the increased military campaign by the Houthis against the Government of Yemen forces, which recently led to exchanges of fire that resulted in many deaths and injuries. We are also concerned about the Houthis' hostile economic measures against the Government of Yemen, which are undermining efforts to facilitate a conducive environment for peace talks. We sincerely hope that the parties will engage constructively under the auspices of the United Nations.

In that context, it is essential to secure the full, equal, safe and meaningful participation of women in the peace process.

Thirdly, on the humanitarian front, Director Wosornu reminded us that more must be done to save the people of Yemen from the multifaceted crisis, including malnutrition and the spread of epidemics. The already dire humanitarian situation is being amplified by climate change. Japan calls for the international community to increase assistance to alleviate the plight of Yemenis, in particular women and children. In that regard, we should continue to urge the Houthis to lift the restrictions on women's freedom of movement, which negatively impact women's daily lives and curtail the abilities of female aid workers.

In conclusion, Japan calls on all parties to work towards peace and stability in Yemen and beyond.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank all the briefers for their briefings.

At present, the situation in Yemen remains complex and daunting. All parties concerned should adhere to the general direction of a political settlement, eliminate any interference, align their positions and work together to promote a comprehensive political process that is Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned. We urge all parties in Yemen to exercise restraint, avoid provoking an escalation of the situation and create a favourable environment for the political process. China supports the efforts of Special Envoy Grundberg and expects all parties, in particular countries with influence on the situation in Yemen, to play a constructive role.

China is concerned about the tensions in the Red Sea and reiterates its call on the Houthis to respect the right of commercial vessels of all countries to navigate

in the waters of the Red Sea in accordance with international law and to immediately cease relevant attacks. We call on the parties concerned to exercise restraint and refrain from actions that might exacerbate tensions. China reiterates that the Security Council has never authorized any country to use force against Yemen, and that no country should misinterpret or abuse international law or Security Council resolutions.

Alleviating the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is a shared task of the international community. The conflict in Yemen has lasted for nine years, causing massive destruction of infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. More than four fifths of the country's population live in poverty, and more than 4.5 million school-aged children are unable to attend school. China calls on the international community to increase its investment in Yemen's humanitarian and development efforts and looks forward to the early resumption by the World Food Programme of the assistance programme in northern Yemen.

The tensions in the Red Sea are a visible manifestation of the spillover effects of the Gaza conflict. Despite the adoption of resolution 2728 (2024), which explicitly demands a ceasefire, the fighting continued unabated through the end of Ramadan, and the threat to regional peace and stability continues to grow. Israel should fulfil in good faith its obligations as a Member State of the United Nations and fully implement the demands of the Council resolutions by immediately ceasing its military attacks on Gaza and ceasing its collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

China supports the Security Council in taking further action in the light of the developments on the ground.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and Director of Operations and Advocacy at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Edem Wosornu, for the briefings on the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen. We have taken note of the briefing by Ms. Shakir.

The Russian Federation continues to seek to persuade all actors involved in the Yemeni situation to facilitate the establishment of a lasting ceasefire and the restoration of normal life in the country. We express our full support for the efforts of Mr. Grundberg aimed at achieving those goals and the eventual launch of a

full-fledged, inclusive national dialogue under the aegis of the United Nations. We once again draw attention to the need to renew the international legal basis for a settlement in Yemen, which is clearly outdated and no longer reflects the realities on the ground.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country must also be urgently addressed. Approximately 18 million Yemenis — almost half of the country's population — are in need of humanitarian assistance.

There are alarming reports of an outbreak of cholera, a disease that can be easily treated with the right medicine. However, there is a catastrophic shortage of such medicine in Yemen. We stress that the Yemeni people, regardless of where they reside, must have unimpeded access to food, medicine and other necessities.

We are also concerned about the situation in the waters surrounding Yemen, including the Red Sea. The Russian Federation has consistently advocated safe and free navigation in that area. We have consistently condemned attacks on vessels, which pose a threat to crews and cargo, in particular the attack on the vessel *MV True Confidence*, which resulted in the deaths of crew members. We demand the immediate release of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew. In our contacts with representatives of Ansar Allah, we reiterate our call for an immediate end to such actions and for shifting attention towards achieving peace within Yemen itself.

