



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

9576th meeting

Thursday, 14 March 2024, 10.05 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Yamazaki (Japan)

Members:

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| Algeria | Mr. Bendjama |
| China | Mr. Geng Shuang |
| Ecuador | Mr. De La Gasca |
| France | Mrs. Broadhurst Estival |
| Guyana | Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett |
| Malta | Ms. Gatt |
| Mozambique | Mr. Afonso |
| Republic of Korea | Mr. Hwang |
| Russian Federation | Mr. Polyanskiy |
| Sierra Leone | Mr. Kanu |
| Slovenia | Mr. Žbogar |
| Switzerland | Mrs. Baeriswyl |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . | Mr. Kariuki |
| United States of America | Mr. Wood |

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 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; and Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Grundberg.

Mr. Grundberg: Allow me to start by wishing Yemenis, as well as Muslims around the world, a blessed Ramadan. May this holy month bring Yemenis and people across the world reasons to hope for a more peaceful future. I wish them a Ramadan Kareem.

We had hoped — and Yemenis had expected — that, by this Ramadan, we would have had an agreement on a nationwide ceasefire and measures to improve living conditions in Yemen. I had hoped I would be briefing the Security Council about the preparations for an inclusive political process. Public sector employees across the country should have been receiving their salaries and pensions. Oil exports should have resumed, which could have enabled more effective service delivery and improved economic conditions. And we should have had another agreement on the release of prisoners, allowing loved ones to return home in time for Ramadan. While those hopes and expectations have not to date been met, our efforts in finalizing and implementing a United Nations road map remain undeterred. I believe that Yemenis share my impatience in achieving those aspirations.

However, as I briefed last month (see S/PV.9548), the mediation space has grown more complex. That continues to be the case. Although we have tried to shield the peace process from regional developments

since the war in Gaza, the reality is that what happens regionally impacts Yemen and what happens in Yemen can impact the region.

Since November, Ansar Allah has been targeting vessels in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. In response, since January, the United States and United Kingdom have struck military targets in Ansar Allah-controlled areas. Last week, Ansar Allah attacked a bulk carrier in the Gulf of Aden, killing and wounding several crew members. Another vessel that Ansar Allah recently struck, the *MV Rubymar*, left an oil slick and has now sunk in the Red Sea, along with its cargo. Regrettably, the current trajectory gives cause for serious concern.

The longer the escalatory environment continues, the more challenging Yemen's mediation space will become. With more interests at play, the parties to the conflict in Yemen are more likely to shift calculations and alter their negotiation agendas. In a worst-case scenario, the parties could decide to engage in risky military adventurism that propels Yemen back into a new cycle of war. Therefore, allow me to emphasize the importance of remaining focused on the long-term aims that we are seeking to achieve in Yemen.

In order to protect progress on the peace process, I urge all those involved to exercise maximum restraint and work towards de-escalation. With the Red Sea now part of a wider set of concentric circles of escalation, I also reiterate the Secretary-General's warning about the risk of further spillover of the Gaza conflict across the region and his recent calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza.

Inside Yemen, although hostilities have remained at relatively low levels compared to the pre-2022 truce period, we have seen continued clashes and troop movements in Al-Hudaydah, Lahj, Ma'rib, Sa'ada, Shabwa and Taiz. The parties also continue to make public threats to return to war. Many Yemenis who I have spoken to have expressed their fears of a potential escalation in internal fighting. We must do all we can to prevent that. My Office continues to engage the parties on the need to maintain calm at the front lines.

Amid the regional turmoil, my work continues to be guided by the priorities articulated by Yemenis for Yemen. And my focus remains on reaching a ceasefire and starting a political process. That is the only way to resolve the conflict in Yemen. Over the past few months, my Office and I have consulted with Yemenis from all walks of life. They have talked about what they have

lost, what peace means to them and how they think we should get there. One thing we have heard consistently, across the board, is that their needs and priorities have not changed since this recent regional escalation. They have only grown more urgent.

My mediation efforts therefore focus on engaging the parties to bridge gaps and identify ways to initiate a ceasefire, improve living conditions and start a political process, building off the commitments they made in December. As part of that effort, my Office has convened meetings in recent weeks with key security officials in Aden and Taiz to prepare for a future nationwide ceasefire. It is imperative that all parties keep channels of communication open and do not lose focus on delivering results for Yemenis.

