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Security Council

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New York

President:	Mr. Geng Shuang	(China)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Yahiaoui
	Denmark	Ms. Landi
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Greece	Mr. Sekeris
	Guyana	Ms. Persaud
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Ms. Karim
	Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
	Somalia	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Ms. Shea

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): 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; and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: Since I last addressed the Security Council (see S/PV.9835), we have witnessed a significant, albeit fragile, development in the Middle East, with the ceasefire in Gaza. We have also seen a cessation of attacks by Ansar Allah on vessels in the Red Sea and targets in Israel. This tentative reduction in hostilities, along with the release of the crew of the *MV Galaxy Leader*, is a welcome relief. We must build on this opportunity as a foundation for further de-escalation. Yet, while we welcome this reprieve, we must also acknowledge the magnitude of challenges still facing Yemen.

A deeply troubling development is the fourth wave of arbitrary detentions of United Nations staff, conducted by Ansar Allah last month. These detentions are not only a violation of fundamental human rights but also a direct threat to the United Nations ability to provide humanitarian assistance to millions in need. Even more deplorable is the death, while detained by Ansar Allah, of a United Nations colleague working for the World Food Programme. I join the Secretary-General in calling for an immediate, transparent and thorough investigation of his death and for those responsible to be held accountable. I also echo the Secretary-General's strong condemnation of the detention of these staff members and call for their immediate and unconditional release, along with the rest of the United Nations, non-governmental organization, civil society and diplomatic mission staff arbitrarily detained. I appreciate the support of the Council to the United Nations during this difficult time. Allow me to express my deepest condolences to Ahmed's family and to the World Food Programme.

Regrettably, we have also seen a continuation of military activity in Yemen, with reports of the movement of reinforcements and equipment towards the front lines, and shelling, drone attacks and infiltration attempts by Ansar Allah on multiple front lines, including in Abyan, Al-Dhale, Lahj, Ma'rib, Saada, Shabwa and Taiz. I call on the parties to refrain from military posturing and retaliatory measures that could lead to further tension and risk plunging Yemen back into conflict. My Office remains in regular contact with the parties, urging them to de-escalate tensions and take concrete confidence-building measures through the Military Coordination Committee.

I am deeply concerned about Yemen's rapidly deteriorating economic situation. These hardships are felt across all of Yemen. In Government-controlled areas, residents have endured prolonged blackouts, sometimes for more than 24 hours. Last week, Aden went three consecutive days without electricity, which led to people taking to the streets. That this is happening in winter, when energy demand is low, speaks to the severity of the crisis. Moreover, the continued depreciation of the

Yemeni rial has sent the cost of essential goods soaring, making simply surviving a challenge for millions. For many families, even the most basic necessities — food, medicine and fuel — have become unaffordable. This economic hardship is not limited to Government-controlled areas. In Ansar Allah-controlled territories, ordinary Yemenis also struggle to afford basic commodities. These hardships are symptoms of the failure to achieve a sustainable political resolution. Without the prospect of peace, there cannot be prosperity. My Office continues its engagement with the parties to the conflict to advance sustainable, achievable and practical solutions that will benefit the Yemeni population.

As part of our continued political dialogues, my Office has also recently engaged with civil society representatives, including youth and women, from Aden, Abyan, Al-Dhale, Lahj and Shabwah, to incorporate local-level perspectives into the peace process. We also heard first-hand from Yemeni businesswomen across the country. Despite their potential for unlocking economic growth and opportunities in Yemen, they are faced with increasing obstacles preventing them from fully participating in the economy, including regulatory constraints and limited access to banking. Women also continue to face similar challenges in engaging meaningfully in the peace process.

While clarifications have been sought regarding the United States' upcoming designation of Ansar Allah as a foreign terrorist organization, it is important for our efforts to advance the peace process to be protected. I am committed to carrying out my duties in accordance with the mandate from the Council to end the conflict in Yemen. Over the past month, I have continued my active engagement with all regional and international actors, most recently in Washington. My message to all continues to be that only a political settlement of the conflict will support the Yemenis in their aspiration for lasting peace. It is achievable, it is possible, and it is pragmatic.

The elements of the road map already provide a framework for that path forward. The parties made a commitment to a nationwide ceasefire as a first step towards stability, recognizing that only an end to the hostilities can create the conditions necessary for meaningful dialogue. That would pave the way for a structured political process in which Yemenis can determine their own future through inclusive negotiations under United Nations auspices. It is critically important that my Office maintain appropriate space for engaging in effective mediation. Moreover, addressing Yemen's economic crisis through sustained dialogue and concrete measures will be vital to rebuilding the country and preventing further hardship for its people. In that regard, I urge the parties to seize the opportunity created by the recent regional de-escalation and to build confidence through meaningful actions. The unilateral release of 153 conflict-related detainees by Ansar Allah is a positive step, and I encourage further progress. It is high time that the parties made the necessary compromises to reach an agreement for the release of all who are still being held in relation to the conflict.

Let me conclude with this. Yemen stands at another critical juncture. The choices made today will determine the course of its future. A sustainable resolution to the conflict is still possible. I am not naive. It will not be easy. It requires commitment, courage and action from all sides. The parties must engage in good faith and take the necessary steps to turn commitments into reality. I am aware that some think that they could get a better outcome through a resumption of full-scale military operations. I want to make it clear that that would be a mistake for Yemen and for stability in the wider region. The responsibility to create the space for a mediated solution does not rest with the Yemeni parties alone. The regional and international stakeholders also share a duty to support diplomacy, de-escalation and inclusive dialogue. A genuine and lasting peace must be fostered through collective efforts. That requires resolve and coordinated action. I remain fully committed to confronting the challenges head-on with a clear, structured and relentless approach.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Grundberg for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fletcher.

Mr. Fletcher: I thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his energetic commitment to peace in Yemen.

I hope that the Security Council will join me in my grief and outrage at the loss this week of our much-loved World Food Programme colleague who died while being held in detention by the Houthi de facto authorities. Like Special Envoy Grundberg and the Secretary-General, my thoughts are with his colleagues and family, and as I have cause to say here much too often, we must protect our courageous humanitarian workers wherever they are.