However, we must acknowledge that the root cause of the situation is Israel's ongoing bloodshed in the Gaza Strip in violation of resolution 2728 (2024). That horrific escalation has claimed the lives of more than 33,000 Palestinian civilians, with serious repercussions across the Middle East, including in the Red Sea region. Calm in that region also depends on putting an end to the violence in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict zone.

We also note the destructive role of the self-proclaimed "coalition" led by the United States and the United Kingdom, which continues to carry out attacks on Yemeni territory on a weekly basis. The absence of results on the ground and their blatant inability to thwart the Houthis' military capability has not deterred Washington or London. We stress once again that missile and bomb strikes by the Western United States-led coalition against the sovereign territory of Yemen are categorically unacceptable. Also unacceptable are attempts to justify the aggression with resolution 2722 (2024) or with references to the right to self-defence

under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Those actions are detrimental to efforts to achieve an intra-Yemeni settlement and undermine the efforts of international and regional mediators. In essence, it is largely thanks to that vicious cycle of escalation that the Yemeni settlement has been forced to be put on hold. Moreover, in the absence of a formal truce between the parties, the situation may further deteriorate. As Mr. Grundberg informed us today, clashes between the Yemeni parties along the front line have become increasingly frequent. That dangerous trend could trigger a new round of tensions within the country.

At the same time, we note that recently, having clearly grasped the futility of a military approach, the United States itself has begun to speak more frequently about the need for de-escalation and goodwill gestures. That inspires a certain optimism. From the very beginning of the Yemeni conflict, Russia has consistently stressed that it can be resolved only through political and diplomatic means on the basis of the principle of inclusivity, which entails the participation of all Yemeni protagonists, including Ansar Allah.

It is with deep regret that we learned that the United States has concluded the transfer of the weapons and ammunition it seized in the Gulf of Oman to the conflict zone in Ukraine. We would like to recall that there is no regime specifically for the inspection of vessels in international waters near Yemen, and those actions are not provided for in resolution 2216 (2015), to which the United States refers. We condemn the broad interpretation of the provisions of Security Council resolutions on Yemen, including sanctions resolutions. We view the Council's sanctions regime as a subsidiary mechanism for political settlement, not as a means for inflicting punishment. Those irresponsible actions show that Washington continues to seek to impose on the whole world its so-called rules-based order, in which the rules are formulated by and adapted to suit the needs of the United States and its allies. Such egotistical intractability and unwillingness to abide by the norms of international law will not add to peace and security on our planet.

Mrs. Paolini (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the briefers for their briefings.

The region saw a major development from 13 to 14 April with the unprecedented attack carried out by Iran and its proxies against Israel. France condemns that attack in the strongest possible terms. It obviously

is a serious and major threat to international peace and security and in particular to the stability and security of the region. France expresses its solidarity with the Israeli people and reiterates its commitment to the security of Israel and its partners and to regional stability.

As the Secretary-General's report (see S/2024/303) shows, the attacks carried out by the Houthis in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden continue despite the warnings of the Council.

France strongly condemns the attacks carried out by the Houthis over the past several months. They undermine the rights and freedoms of navigation, destabilize Yemen and the region and adversely impact the interests of the countries of the region, as well as all countries benefiting from the international trade that transits through that zone. The environmental and humanitarian impacts are worrisome. We call on the Houthis to immediately release the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew, held since November 2023. We are also concerned about the reports that the Houthis were involved in Iran's attack on Israel on the night of 13 to 14 April. Given the irresponsible behaviour of the Houthis, France will remain committed within the framework of the European Union's Operation Aspidos to guaranteeing maritime security and freedom of navigation, in accordance with international law and in cooperation with its partners.

Resolution 2722 (2024) recalls that the exercise of the rights and freedoms of navigation must be respected and that States have, in accordance with international law, the right to defend their vessels against attack. That resolution must be fully implemented.

On the security front, the de facto truce must be transformed into a complete and lasting cessation of hostilities to avoid any resumption of conflict on the ground.

The humanitarian situation is catastrophic and has deteriorated in recent months. Insecurity in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden is having an impact on the cost of humanitarian operations and supplies at a time when funding is insufficient.