International Women's Day this month was a reminder of the disproportionate impact of conflict on women in Yemen and of the importance of enabling their meaningful participation in the peace process. The conflict has exacerbated gender inequalities, restricting women's access to education, health care and freedom of movement. Imposed guardianship requirements further curtail women's agency and participation in peace efforts.

My Office is continuing its partnership with UN-Women to hold consultations with civil society, women political leaders, human rights activists and representatives of marginalized groups. Through those consultations, we aim to prioritize the voices and experiences of local communities, particularly Yemeni women. Last month, my Office also held a three-day consultative meeting with 30 civil society men and women activists from diverse governorates, discussing their priorities and visions for the peace process and ideas on how to make United Nations negotiations more inclusive.

We are also closely following and encouraging local mediation efforts. In recent weeks, thanks to the relentless advocacy and work of Yemeni civil society and local mediators, we have seen renewed attention on the need to open roads that were closed during the conflict. The opening of the Haifan road, in Taiz governorate, is a step in the right direction. I am encouraged that the parties are giving renewed attention to the issue of roads. However, more needs to be done to prevent incidents and improve coordination between the parties. I urge them to prioritize the collective interest of Yemenis over narrow gains and to seize this

opportunity to meet Yemenis' expectations regarding the sustainable opening of main roads across Yemen. Supporting the freedom of movement of people and goods across Yemen remains a priority for my Office, and we stand ready to assist the parties as needed. I hope that by the time we meet again next month, there is more positive news to share in that regard.

I have continued working with regional actors, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman, who play a crucial role in supporting my mediation efforts. Yemen has also been fortunate to have long benefited from the unity of the Security Council in supporting a political process under United Nations auspices. I am grateful that all international stakeholders I have engaged with continue to assure me of their steadfast support for my efforts and for the resolution of the conflict. I will need that concerted backing in order to ensure strong and consistent signalling to the parties on the need to engage with the peace process. And I will rely on the Council's collective diplomatic action to help me steer the mediation process through the current regional turmoil.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Wosornu.

Ms. Wosornu: I thank Special Envoy Grundberg for his update. I can only echo and reiterate his call for de-escalation in Yemen and for the parties to recommit to the path of stability and peace. I also wish the people of Yemen and everyone celebrating — Ramadan Mubarak.

Positive progress observed since the United Nations-brokered truce in April 2022 is at risk of unravelling. Levels of food insecurity and malnutrition have surged in recent months, posing a real and increasing threat to the lives and well-being of millions of people, particularly women and children.

Recent assessments by UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) showed an 11 per cent increase in food insecurity since November — the highest levels for 16 months in Houthi-controlled areas — and that nearly half of all children under the age of five are experiencing moderate to severe stunting, a 4-percentage point increase compared to 2022 and more than double the global stunting prevalence. More than half of the families surveyed reported inadequate food consumption levels.

The causes are familiar — conflict, a protracted economic crisis and, increasingly, severe funding shortfalls, which are significantly impacting humanitarian assistance. In Government-controlled areas, the number of people receiving aid and the size of food rations have had to be reduced.

As we previously told the Council, the World Food Programme paused general food assistance in Houthi-controlled areas in November while it continued discussions with the Houthi de facto authorities on who to prioritize for assistance. Following an allocation by the Emergency Relief Coordinator of \$7 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to the World Food Programme, an agreement on commencing a pilot retargeting exercise in Houthi-controlled areas has been reached. Based on the success of that pilot and subject to availability of funding, a broader resumption of food distribution will take place.

As a result, 9.5 million people who have not received assistance since November 2023 could be reached. Over the next five months, the WFP's overall requirement is \$230 million to cover three food-distribution cycles for the most vulnerable families in Houthi-controlled areas. We urge donors to step up with this much-needed immediate funding.

For most people in Yemen, food insecurity is an issue of affordability, not accessibility. As people in Yemen very clearly told me when I visited the governorates of Aden, Sana'a and Amran last week, they want sustainable solutions to the causes of their humanitarian needs and the opportunity to define for themselves how to rebuild their futures.