The humanitarian appeal for Yemen that we released last month paints a grim picture, with 19.5 million people in need of humanitarian support. Millions are hungry and at acute risk of life-threatening illness. Children and women make up more than three quarters of those in need. According to World Food Programme reporting in December 2024, 64 per cent of people of Yemen were unable to meet their minimum food needs, and that was up 3 percentage points even from November. I am afraid that that number will rise again this month, driven by lean-season scarcity and rising food prices. As in any crisis, children suffer first and suffer most. Currently, 3.2 million children in Yemen are not in school. Half of all children under the age of 5 are acutely malnourished. Seventy per cent of 3- and 4-year-olds have not received a full course of vaccinations, and children under the age of 5 are dying at a horrific rate, mainly from preventable or treatable conditions — an average of five every hour in 2023.

Despite significant risks, humanitarian operations across Yemen are largely continuing, but the detention — as the Special Envoy described — of more United Nations staff members in January has led to tough decisions regarding the ability of the United Nations system as a whole to deliver for those in need. The United Nations and humanitarian partners simply cannot be expected to operate in the absence of guarantees for their safety. Faced with real risks to the security of our staff, we have therefore been forced to temporarily pause operations in Saada governorate. We remain fully committed to supporting the millions in need, and we hope that the pause will be for a short period only. To that end, we are taking all possible steps to preserve our capacity to restart operations once security guarantees have been obtained. Globally, humanitarians are overstretched, underfunded and under attack. We are facing that growing challenge in a spirit of cooperation and pragmatism, guided by the urgent needs of those whom we serve. The situation in Yemen is perilous. My three asks for the Council are as follows.

First, the Council should get United Nations and civil society staff released. They are there on the Council's behalf. They should be protected, as international humanitarian law demands, because to save lives, humanitarian workers need to talk to anyone, anywhere, at any time.

Secondly, the Council should back us to return to United Nations operations at full capacity and, amid mounting global funding challenges, should give us the money to deliver for those we serve.

And thirdly, action should not be taken that affects civilians' access to essential services. Political and security decisions should not punish affected communities by limiting the flow of essential commodities into Yemen. Any severe disruptions to that pipeline — commercial or humanitarian — will have cascading negative consequences for Yemeni communities already on the precipice of disaster. Those lifelines must remain viable and undisrupted.

Almost 20 million Yemenis are in need of our support right now. The country is a tough place for us to deliver humanitarian support, and I recognize that it is a tough place for the Council to get the political judgments right. But we must be brave, principled and unflinching in our effort to save lives.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Fletcher for his briefing.

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

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for briefing us today, and I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in our meeting.

I will make three points.

First, the United Kingdom strongly condemns the tragic death of a World Food Programme staff member while in Houthi detention, and we extend our condolences to their family and colleagues. We also condemn the recent further detentions of aid workers by the Houthis, and we reiterate our clear call for the immediate and unconditional release of all those detained. Those detentions are shrinking the humanitarian operating environment at a time when we continue to see an alarming deterioration in the humanitarian situation. We call for an end to the Houthis' use of fear, intimidation and unjustified detention so that aid workers are able to perform their work of supporting almost 20 million Yemenis in need of humanitarian assistance.

Secondly, we welcome the release of the crew of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and thank the Sultanate of Oman for their efforts. While we note the pause in maritime attacks, we must see a permanent end to those attacks to restore freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. As ever, we thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his engagement with the parties and his efforts towards peace and long-term stability in Yemen.

Finally, the United Kingdom reiterates its support for the Government of Yemen in delivering governance and providing for its citizens. That was underlined during our event in New York last month with Prime Minister Binmubarak. The United Kingdom stood alongside 23 other Member States in calling for international and regional support for the Government, to strengthen its institutional capacity and help to deliver its vision for reform to improve the lives of millions of Yemenis. The United Kingdom and the Government of Yemen will continue to build on that progress together in the months to come. That is the best way we can support a more secure, stable and prosperous future for all Yemenis.

Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (Somalia): I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council plus (A3+), namely, Algeria, Guyana, Sierra Leone and my own country, Somalia.

We express our gratitude to Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their briefings and for their valuable updates on the latest developments in Yemen. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to this meeting.

The A3+ reiterates its unwavering support for United Nations-led and regional mediation efforts, including those spearheaded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman, aimed at achieving a Yemeni-owned and Yemeni-led political resolution to the conflict. A sustainable and inclusive peace process with the meaningful engagement of all stakeholders, including women and youth, remains vital in responding to the aspirations of the Yemeni people.

The recent developments in Yemen highlight both progress and challenges. The A3+ welcomes the release of the crew members of the *MV Galaxy Leader*, who had been held by the Houthis since November 2023. Their release marked a positive

step for United Nations staff and other humanitarian personnel in the efforts to build confidence and facilitate broader de-escalation efforts. However, the A3+ is deeply saddened by the tragic loss of a World Food Programme (WFP) staff member, who died while in detention, where he had been held since 23 January 2025. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and WFP colleagues and stand in solidarity with all arbitrarily detained United Nations personnel and their loved ones. The recent detention of additional United Nations staff is also deeply distressing. The A3+ demands the immediate and unconditional release of all United Nations, non-governmental organization, civil society organization and diplomatic mission staff arbitrarily detained in Yemen, in accordance with international law and the relevant international agreements. Furthermore, we insist that the Houthis cease all such illegal activities, which undermine peace efforts and contribute to the instability in the country.

We urge the parties in Yemen to focus on the following key priorities.

First, we are deeply concerned about the continued threats and unlawful arrest and detention of United Nations personnel by the Houthis, resulting in the suspension of United Nations humanitarian activities in territories controlled by them. The security and humanitarian situation in Yemen remains fragile, with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reporting that more than half of the population need humanitarian assistance and protection services, including in Houthi-controlled Saada, which has a population of more than 1 million people. While we recognize efforts to improve humanitarian conditions, we emphasize the urgent need for unhindered access to aid across all regions.

Secondly, we reiterate our concerns about the continued attacks on commercial and maritime vessels in the Red Sea. The Houthi attacks in the Red Sea threaten global shipping and undermine regional stability. Such actions not only endanger international trade but also pose severe risks to the marine ecosystem. We call on the Houthis to permanently cease those hostile activities, and we urge all parties to exercise restraint to prevent a broader regional crisis. Maritime security must remain a priority, and we support all diplomatic efforts to safeguard the Red Sea as a zone of peace and cooperation.