It is also essential that the Houthis stop destabilizing Yemen's economy and waging an economic war against the Government. Their irresponsible attitude is contributing to the impoverishment of the population. France condemns the issue of counterfeit currency by

the Houthis and supports the Central Bank of Yemen, based in Aden, in its mission to guarantee the stability of the country's financial sector.

Together, we must stand ready to meet the needs of the civilian population in Yemen. Food insecurity affects 70 per cent of children under the age of two. Their very development is at stake. We are also concerned about the cholera epidemic that is spreading throughout the country. To address that situation, it is essential that all necessary access be guaranteed and that humanitarian workers be able to carry out their missions without hindrance, in particular female staff in Houthi-controlled areas.

We would also like to express our concern about the increasing number of arrests and atrocities committed by the Houthis against the population, such as the brutal destruction of houses in Rada'a last month, which led to the death of several inhabitants, including women and children.

France supports the United Nations mechanisms that are working for greater stability and security in Yemen, such as the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism, which is helping to combat weapons trafficking in the Red Sea. Thanks to the inspections the Mechanism is carrying out, it is creating trust and facilitating commercial imports and the delivery of humanitarian aid to Yemen. It must be strengthened and better financed.

We must also take concrete action to support the Yemeni Government's reform efforts and give it the means to regain sovereignty over the whole country.

Finally, France reiterates its full support for the Special Envoy and his efforts to define and implement an inclusive political road map. We call on the Houthis to cease their attacks and choose the peace process under the aegis of the Special Envoy. France welcomes the efforts of Saudi Arabia, Oman and other regional players in that regard. The effective participation of Yemeni women in political negotiations must be guaranteed. France will continue its efforts in that direction.

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

I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Director of Operations and Advocacy at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Wosornu for

their comprehensive briefings and Ms. Shakir for her strong testimony today.

The nine-year conflict in Yemen has created dire humanitarian conditions for Yemeni civilians. More than 17.5 million people face acute food insecurity, with numbers likely to increase in the coming months. Earlier we were reminded how important it is for the international community to scale up support to the humanitarian response plan, at a time when the plan remains drastically underfunded.

The essential delivery of humanitarian aid continues to be hampered owing to impediments to humanitarian access. Authorities must lift restrictions on women's freedom of movement. Those restrictions exacerbate gender inequality and structural barriers hindering access to education, health care and income for their families.

We are concerned about the increasing cases of cholera in Yemen and call for a rapid, robust response by the international community.

Malta is concerned that space for mediation efforts remain constrained owing to escalations in the Red Sea and the region. We call on the Houthis to immediately cease all attacks and actions against commercial shipping and abide by their obligations under international law, including full adherence to resolution 2722 (2024).

Recent skirmishes in Yemen, including in Lahj and Ma'rib, also reflect the tenuous security situation.

On the socioeconomic front, the decision by the Houthis to issue new currency is concerning. Unilateral decisions that deepen the fragmentation of Yemen's already weakened economy only harms the well-being of Yemenis.

We call on parties to de-escalate tensions and prioritize dialogue to find an agreement that will lead to sustainable peace. The establishment of a United Nations road map will be crucial to ensure the implementation of a nationwide ceasefire and inclusive Yemeni-led and-owned political process under United Nations auspices. Women must be full, equal and meaningful participants in all diplomatic efforts to find peace.

As has been highlighted again today by Ms. Shakir, we must not forget that Yemen is the third country most susceptible to climate-related impacts and one

of the least prepared for climate shocks. According to a recent report by the United Nations Environment Programme, environmental stressors such as water scarcity, desertification and extreme weather events are highly intertwined with security concerns. In 2023, more than three quarters of newly displaced individuals experienced such displacement owing to severe weather occurrences.

While women in rural communities remain greatly dependent upon agriculture for their livelihoods, we also acknowledge their pivotal role in helping to ease tensions over natural resources. Furthermore, through the work of women-led civil society organizations, women help to meet the essential needs of communities in remote and front-line areas.