At the As-Shaab displacement site in Aden, I spoke with Shadia, Jumah, Sa'ada, Sumaya and Shahra — mothers, breadwinners and change-makers in their communities. They shared with me their hopes to start businesses making *bakhoor*, or perfume and incense, to take control of their lives for themselves and their families. As Special Envoy Grundberg said, as we celebrate International Women's Day this month, I am awed by their drive, determination and resilience. The sustainable solutions that we have discussed go far beyond what humanitarians can be expected to provide. It is more important than ever that the international community get behind the United Nations development framework for Yemen to enable the people of Yemen to break the cycle of dependence on external assistance and help them build a robust, self-reliant and

sustainable economy, just like the women whom I met mentioned to me. Livelihoods and job creation are the central pillars of that development framework, which includes prioritizing support for groups at the highest risk of being left behind, including women and girls.

As was mentioned earlier, rising regional tensions and the escalating situation in the Red Sea are further factors threatening the modest economic improvements and humanitarian progress made following the United Nations-brokered truce in April 2022 and the subsequent cessation of hostilities. As the Special Envoy said, attacks against vessels, such as the *MV Rubymar*, could have direct and indirect impacts on the livelihoods of thousands of people in coastal communities who rely on fishing for survival. The incident illustrates the substantial risks posed by the growing escalation in and around Yemen. We have also received a number of unverified reports of civilian casualties as a result of Houthi attacks on vessels, as well as from air strikes in Yemen. We once again reiterate the Secretary-General's call for full compliance with resolution 2722 (2024). We urge all parties concerned to comply with international law and refrain from actions that could exacerbate the situation.

I also want to reiterate the importance of full humanitarian access to people in need in Yemen. Following several cancellations by the Houthi de facto authorities, we welcome the resumption of flights to Ma'rib. We continue to advocate for the lifting of bureaucratic impediments and restrictions on staff members' movements, particularly the movement of Yemeni female staff members throughout the country.

The people of Yemen can ill afford to see the progress made since the United Nations-brokered truce ebb away. Neither can they afford the disaster and deprivation that could come with a further escalation in the conflict. I appeal to the members of the Council to do everything that they can to support de-escalation and peace efforts for the people of Yemen, including, as Special Envoy Grundberg mentioned, women-led initiatives. I also ask them to continue using all diplomatic means to support and facilitate a principled humanitarian response in Yemen and to maintain unity for the sake of all those working tirelessly to serve those in need, despite the dangers. Lastly, we appeal to donors to provide the urgent financial support required to tackle food insecurity and other pressing

humanitarian needs, as well as support for livelihoods. That remains a lifeline for the people of Yemen, and we depend on the timeliness of such funding.

The President: I thank Ms. Wosornu for her 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 Director Wosornu for their briefings. We are grateful for all the work that they and their teams are doing to bring sustainable peace and humanitarian relief to the Yemeni people.

Since we previously met (see S/PV.9548) to discuss Yemen, the Houthis have continued their reckless attacks on shipping in the Red Sea. The United Kingdom offers its condolences to the families of the innocent crew members killed or injured during their recent attack on the *MV True Confidence*, targeted while en route from China to Saudi Arabia. In recent days, similar actions resulted in the sinking of the fertilizer-laden *MV Rubymar* and continue to risk exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The attacks are impacting all of us. Ships from around the world are being targeted. It has also been more than 100 days since the seizure of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew members, who continue to be unlawfully detained. We call for the immediate release of the vessel and its crew. The Houthis alone are risking further escalation. The United Kingdom condemns the abhorrent attacks, and we call on the Houthis to stop them, respect the freedom of navigation of all vessels and de-escalate tensions in the Red Sea.

Today the Security Council will hear an update from the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM), which monitors ships entering Yemeni ports. The inspection of vessels is fundamental to interrupting illicit arms entering Houthi-controlled areas, while preserving the flow of goods into Yemen. Almost 90 per cent of all food in Yemen comes through commercial imports. Therefore, maintaining the integrity of those ports is vital. Reports of Iranian ships circumventing the inspections are therefore extremely concerning. The United Kingdom calls on Iran to cease its unlawful support for the Houthis. All ships entering Al-Hudaydah must comply and report to the UNVIM for inspection. We recommit our support to UNVIM so that it has the necessary

capacity and funding to ensure that Yemenis have access to essential goods, while abating the smuggling of illicit arms.