Thirdly, turning to the impact of external military actions, the A3+ is concerned about the increase in external military interventions in Yemen, including Israeli air strikes and the wider ramifications of the Gaza conflict. Those actions undermine peace efforts and further destabilize an already fragile situation. We urge all external actors to respect Yemen's sovereignty and refrain from military escalations. We also emphasize the importance of upholding the ceasefire in Gaza, as it will undoubtedly contribute to the de-escalation of tensions and foster an environment conducive to achieving a lasting and sustainable peace in the broader region.

Lastly, with regard to addressing food insecurity and economic hardship, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen continues to be exacerbated by food shortages and economic instability, with significant depreciation and rising inflation. According to recent reports, nearly half of the population — approximately 17 million people — will face severe food insecurity in 2025. Urgent and sustained international support is required to address that crisis. Noting that despite tremendous security and logistical challenges, humanitarian organizations were able to support more than 8 million Yemenis last year, we call for increased funding for the 2025 humanitarian response plan. We also stress the need for sustainable economic recovery mechanisms to support Yemen's long-term stability.

The A3+ firmly believes that a stable and peaceful Yemen is critical for broader regional security. We continue to advocate for a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned peace process under United Nations auspices, and we urge all parties to prioritize

dialogue over confrontation. In that regard, we reaffirm our support for Special Envoy Grundberg's mediation efforts and encourage all actors to engage constructively in confidence-building measures. Similarly, we emphasize the need for continued international support in addressing Yemen's humanitarian and economic challenges. Reversing the significant economic decline in Yemen after 13 years of conflict requires, first and foremost, a commitment by all Yemeni actors to peace, along with support from regional and international partners.

In conclusion, the A3+ underscores the critical importance of maintaining momentum towards a comprehensive and inclusive peace process. The people of Yemen have suffered for far too long. Now is the time for the international community to redouble its efforts and stand united in pursuit of a peaceful and prosperous future for Yemen.

Ms. Shea (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher for their briefings, which underscored the precarious situation in Yemen and Houthi threats to international peace and security.

With materiel and financial support from Iran, the Houthis have launched numerous attacks on civilian infrastructure, fired at United States Navy warships dozens of times since 2023 and attacked commercial vessels indiscriminately. Moreover, they continue to detain United Nations, diplomatic and non-governmental organization staff, including dozens of current and former United States locally employed staff members.

The United States condemns the death of a World Food Programme staff member, who died while in Houthi detention, and we send our condolences to his family and colleagues. This colleague's death underscores the Iranian and Houthi threat against peace and security and the continuing threat of violence to all Houthi detainees, including United States locally employed staff.

Iran's continued and unprecedented provision of weapons components, financial support and training and technical assistance to the Houthis over more than a decade violates the arms embargo the Council imposed on the group. It is this organ's responsibility to respond to Iran's flagrant violations of its resolutions and Iran's arming of terrorist groups. Every member of the Council — and especially those with direct channels to Iran — should press Iran's leaders to stop arming, funding and training the Houthis, without which they would not be able to launch attacks that disrupt navigational rights and freedoms and put innocent civilians in harm's way. Iran must bear the costs of enabling these reckless and egregious attacks.

The Houthis' activities threaten the security of American civilians and personnel in the Middle East, the safety of our closest regional partners and the stability of global maritime trade and local economies. That is why the Trump Administration has initiated a process to consider designating the Houthis as a foreign terrorist organization. That is an important step to respond to the threat to civilians and regional stability. It is imperative that the international community work together with regional partners to eliminate the Houthis' capabilities, which continue to threaten international shipping and innocent seafarers.

The Houthis must permanently cease all attacks in the Red Sea and surrounding waterways, without exception, and immediately release all of the hundreds of detainees. We must also deprive the Houthis of illicit revenues that sustain their attacks and disrupt the growing relationship between the Houthis and other terrorist groups, such as Al-Shabaab, including through the use of targeted sanctions.

We reiterate our call for the Council to take steps to strengthen the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM). We call on Member States to do their part by increasing funding that supports long-term planning,

recruitment of staff and critical infrastructure that is needed for enhanced capacity. UNVIM is a key means of preventing Iran and other malign actors from smuggling arms and related illicit materiel to the Houthis.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan thanks Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for their valuable briefings and updates. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in this meeting and reiterate our support to the efforts of the Government of Yemen to promote a political solution in his country.

The ongoing conflict in Yemen, has emerged as a multidimensional crisis, graduating from the local to the regional and, ultimately, to a crisis with global implications. We need to address the various facets of this crisis through effective diplomacy and a collective response. We reaffirm our support for the efforts of Special Envoy Grundberg, as well as regional initiatives, particularly by Saudi Arabia and Oman, to facilitate a negotiated political settlement. Pakistan also appreciates the continued engagement of the Special Envoy with countries of the region and others involved in the Yemen crisis.

While welcoming the release of the crew of *MV Galaxy Leader*, we strongly condemn the arbitrary detention of United Nations personnel and the staff of international and national non-governmental organizations and diplomatic missions by Ansar Allah, including the most recent additional detentions. We are appalled by the tragic death of a World Food Programme staff member in Houthi custody in Sada and extend our deepest condolence condolences to his family and loved ones. These actions by Ansar Allah are a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. Ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel must remain a top priority for the international community. There should be accountability for such actions. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained personnel.

The continued suspension of United Nations operations due to those actions further exacerbates the already dire humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Nearly half of the population, more than 17 million people, face acute food insecurity, while climate change-induced disasters, including floods and droughts, have displaced approximately 4.5 million individuals. This crisis necessitates a well-coordinated and robust international response. We urge donor countries to enhance their contributions to the 2025 humanitarian response plan for Yemen, as just appealed by Tom Fletcher, and we call for an adequate response to address the urgent needs of the affected population in Yemen.

Pakistan has condemned the Houthi attacks on commercial and merchant vessels. We take note of the Secretary-General's report of 7 February, which indicates that no new incidents of attacks on shipping have been recorded in the past month. This development is obviously related to the ceasefire in Gaza. It is imperative, therefore, to ensure that the ceasefire in Gaza continues and that all three phases of the ceasefire agreement are implemented for the sake of peace in the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as in the broader region, including Yemen.