The international community should support Yemen in mitigating the effects of the climate crisis. That includes ensuring adequate access to climate financing, assisting in national preparatory systems and investment in climate-resilient measures through effective strategies integrated with conflict-prevention efforts. The Security Council needs to recognize that nexus to address the multiple impacts on communities and enhance long-term stability in Yemen.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and wish you every success in your endeavours. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Japan, for his successful presidency of the Council last month. I would like to thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Ms. Edem Wosornu for their briefings. I also thank Ms. Wameedh Shakir for her briefing.

A just and lasting peace has been and will remain the main objective of the Presidential Leadership Council and the Yemeni Government, as peacebuilding in Yemen is an imperative need and in the country's national, regional and international interest on the path to restoring State institutions that guarantee the rights, freedoms, justice and equal citizenship that would make Yemen and its people more secure, enhance the country's stability and increase its presence at the regional and international levels. Restoring State institutions is a top priority and the ultimate goal

of all efforts to reach a political settlement without discrimination or exclusion while building a brighter future for all the Yemeni people.

The Yemeni Government once again expresses its openness to and welcomes all initiatives and good offices aimed at achieving a comprehensive and sustainable peace based on the nationally, regionally and internationally recognized terms of reference of the political settlement, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), which represents a road map to address the Yemeni crisis. My country's Government also reaffirms its support for all regional and international efforts, as well as the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, aimed at ending the conflict and achieving peace in Yemen.

Given its firm commitment to peace, the Yemeni Government welcomed the declared truce, its extension and the expansion of its humanitarian benefits to the Yemeni people in the areas under the control of the Houthi militias. The Government also welcomed a number of confidence-building measures and arrangements leading to a proposed road map, with a view to resuming a comprehensive political process and transitioning towards building desired peace and democratic State institutions that meet the aspirations and hopes of the Yemeni people.

Our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman undertook mediation efforts, but those efforts were dashed even though we were about to sign a road map. The terrorist Houthi militias decided, as usual, to shirk their responsibilities and commitments to peace and undermine the political process with a dangerous and destructive escalation in the Red Sea under the pretext of assisting the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. However, time has shown that pretext to be false, as those militias, which destroy homes and kill their inhabitants, besiege cities, loot property, terrorize women and children, and undertake acts of killing and kidnapping can never support just causes.

Those militias have multiplied their restrictions and grave violations and increased their military escalation on all fronts. Although there is a fragile truce, the militias did not honour its provisions because they can live only in the quagmire of conflict. Their project is

one of war and destruction and not a project of peace. They cannot coexist peacefully with society. History has shown that time and again. In that regard, I would like to commend the good offices of our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their efforts to address the Yemeni crisis, establish peace and alleviate the human suffering of the Yemeni people.

The terrorist Houthi militias continue their heinous violations and crimes against the Yemeni people, the latest of which was the razing of the homes of innocent citizens in the city of Rada'a in Al-Bayda governorate, killing their inhabitants. That crime resulted in the killing and wounding of no less than 35 civilians, mostly women and children, including nine members of one family. That heinous and horrific crime, which took place during the holy month of Ramadan, is not an isolated act, but rather one in a long series of brutal crimes committed by those Iranian-backed terrorist militias and is a clear example of how the militias claim to support the Palestinian people in Gaza but at the same time commit acts of terrorism, murder and violations against the Yemeni people on a daily basis and continue to impose an unjust and suffocating siege on the city of Taiz, resulting in all kinds of suffering and humanitarian crises for the more than 4 million residents of the city.

The militias have failed to comply with their commitment to open roads, and they continue their siege, reflecting a policy of starvation and collective punishment. The siege coincides with an ongoing war targeting cities, villages, residential areas and citizens' homes. The militias use snipers to target innocent civilians, including women and children. They have perpetrated dozens of crimes and have planted mines, killing thousands of civilians, in flagrant violation of the calls of the international community and the Council to put an end to the war, resume the political process and alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people.

The Yemeni Government condemns in the strongest terms the crimes of the terrorist Houthi militias. The Government emphasizes that those crimes and violations are not subject to the statute of limitations. It reiterates its commitment to restoring State institutions, imposing security and stability and ending terrorist acts against the resilient Yemeni people.