Lastly, as Special Envoy Grundberg made clear, the peace process in Yemen remains critical. We urge all stakeholders and parties to the conflict to prioritize the peace process and build on the progress made by the Special Envoy. That is perhaps the best opportunity for sustainable peace in Yemen in nine years. We must take it.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Director Wosornu for their comprehensive briefings.

Malta continues to be gravely concerned about the dire and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen, which has caused years-long untold suffering for the Yemeni people. The humanitarian response plan for 2024 is a tragic reminder of the scale of suffering in Yemen. More than 18 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection services. As we heard today, Yemen continues to be one of the most food-insecure countries in the world, with 17.6 million people facing food and nutrition insecurity. Almost half of all children under the age of five are suffering from stunting. The international community must scale up efforts to ensure that the World Food Programme and its partners have the necessary resources and access to urgently resume food distribution in Houthi-controlled areas. Without the necessary funding, food security will continue to deteriorate sharply.

Military escalation in the Red Sea threatens progress towards peace in Yemen. Malta condemns the Houthi missile attack on the *MV True Confidence* cargo ship on 6 March, which resulted in the deaths of three seafarers and injured four others. We also condemn the missile attacks on the *MV Rubymar*. Its sinking poses a serious environmental risk in the Red Sea. We call for the full implementation of resolution 2722 (2024), including the immediate release of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew. Furthermore, Houthi attacks against international shipping will endanger the safety and security of seafarers and the freedom of navigation and hinder the delivery of essential humanitarian aid into Yemen. We welcome the launch of the European Union's Operation Aspides, which seeks to restore maritime security and safeguard the freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. The Houthis must immediately cease their attacks and actions against commercial shipping and abide by their obligations under international law.

We call on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to focus their efforts on finding a political agreement that will lead to sustainable peace for the benefit of all Yemenis. The establishment of a United Nations road map will be crucial to ensuring the implementation of a nationwide ceasefire, improved living conditions and the resumption of an inclusive Yemeni-led and -owned political process under United Nations auspices.

As we are also gathered here at Headquarters for the Commission on the Status of Women, we must emphasize that the rights of women in Yemen continue to be violated. While the National Dialogue Conference agreed to a 30 per cent quota for women's participation, that participation remains marginal in the intra-Yemeni talks and the committees to implement the Hodeidah Agreement. We urge the authorities across Yemen to lift the restrictions that are systematically violating women's right to freedom of movement. The restrictions requiring women to have a male guardian's permission or a male chaperone to move around freely impede their access to health care, education and work. Yemeni women working with non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies are being specifically targeted, harassed or humiliated at checkpoints, and many have been forced to resign. That cuts off essential humanitarian aid to Yemeni women and girls and much-needed income for their families. We urge the United Nations to ensure that it has sufficient capacity to implement its commitments under the women and peace and security agenda, including through the deployment of gender advisers and women protection advisers. We call on all the parties in Yemen to fully respect the equal rights and freedoms of women, including their ability to move freely within the country.

In conclusion, along with the start of the holy month of Ramadan we saw expectations and hope for the people of Yemen. Despite the fact that so far those expectations have not been fulfilled, we remain steadfast in our support for the Yemeni people's aspirations for a ceasefire and sustainable peace.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Special Envoy Hans Grundberg and Director Edem Wosornu of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their detailed briefings. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in this meeting.

A month has passed since we held the previous regular meeting on Yemen (see S/PV.9548). Many Council members, including the Republic of Korea, were

firm in their demands for an end to the Houthi attacks on vessels in the Red Sea. Unfortunately, the dangerous escalation by the Houthis is still ongoing. My delegation once again strongly demands that the Houthis cease all such attacks. We condemn the attacks on 6 March that killed three crew members of the *MV True Confidence*. The sinking earlier this month of the *MV Rubymar* cargo ship, carrying fertilizer, is also deeply concerning owing to its possible environmental contamination of the Red Sea. And we are very worried about the economic damage that these attacks are triggering by disrupting international trade. There is no excuse that can justify these Houthi attacks. The Houthis argue that they are acting in support of Palestinians in Gaza, but the attacks are not helping to resolve or ease the situation in any way. They merely intensify and widen regional tensions and confrontation. Moreover, the provocations are delaying the advancement of the peace process in Yemen.