The December 2023 negotiations marked a significant step forward in Yemen. It is imperative to preserve and consolidate the progress made and ensure the full implementation of commitments towards lasting peace. We share the Special Envoy's view that the road map remains a viable path, initiated by a nationwide ceasefire, a structural political process and by addressing the critical economic and humanitarian challenges facing Yemen. The resumption of military operations would further exacerbate the conflict.

In conclusion, Pakistan reiterates its full support for the efforts of the Special Envoy to facilitate a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under United Nations auspices. We stand in solidarity with the people of Yemen in their pursuit of peace, stability and prosperity.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Hans Grundberg, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for their briefings.

We continue to follow the situation in Yemen very closely and have seen some positive developments there recently. The situation at the line of contact remains calm, despite some localized incidents, including in Marib province. It is clear that none of the Yemeni parties are interested in seeing an escalation on the ground. We note the efforts by the official Yemeni authorities to restore the national economy and improve the people's living conditions.

As many experts predicted, since the agreement on a cessation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip took effect on 19 January we have seen a noticeable stabilization in the situation in the waters off Yemen. We consider the statements made in that connection by the leadership of the Yemeni Ansar Allah movement about ending strikes on commercial ships transiting the Red Sea, confirmed in the latest monthly reports of the Secretary-General, to be a positive development. We welcomed the Houthis' release of the crew of the *MV Galaxy Leader* cargo ship on 22 January through Oman's mediation. We hope that freedom of navigation in the Red Sea will soon be fully restored.

At the same time, we are concerned about reports of the continuing detention of local United Nations personnel by the Houthis. Another eight people were arrested in Saada at the end of January. In the circumstances, the United Nations has announced a temporary suspension of operations in the province. We would like to express our condolences for the death of a World Food Programme staff member on 10 February. There is no justification for such incidents, wherever they occur, in Yemen or anywhere else in the world. Moreover, the situation of those who were detained previously has yet to be definitively resolved. We want to remind everyone that humanitarian workers have corresponding privileges and immunities that all parties are obliged to respect. We note the ongoing United Nations efforts to ascertain the reasons for what has happened, ensure humanitarian access to the detainees and create the conditions for their eventual release. Those efforts have already had results, as the Houthis released four people at the end of last year. We will continue to do our utmost to assist the Organization in that regard.

As noted, we see the overall stabilization of the situation in and around Yemen as an opportunity to capitalize on those positive trends and step up comprehensive political and diplomatic efforts to relaunch a political settlement. It will be particularly important to avoid squandering the results of the extensive work that has been done on the road map, and we urge all the parties to resume the negotiation process without delay. In particular, the international mediation should pursue targeted and inclusive efforts with Yemeni stakeholders, including Ansar Allah, so as to arrive at sustainable parameters for a swift normalization of the conflict. We stand ready to continue providing whatever help we can to Special Envoy Grundberg in that connection. Based on the agreements reached, it would then be possible to initiate a long-overdue update to the international legal framework for the Yemeni settlement so that it accurately reflects the military and political situation in the country. In the current circumstances, measures to restore trust — the so-called "small steps" practice — are significant and capable of bridging the differences between the parties to the conflict. In that connection, we welcomed the Houthis' unilateral release of 153 prisoners of war through the International Committee of the Red Cross at the end of January.

Broad international cooperation is also needed to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance this year has reached 19.5 million — an increase of almost 1.5 million from last year.

More than half of households nationwide are food-insecure. Infant mortality is growing and includes deaths from entirely curable diseases that are the result of a chronic shortage of medicines and lack of access to qualified medical care. There is still a serious shortfall in funding for humanitarian programmes, including the United Nations humanitarian plan for Yemen, which will require $2.5 billion in 2025. It will be necessary not only to increase humanitarian funding to rectify the situation but to work to remove the obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need throughout Yemen.

Frankly, against that backdrop, the news of the launch of a process to include the Houthi movement on the United States list of foreign terrorist organizations came as a bolt from the blue. The move could not only seriously complicate the work of humanitarian workers in Yemen but also adversely affect further mediation efforts aimed at restarting the political process. Washington's decision to tighten the screws on Ansar Allah, creating additional reasons for escalating tensions, seems completely divorced from reality. The ill-considered actions of the previous Administration prolonged the confrontation with the Houthis for more than a year and compounded the Yemeni people's suffering. Now, at a moment when the situation would seem to be de-escalating, the United States is taking steps that will exacerbate it. To put it bluntly, the inescapable conclusion is that the United States is simply not interested in a Yemeni settlement with the participation of the Houthis, who are an integral part of Yemeni society. I would like to believe that the move was taken by the new Administration in haste and without proper consideration, and that it will be revised. Otherwise, the blame for scuppering the efforts to secure a long-awaited peace in Yemen will be on Washington.

Mr. Sekeris (Greece): Let me start by thanking Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their informative briefings and tireless efforts to promote peace and stability in Yemen. I would also like to welcome the presence here today of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

Despite a relative decline in the Houthis' attacks in the past few months, the situation in Yemen and in the Red Sea region remains critical and volatile. The grave humanitarian situation and the political crisis remain in jeopardy, with increasingly negative consequences for the Yemeni people and the broader region. I would like to make some brief points.

First, although we welcome the release of the *MV Galaxy Leader* crew as a positive step, we condemn in the strongest terms the Houthis' recent arbitrary detentions of additional United Nations personnel, in a continuation of the deplorable trend that they initiated back in June. We deeply deplore the fact that one recently detained staff member from the World Food Programme lost his life while detained, and we express our sincere condolences to his family and the United Nations. The circumstances of his death must be thoroughly investigated. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all diplomatic staff, United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel and humanitarian workers who continue to be arbitrarily detained by the Houthis, and we encourage the Council to relay a strong message in that respect.

Secondly, all parties to the conflict must fully respect their obligations under international humanitarian law to authorize and facilitate the rapid, safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid. The safety and security of humanitarian workers must be protected so that they can deliver life-saving supplies, especially food and medicine. We also continue to fully support the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen, which has undertaken the colossal task of clearing much-needed shipments of goods and foodstuffs in order to address the population's needs.