The repeated attacks launched by the terrorist Houthi militias against oil tankers and commercial vessels in the Red Sea and the Bab Al-Mandab Strait and the increased acts of piracy illustrate those militias' disregard for

the catastrophic consequences of any oil spill on the economic, agricultural and fishing sectors, the maritime environment and biodiversity in Yemen and coastal countries. In that context, my country's Government calls for providing the necessary support by any means to address the potential negative impacts of the sinking of the *MV Rubymar*. We need concerted regional and international efforts to deal with those environmental challenges, which pose a threat to Yemen and the region, so that we can prevent disasters and any pollution that could directly threaten the maritime environment in the Red Sea.

The Houthi militias continue to escalate the situation in the Red Sea so that they can shirk their responsibility towards peace and implement the agenda and plans of the Iranian regime — in Yemen and the region — and destabilize regional and international security and stability. Once again, the Yemeni Government warns against the flow of Iranian weapons to the terrorist Houthi militias, in blatant violation of Security Council resolutions, notably resolutions 2140 (2014) and 2216 (2015). That could lead to prolonging the conflict in Yemen and worsening the humanitarian crisis. The Yemeni Government warned about those plans early on and on more than one occasion, including in the Security Council, as well as in the General Assembly via the statements of His Excellency Mr. Rashad Al-Alimi, President of the Presidential Leadership Council. Those plans are aimed at undermining security and stability in Yemen and the region and jeopardizing the safety of international maritime shipping and the free flow of international trade. The attacks launched in the Red Sea were intended to implement those plans and would have occurred whether or not there was brutal Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip.

The Yemeni Government today is embracing the principles of transparency and accountability. It is implementing a number of economic and financial reforms in order to face the economic and humanitarian challenges resulting from the war waged by the Houthi militias, their continued escalation of the situation and targeting of vital oil facilities. They have also targeted oil ports, which has prevented the Yemeni Government from re-exporting oil for over a year and a half, preventing the Yemeni people from enjoying their most important economic and income resource, impacting our State budget and preventing the Government from providing basic services, including paying salaries. The Houthi militias have also prevented hard currency from

entering the national economy and increased pressure on the exchange rate of our local currency. That has resulted in catastrophic economic and humanitarian challenges. The terrorist Houthi militias are adopting a policy of starvation and launching a systematic economic war against the Yemeni people.

The Yemeni Government once again calls on the international community to support it in addressing those challenges and finding the means to re-export oil so that we can honour our obligations under those difficult and exceptional circumstances. We look forward to effective cooperation and support from the international community to face those economic and humanitarian challenges in order to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people. We thank our brothers from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for their support, which greatly contributed to addressing State budget deficit and overcoming multiple financial and service difficulties.

As part of the escalation of their economic war against the Yemeni Government and people, the Houthi militias issued forged currency and imposed its use instead of the official currency in areas under their control, in blatant violation of all financial and banking laws and norms. My country's Government warns against the impact of that irresponsible escalation, as it will lead to confusion and complexity in transactions for citizens and financial institutions, inside and outside Yemen. That will also lead to further fragmentation of the Yemeni economy and will undermine the safety of our banking sector and will not achieve peace.

My country's Government reiterates its commitment to promoting cooperation and advancing our partnership and coordination with all humanitarian

and relief agencies operating in Yemen. It is important that United Nations agencies and organizations move their headquarters to the temporary capital of Aden so that they do not remain subject to the extortion and terrorism of Houthi militias and so that they can provide assistance to all areas in need in Yemen without discrimination. Once again, we underscore the need to send humanitarian support funds to the Yemeni Central Bank, a step that will greatly contribute to national economic recovery efforts, safeguard the value of our currency and improve the living conditions of our citizens.

In conclusion, the grim picture of the current humanitarian situation in Yemen requires more support from the international community to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people and address all aspects of the crisis. In that regard, the Yemeni Government looks forward to the upcoming donors' conference in order to mobilize funds for the 2024 Yemen humanitarian response plan. We call on fraternal and friendly countries, along with international organizations, to donate generously in order to meet the current humanitarian needs. We also call on the United Nations and the international community to keep the humanitarian situation in Yemen at the top of their list of priorities in the light of the multiple humanitarian crises around the world.

The President: There are no more names on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.