The Republic of Korea stresses the vital importance of the full implementation of resolution 2722 (2024) by all Member States, including adherence to the obligations related to the targeted arms embargo under resolution 2216 (2015). As the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), concerning Yemen, we will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the sanctions regime, in particular the arms embargo, with the valuable support and cooperation of the Panel of Experts on Yemen.

While the international community focuses its attention on Gaza and the Red Sea, we should not forget that the humanitarian suffering in Yemen has lasted for a decade as a result of the continuing conflict and confrontation in the country. My delegation is alarmed that 17.6 million people, including 6.5 million children, are facing food and nutrition insecurity. Cooperation between the Yemeni parties and humanitarian organizations is crucial. All restrictions, including the limitations on female humanitarian workers' movements, should be removed. The Republic of Korea remains firmly committed to providing assistance to Yemen on both the humanitarian and development fronts, including through its annual donation of 18,000 tons of rice to Yemen in cooperation with the World Food Programme. However, it is clear that the conflict-related humanitarian crisis cannot end without a concrete and durable political settlement in Yemen. It is therefore imperative for all Yemeni parties, especially the Houthis, to stick to the negotiation process alongside the full cooperation of the United Nations.

The Republic of Korea fully supports Special Envoy Grundberg's continuing endeavour to push his mediation for dialogue forward among the relevant parties and key stakeholders in Yemen. We also appreciate the efforts of Saudi Arabia and Oman to contribute to establishing peace there. In order to reach a durable solution to the question of Yemen, civil society, representing a wide range of Yemen's 34 million people, should be encouraged to exercise its critical role in the peace process. We hope that the constructive engagement by the Special Envoy with civil society groups, including those representing women, will not only continue but expand further across all of Yemen.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Hans Grundberg and Edem Wosornu for their briefings and welcome the presence here today of the representative of Yemen.

The attacks by the Houthis in the Red Sea have continued despite the warnings of the Security Council, as the latest report of the Secretary-General on the subject indicates. Let us be clear. The Houthis are solely responsible for the current escalation in the Red Sea and its negative consequences for regional stability and international maritime trade. France firmly condemns the destabilizing attacks that the Houthis have been carrying out for several months, which undermine navigation rights and freedoms.

A new threshold was crossed in early March when the Houthis attacked a commercial vessel, the *MV True Confidence*, killing several members of its crew. They are also responsible for the sinking of the *MV Rubymar* cargo ship, which poses a very serious risk of an environmental disaster. We call on the Houthis to immediately release the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew, whom they have held hostage held since November 2023. We also call on the Islamic Republic of Iran, which finances and arms the Houthis, to cease its destabilizing activities.

In the face of the Houthis' irresponsible actions, France will continue its commitment within the framework of the European Union's Operation Aspidos to ensure maritime security and freedom of navigation, in accordance with international law and in liaison with its partners. As part of Aspidos — which I would like to reiterate, has a de-escalation-based approach and a solely defensive posture — a French frigate has been deployed and has already intercepted several Houthi drones. Resolution 2722 (2024) states that the exercise

of navigational rights and freedoms must be respected, and that States have a right to defend their vessels against these attacks, in accordance with international law. It must be fully implemented.

The serious violations of international law committed by the Houthis in the Red Sea must not divert attention from the situation inside Yemen. The partial truce, which continues to be interrupted by flare-ups, must become a complete and lasting cessation of hostilities, as the Yemeni people are the main victims of this conflict. A lasting ceasefire would make it possible to improve the humanitarian situation and restore essential infrastructure. By 2024, more than 17 million people will need health-care assistance, and just as many will be suffering from food insecurity. It is also our collective responsibility to enable the people who have been internally displaced, sometimes several times over, to resume their lives. We must also ensure that humanitarian workers can carry out their missions without hindrance, especially women staff in the Houthi zone. 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 for Yemen, which is helping to combat arms trafficking in the Red Sea. It must be strengthened and better funded.

Finally, France reiterates its full support for the Special Envoy and his tireless efforts to define an inclusive road map. The peace process must resume as soon as possible under the auspices of the Special Envoy. France welcomes those efforts, as well as the mobilization of Saudi Arabia, Oman and other regional players, to that end. Only a comprehensive and inclusive political solution that takes the concerns and interests of all Yemenis into account can lead to peace. Yemeni women's effective participation in the political negotiations must also be guaranteed. France will continue its efforts in that direction.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Ms. Wosornu for their briefings.