Thirdly, the instability in the Red Sea region continues to raise deep concerns. A climate of unpredictability prevails, with the peril of resurgent Houthi aggression against merchant ships endangering a crucial global maritime trading route and a significant pathway for the provision of humanitarian assistance in a war-torn region. Greece is firmly committed to safeguarding freedom of navigation and maritime security in the Red Sea. We continue to play a leading role in the European Union's naval Operation Aspides, in full compliance with international law and in line with the operation's defensive posture, working closely with the international community to protect one of the world's most important maritime routes.

Fourthly, the Security Council and the countries of the region must send a clear message of unity and commitment on the need for military de-escalation by the opposing sides in the Yemeni conflict, especially the Houthis. In addition, the Council and the international community should exert influence on all sides to resume the peace process under United Nations auspices, as the only viable path to stability and security in Yemen and the Red Sea region. The process should include all the necessary guardrails and address the security concerns of neighbouring States and major stakeholders. My country, Greece, reiterates its full support for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Hans Grundberg, and his continued and dedicated efforts to revitalize the peace dialogue in Yemen through an inclusive, Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process under United Nations auspices. Women's substantial and equal participation in the process must also be guaranteed. Only through consistent mediation efforts and collective political engagement by all relevant stakeholders can a sustainable and lasting solution be achieved for Yemen.

Mrs. Blokar-Drobič (Slovenia): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their briefings. They can rest assured of Slovenia's full support for their efforts. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the meeting.

It is with deep regret that we are meeting today against the backdrop of the devastating news of the death of a World Food Programme staff member in Houthi detention earlier this week. We offer our condolences to his family and call for a swift, transparent and thorough investigation into his death. It follows the detention of an additional eight United Nations personnel at the end of January, bringing the total number of United Nations staff now detained by the Houthis to 23.

Slovenia believes that this warrants the Council's outright condemnation. We call once again for the immediate and unconditional release of all United Nations staff, as well as all others detained by the Houthis. Resolution 2730 (2024) on the protection of humanitarian and United Nations personnel is clear on the parties' obligations and responsibilities. Humanitarians must never be a target.

Those actions are particularly reprehensible when humanitarian needs are so high. It is not only an attack on humanitarians and on the United Nations family, but also an attack on those Yemenis who need humanitarian assistance the most. The recently published 2025 humanitarian response plan for Yemen shows that needs are growing. Food insecurity, malnutrition and lack of clean water remain a serious concern across many parts of the country. The spectre of famine is never far from the Yemeni people. Since joining the Council, we have underlined the need for all stakeholders to prioritize the protection and needs of civilians in Yemen first and foremost. We continue to make that plea. We believe that any worsening of the humanitarian crisis will only take us further away from peace, our shared goal.

We hoped that the ceasefire agreements in Gaza and between Israel and Lebanon would offer a precious opportunity to bring much-needed peace and stability to the entire region, including in Yemen. We must strive towards a sustainable nationwide ceasefire in Yemen and towards making progress on an inclusive intra-Yemeni

political process that prioritizes the population's needs and lays the groundwork for reconciliation and recovery, building on the truce first secured by the Special Envoy in 2022, a political process in which women will fully, meaningfully and safely participate.

The recent release of the *MV Galaxy Leader* crew was welcome, and we recognize the important role played by the Sultanate of Oman in achieving that outcome.

In conclusion, we urge all parties, in particular the Houthis, to refrain from any escalatory or inflammatory acts and rhetoric during this critical period. All attacks must end, and all detentions must be reversed. Last month I called on all sides to seize the moment and show a genuine commitment to peace and good governance (see S/PV.9835). I reiterate that call, which today feels all the more urgent.

Ms. Landi (Denmark): I would like to thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their briefings. I also welcome the representative of Yemen to our meeting today.

Recent developments across the Middle East have given cause for cautious optimism. Across the region, a reduction in violence has led to real dividends of peace for millions of people. It is therefore deeply distressing that, despite those trends, the situation in Yemen continues to grow more dire. This year alone, a staggering 19.5 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection services. Food insecurity is soaring. Half of all children under 5 years of age are acutely malnourished. As always, the most vulnerable are the most affected.

Around this table and across the international community, we have a responsibility to act. We must find ways to meet the needs of the population in line with humanitarian principles. Denmark is stepping up. We recently provided a new contribution of $13.5 million to the humanitarian response in Yemen, contributing to the life-saving efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Food Programme and the Yemen Humanitarian Fund. We urge others to join us.

As we speak, personnel from the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and diplomatic missions are being held in captivity by the Houthis, deprived of their freedom. Arbitrarily detained, many of them were working to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to Yemeni civilians in need. Those arbitrary detentions by the Houthis have forced the United Nations to pause all humanitarian operations in the governorate of Saada. We continue to call for unhindered and sustained access for humanitarian operations across Yemen, for which the safety and security of humanitarian personnel is a prerequisite.

Earlier this week, we received the tragic news that an aid worker from the World Food Programme died while being held captive by the Houthis. We are deeply concerned by that and extend our condolences to his family and to the United Nations community. Let there be no doubt, the safety and security of the United Nations and other humanitarian personnel must always be guaranteed. Humanitarian aid and the personnel providing it must not be held hostage in political power games. Disinformation about and against them must stop. We demand their immediate and unconditional release.

In addition, it is important that all restrictive measures against the Houthis, both United Nations sanctions and sanctions outside the scope of the United Nations, do not lead to unintended humanitarian consequences for the civilian population. Such consequences could present challenges to the humanitarian and the commercial sector in Yemen. With Yemen importing nearly 80 per cent of all food, fuels, textiles and medicines, we must do all we can to mitigate such effects.

Denmark has positively noted the Houthis' announcement to halt their attacks on commercial shipping in the light of the ceasefire in Gaza, but underlines that this must also be the case for Israeli-flagged and -operated vessels. The attacks on civilian commercial vessels must be halted entirely.

We welcome the Houthis' release of 153 conflict-related detainees. That represents a confidence-building measure and is hopefully a first step in a series of many. Such actions should provide new momentum towards a resumption of the peace process led by Special Envoy Grundberg and towards the implementation of the United Nations road map for peace. Those important processes deserve our full support.

In that regard, we underline that in order for peace to be sustainable, it must be inclusive. That means ensuring the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of a diverse group of women in the political process, and it means supporting the participation of young people and civil society groups of all political backgrounds from all regions of Yemen. Only a political solution to the conflict can bring peace to Yemen. We urge all stakeholders to exercise restraint and refrain from escalatory rhetoric that could derail those efforts.

In conclusion, we call on all parties to demonstrate a genuine interest in peace and to recommit to the United Nations-led process — to put it simply, to prioritize the needs of the Yemeni people.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Tom Fletcher, for their briefings. I welcome the presence among us of the Permanent Representative of Yemen.

France expresses its profound indignation at the death of Ahmed, a humanitarian worker for the World Food Programme, who had been arbitrarily detained by the Houthis and held in inhumane conditions since 23 January. We offer our condolences to his family and colleagues. Ahmed's death is a further illustration of the systematic violations of international humanitarian law committed by the Houthis. France calls on the Security Council to unanimously condemn those crimes.

France also reiterates its strongest condemnation of the arbitrary detention by the Houthis of dozens of United Nations and humanitarian personnel, both local and international, and of members of Yemeni civil society. France demands their immediate and unconditional release. We urge the Houthis to guarantee safe and unhindered humanitarian access and to halt all threats and all disinformation campaigns against humanitarian actors.

As we have heard, the Houthis' actions leave the United Nations with no choice but to suspend its activities in Saada governorate to protect its staff. Through their actions, the Houthis are undermining the delivery of the aid needed by the Yemeni people and worsening the humanitarian crisis in the country. France welcomes the unwavering commitment of the United Nations and humanitarian agencies that are still on the ground, standing ready to resume their activities as soon as the security conditions have been met. We must support them.

Through their actions and provocative statements, the Houthis bear major responsibility for the ongoing regional crisis. Their actions once again demonstrate their indifference to the suffering of the Yemeni people. Let us not play their game. The international community has a responsibility to support the revival of the inter-Yemeni peace process and to create the necessary conditions for the resumption of United Nations mediation. In that regard, France reiterates its full support for the Special Envoy, Mr. Hans Grundberg, in his efforts to prepare for the necessary resumption of the peace process. It also welcomes the constructive efforts of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman to facilitate those discussions. The unity of the Yemeni Presidential Leadership Council is also essential, as is the strengthening of the Yemeni Government. For their part, the Houthis must return to the negotiating

table under the leadership of the Special Envoy. France underlines the importance of inclusive negotiations, ensuring the participation of civil society as a whole and in particular Yemeni women.

Lastly, France reaffirms its commitment to Yemen's stability and regional security. It reiterates the need to avoid any further escalation in the region and calls on Iran to cease its support for destabilizing actions in the Middle East. France will continue its commitment to the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy and Operation Aspides in order to protect maritime security and freedom of navigation, in accordance with international law and alongside our partners.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama thanks the presidency of the Security Council for convening today's meeting. We also thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Hans Grundberg, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Tom Fletcher, for their valuable contributions. We also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in this meeting.

We deeply regret the tragic loss, on 10 February, of a staff member of the World Food Programme, who died while arbitrarily detained by the Houthis. To date, the cause of and circumstances surrounding his death are unknown. That information must be clarified — we hope by means of a thorough investigation. Our sincerest condolences go to his family and the United Nations team.

We strongly condemn the illegal detention of the 17 local United Nations staff members, who should have all been released a long time ago — having not been released immediately — and the most recent and deplorable arbitrary detention of seven other staff members on 23 January, which, as I said, resulted in the tragic death of one of them while he was being held hostage by the Houthis. Those acts represent a flagrant violation of international law and a direct attack on humanitarian work, which is absolutely unacceptable. We urgently and firmly demand the immediate and unconditional release of all detainees.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen has worsened significantly owing to economic decline, climate shocks and regional escalation — factors that have driven humanitarian needs and exacerbated protection risks. In 2025, an estimated 19.5 million people in Yemen will need humanitarian assistance and protection services, representing an increase of 1.3 million compared to last year. Almost half of the population faces acute food insecurity, more than 13 million people lack sufficient access to drinking water, and 40 per cent of health facilities are either partially functioning or inactive. In that context, we must ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those who need it most in an unhindered manner, as the well-being of the Yemeni people must always be the priority.

Aware of the global responsibility that brings us here today and with firm political will, Panama has made efforts to contribute humanitarian assistance through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, contributing within its capabilities to the Yemen Humanitarian Fund. Panama reiterates its support for the efforts of the Office of the Special Envoy, which is actively working with all relevant stakeholders to achieve and maintain a ceasefire that will be a concrete step towards a sustained and lasting peace process. In that regard, we welcome the meetings convened by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen with Yemeni women entrepreneurs, highlighting their crucial role in the economic recovery and stability of the country.

The Republic of Panama recognizes the release of the 25 crew members of the *MV Galaxy Leader*, originally from Bulgaria, Mexico, the Philippines, Romania and Ukraine, who were illegally detained by the Houthis for more than a year. That act

should serve as an example of the urgent need to put an end to arbitrary arrests and abductions, such as those still being endured by the United Nations staff who remain in detention. It also stresses the urgency of restoring maritime security in the region, which is essential to ensuring stability along trade and humanitarian assistance routes. We welcome the fact that, according to the most recent report of the Secretary-General, the International Maritime Organization indicates that there have been no new incidents involving merchant vessels since the previous report, which we hope reflects positive progress in the security and stability of maritime areas. However, we strongly reject statements about the possible continuation of unjustified attacks by the Houthis in the Red Sea against Israeli-associated vessels. That would negatively affect the already fragile situation in Yemen and opportunities for peace, as well as the fragility of the situation in Gaza and the rest of the region and the development of all phases of the peace agreements.

We believe that the Council must vigorously defend maritime security and the rights of navigation, demanding the definitive cessation of all attacks in the Red Sea and its surrounding maritime corridors, while taking the necessary action to protect the security of United Nations personnel and condemning any act that endangers their integrity.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): My gratitude goes to Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher for their informative updates. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in the Security Council meeting today.

Today, as the Middle East stands at a perilous crossroads, Yemen remains mired, in a fragile balance between conflict and stability. The choices made in the coming weeks and months will determine whether the country moves towards lasting peace and stability or slides back into deepening crisis.

In that light, I would like to underscore the following points today.

First, the Republic of Korea condemns in the strongest terms the Houthis' illegal detention of eight additional United Nations staff members. We demand the immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained United Nations, non-governmental organization, civil society and diplomatic personnel. We are acutely saddened and outraged by the tragic death on 10 February of a World Food Programme staffer and father of two who had been unlawfully detained by the Houthis since January. That heartbreaking loss underscores the grave risks that humanitarian workers face in Houthi-controlled areas, in which the delivery of critical humanitarian assistance to Yemeni people in desperate need is severely obstructed. The Houthis must abide by international humanitarian law. The safety of humanitarian workers and their access to civilians must be guaranteed, as emphasized by resolution 2730 (2024).

Secondly, we are deeply concerned by ongoing violations and abuses of human rights in Yemen, particularly by the Houthis, against the Yemeni people, as documented in the report of the Panel of Experts (S/2024/731) of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), concerning Yemen. The Houthis, while seeking humanitarian aid from the outside world, have shown hostility towards the international community's engagement on human rights, better governance and peacebuilding. That is unacceptable. It is also deplorable that the Houthis are consolidating control over civilians by instilling fear, silencing the voices of civil society and isolating them from the international community. We urge the Houthis to cease human rights abuses in the area under their control and to focus on enhancing the safety and well-being of the residents. We also call on the Houthis to stop undermining the long-stalled Yemeni-led political transition process, which requires inclusive participation by all, including women and youth.

Thirdly, all stakeholders must prioritize creating new opportunities for peace and stability amid the rapidly shifting dynamics in the Middle East. All relevant political actors, including the Houthis and neighbouring countries, must refocus their attention on de-escalation and engage in dialogue and negotiations to restart the Yemeni-led political process under United Nations auspices, which has been stalled since 7 October 2023. In that regard, we note and encourage the Special Envoy's tireless efforts to lay the groundwork for tangible progress in the political process by actively engaging with the key players in the region, including Saudi Arabia and Oman. In that context, it is crucial that the ceasefire hostage deal in Gaza be implemented and extended into the next phase. We cannot tolerate any actions that turn back the clock to the catastrophe before the 19 January agreement. Such actions also have the potential to rekindle insecurity and violence in Yemen and the Red Sea.

Fourthly, we reiterate the importance of the full and faithful implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular the arms embargo. Indeed, the unprecedented transfers of diverse military materiel and technology to the Houthis, as highlighted by the report of the Panel of Experts in October 2024, have sounded the alarm. In view of that troubling reality, we stress the crucial role of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen in ensuring compliance with the arms embargo. The international community should also place greater emphasis on strengthening the Yemeni Government's capacity to effectively enforce the arms embargo. In addition, as a Chair of the Yemen sanctions Committee last year and likely this year, I look forward to the swift appointment of new Panel of Experts for the sanctions Committee. The Republic of Korea remains firmly committed to ensuring a brighter future for Yemen and its people.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their briefings. I also warmly welcome the presence of the representative of Yemen in today's meeting.

Following the recent ceasefire in Gaza, tensions in Yemen and the Red Sea largely abated. However, given the complex dynamics of the conflict and the palpable lack of willingness to reach a political settlement, the situation on the ground remains fragile. China maintains that no matter how the situation evolves, the Yemeni issue should be resolved politically, and that Yemen's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity should be respected, international humanitarian law should be observed and civilians should be protected.

I will make four points.

First of all, facts over the past year have proven that there is no military solution to this conflict and that violence will only lead to dire consequences. A cessation of hostilities is a sine qua non for de-escalation. All parties concerned should seize the ceasefire in Gaza as an opportunity, stop assaulting commercial vessels, cease air strikes on Yemen and avoid another flare-up of the situation. All parties to the conflict in Yemen should utilize the Redeployment Coordination Committee, enhance military coordination and avoid miscalculation.

Secondly, it is the hope of the international community that United Nations support will help break the political deadlock and relaunch the peace process. All parties in Yemen should put the interests of their people first, respond to the call of the international community and resume dialogue and communication as soon as possible. Countries in the region should play a positive role and constructively facilitate dialogue among the parties. China supports Special Envoy Grundberg in redoubling his mediation efforts.

Thirdly, all parties in Yemen should actively cooperate with the humanitarian relief efforts of the United Nations to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access and the safety and security of humanitarian workers. The international community should sustain its humanitarian aid in Yemen and support the country's economic development and livelihood improvement. Recently, several additional United Nations personnel were detained in Yemen, and a World Food Programme staff member died while in detention. China is appalled by that incident and expresses serious concern over those incidents. China calls on the Houthis to immediately and unconditionally release all detained persons and guarantee their living conditions.

Fourthly, we cannot discuss Yemen and the Red Sea in isolation from the regional context. As we speak, the implementation of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza faces uncertainty. At this critical juncture, the international community, especially the major Powers, should play a constructive role. The recent proposal of the United States to clean out and take over Gaza has caused an uproar and was met with strong opposition from the Arab world and the wider international community. China has always maintained that Gaza belongs to the Palestinian people and is an integral part of the Palestinian territory. China firmly supports the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as a nation. We are consistently of the view that Palestinians governing Palestine is an important principle that must be upheld in the governance of Gaza, and we oppose the forced relocation of Gazans. We stand ever ready to work with the international community to stay the course of the two-State solution as the fundamental way forward and to make positive efforts towards peaceful coexistence between Palestine and Israel and long-term peace and stability in the Middle East.

I now 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, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council for this month and to wish you every success. I thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Algeria, for his successful presidency last month. I thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Mr. Tom Fletcher for their briefings.

We express our sincere condolences and sympathy to the family of Yemeni national Ahmed Baalawi, a World Food Programme (WFP) staff member in Yemen who died in the prisons of the Houthi terrorist militias after he was kidnapped and forcibly disappeared, along with seven other United Nations staff members, since 23 January 2025. We also express our condolences to WFP, the United Nations and the humanitarian community as a whole.

The Houthi terrorist militias persist in their criminal practices and policies against the staff of international organizations, civil society organizations and United Nations agencies operating in areas under their control, reflecting the systematic criminal approach of those militias and their grave violations of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and all international norms and instruments and national legislation. These militias continue to restrict and obstruct the work of relief and humanitarian workers. In June, they launched a campaign of kidnappings against dozens of employees of the United Nations, international and local organizations and civil society organizations. Last month, they kidnapped eight additional United Nations employees, in flagrant violation of the rules of humanitarian work and contrary to the will of the international community, in a continuation of their crimes and violations against Yemenis.

The killing of our citizen, Ahmed Baalawi, sounds the alarm of the gravity of the conditions of the kidnapped and detainees in the prisons of these militias. It is not unlikely that they will face the same fate, especially given the lack of success in deterring the practices of the terrorist Houthi militias. Time and again, the Yemeni Government has warned the international community, and we reaffirm the need for the international community, the

United Nations and the Council to take urgent action in order to save and protect the lives of humanitarian workers and to take firm measures to stop the Houthi violations and to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of the kidnapped and detainees.

We reiterate the Secretary-General's call for an immediate, transparent and thorough investigation into this incident and for those responsible to be held accountable. In that context, the Yemeni Government calls for the relocation of the headquarters of international organizations and United Nations agencies working in Yemen to the temporary capital of Aden so as to ensure a safe and stable environment for humanitarian workers and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, without obstacles or discrimination against any segment of society.

Our resilient Yemeni people are suffering from the repercussions of a colossal and unprecedented humanitarian and economic crisis, which has persisted due to the war launched by the terrorist Houthi militias, supported by the Iranian regime, against the Yemeni people, who long for peace, and the destructive approach adopted by these militias, their rejection of all efforts and endeavours to achieve peace and their insistence to prolong the conflict and the vicious cycle of violence. They fully disregard the suffering of the Yemeni people and are destroying the values and principles of coexistence, dialogue, civil culture and politics.

The Presidential Leadership Council and the Yemeni Government have stressed time and again that they are committed to a just and comprehensive peace based on the terms of reference of the agreed political solution, primarily resolution 2216 (2015), and that they are open to all regional and international efforts to resolve the Yemeni crisis; alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people; achieve their aspirations for security, stability and development; and fully support the efforts of the Special Envoy Grundberg. The Yemeni Government has committed to the terms of the April 2022 truce because it wants to protect the interests and resources of the Yemeni people, to address the economic and humanitarian situation and to create a favourable environment to advance the political process, despite the military escalation of the Houthi militias in a number of governorates, the latest of which was the military escalation and mobilization in Ma'rib, Jawf , Taiz and Dali', as well as their violations of all obligations and their plans to return to a full-scale war and plunge Yemen into a wider humanitarian crisis.

The Presidential Leadership Council and the Yemeni Government affirm that peace remains the clear strategic option. The window of peace cannot be closed if there is a genuine, serious and responsible partner and full awareness of the need for all Yemenis to participate in building their future. We cannot accept an armed group fighting the State for exclusive power, claiming a divine right to govern the Yemeni people. Efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace, to end the conflict and to resolve the Yemeni crisis will not succeed until the Houthi militias stop extorting the regional and international community. That cannot happen until pressure is brought to bear on these militias to engage positively, earnestly and in good faith with such efforts and to put the interests of the Yemeni people first, and until their sources of funding and weaponry are removed.

We stress that the best and most effective way to achieve peace in Yemen is to support the Yemeni Government by strengthening its economic and security capabilities so that it can exercise control over all Yemeni territory. The recovery of Yemen is not only in the best interests of the nation, but of the region and the international community in order to maintain the security and stability of the region and the world and to protect international maritime corridors in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandab strait and the Gulf of Aden. The relevant Council resolutions cannot be postponed; they must be implemented, especially resolution 2216 (2015). It is incumbent upon the international community and the Council to shoulder their responsibilities and take effective and decisive positions and measures to push the Houthi militias to seek peace and end this war, which has killed nearly half a million Yemenis, displaced hundreds of thousands of Yemenis across countries and continents, plunged more than 20 million Yemenis into poverty, hunger and

food insecurity, forced more than 4 million Yemenis into internally displaced persons camps, living undignified lives under difficult humanitarian conditions.

This conflict has had destructive humanitarian and economic impacts on Yemen, creating one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Despite those enormous challenges, the Yemeni Government is making great efforts to restore State institutions and implement a number of economic, financial and administrative reforms to fulfil its obligations to alleviate the daily suffering of citizens, mitigate the repercussions of Houthi terrorist attacks on oil facilities and exports on the economic and humanitarian situation in Yemen. The Yemeni Government is aware that ending the suffering in Yemen can be achieved only by ending the crisis. We cannot wait for peace before starting development in Yemen.

In the high-level ministerial meeting held at the United Nations Headquarters in January between the Yemeni Government and the United Kingdom, we presented our plan for economic recovery and its implementation matrix. We presented the main priorities — to promote the role of institutions and the capacities of the Government to improve its provision of basic services, address the changes in the national currency exchange rate, to ensure basic goods, to protect the most vulnerable and to increase the State's access to its sovereign resources. We also discussed our partnership with the international community to create a mechanism to promote that partnership.

The Government of Yemen calls on the international community to provide economic, financial and political support in order to enable Yemen to achieve its vision of recovery and economic stability. That is a key factor for the success of our efforts. In that context, we highly appreciate the fraternal support in various fields provided by our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Yemeni people and its Government in order to alleviate their suffering.

The decision by the United States of America to designate the Houthi militias as a foreign terrorist organization — a decision which the Yemeni Government has welcomed — represents an important step in understanding and acknowledging the nature of the threat and the danger that the Iranian-backed group poses to regional and international peace and security and to the Yemeni people and its role in destabilizing Yemen and the region. We urge the international community to take similar steps so as to strengthen international efforts to combat terrorism and dry up its sources and curb the unbridled actions of those militias, who show contempt not only for the interests of the Yemeni people but also for the need for peace and security in Yemen, the region and the world as a whole. Leniency towards those who reject peace will entail further acts of terrorism, undermine regional and international peace and security and thwart all efforts to end the conflict.

It is our hope that the designation will be a significant factor in stepping up international efforts towards achieving peace and stability and alleviating human suffering in Yemen. The Yemeni Government underscores its keen interest in, and commitment to, working with the international community, all humanitarian partners and the national commercial sector in providing all the facilities and guarantees necessary to the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid throughout the country, including areas controlled by the Houthi militias.

In conclusion, despite all the challenges and the difficulties, hope abides in the ability of the Yemeni people to overcome the crisis and to unite national efforts so as to overcome the coup, restore State institutions, turn a new page of stability, construction and development and build a bright future for all Yemenis on the basis of justice, equality, dignity and respect for human rights.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no more names inscribed 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.