Sadly, the Houthis' threats to maritime security and commercial shipping continue to demand our attention. The number of countries affected by their destabilizing behaviour increases each day, and it has truly become a global challenge. While there has been sustained and widespread international condemnation of the illegal and reckless attacks, we cannot afford to become

complacent. That condemnation must continue, and the chorus of voices must grow as the Houthis continue to escalate attacks, including the deplorable sinking of the *MV Rubymar* and the tragic deaths of three civilian mariners on the *MV True Confidence*. That type of activity led the United States to name Ansar Allah, commonly known as the Houthis, as a specially designated global terrorist entity, a designation that came into effect on 16 February.

But we cannot take on that challenge alone. Houthi attacks affect every Member State, and the continued escalation and destabilization are putting global commerce at risk in every corner of the globe. It is therefore vital that we speak with one voice in rejecting Houthi efforts to interfere with the exercise of navigational rights and freedoms in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. We must also reiterate our demand that the Houthis immediately release the crew of the *MV Galaxy Leader*. The Houthis have absolutely no legitimate reason or lawful basis for holding them.

The United States appreciates the solidarity of the Council members who have joined our proposed press statement, co-penned with Japan, which condemns the Houthis' latest attacks in the strongest possible terms and demands that the Houthis cease their attacks, in accordance with resolution 2722 (2024). The press statement also underscores the Council's concern about the foreign origins of weapons used by the Houthis and the apparent violations of the arms embargo that have occurred. The statement further underscores the Council's support for a strong and effective United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen (UNVIM). We look forward to speaking with UNVIM representatives immediately after today's meeting about ways to strengthen UNVIM's capacity to inspect a broader range of vessels bound for Houthi-controlled ports, ensuring compliance with the arms embargo and preventing the import of weapons. UNVIM also plays a critical role in facilitating the flow of essential goods into Yemen, thereby helping to mitigate the dire economic and humanitarian crises facing the country. Of course, 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 the weapons transfers and other activities that help facilitate Houthi attacks in the Red Sea.

Before the Houthis' recent escalation, ordinary Yemenis were beginning to see a way back to stability through a durable ceasefire and an inclusive, United

Nations-led Yemeni-Yemeni political process. The Houthis risk throwing that progress away. I want to make it clear that the Houthis' actions do nothing to alleviate the hardships facing the Yemeni people, much less help meet the needs of Palestinian civilians in Gaza. In fact, Houthi propaganda now suggests that they would continue those attacks even after a ceasefire in Gaza. What is more, those attacks make it increasingly difficult to deliver humanitarian assistance to other suffering people, including in the Sudan. We must therefore condemn those attacks in the Red Sea for what they are — part of a long-term strategy to project power and distract from domestic problems.

The United States wholeheartedly shares the Yemeni people's aspirations for a better future — one that guarantees respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms. We continue to believe that constructive engagement on the United Nations road map remains a better path that can hopefully lead to a durable end to the conflict and address Yemenis' calls for justice, accountability and redress for human rights abuses and violations.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I 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 Grundberg and Director Wosornu for their informative briefings. We also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen in this meeting.

The A3+ reaffirms its commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen and emphasizes the importance of the Yemeni parties engaging constructively under the auspices of the United Nations to end the conflict. A durable political settlement must be the ultimate objective of a Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process. We welcome the critical role and efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman and other regional actors in that regard. In that respect, achieving comprehensive peace requires the full, equal and effective participation of all Yemenis, including women and civil society, in the political negotiations and peace process. The Yemeni people deserve sustainable peace and development.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate, with increased food insecurity and in the absence of a political solution. That is a matter of deep

concern. The need for essential life-saving assistance is urgent, with women and girls being the worst impacted. We urge the international community to scale up support for humanitarian operations in Yemen and ensure that the World Food Programme can resume its operations as early as possible.

Additionally, climate change is exacerbating the crisis owing to water scarcity and by forcing people to leave their homes. According to the United Nations Development Programme, Yemen is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change — a point underscored by the damage and disruption caused by recent natural disasters, including excessive flooding. With Yemen's already complex and multifaceted development challenges, climate change acts as an uncertainty multiplier with the potential to seriously constrain the country's future. It is imperative for international donors to scale up funding and invest in early-warning systems. The shortage of water resources further compounds the complex situation, which requires adequate national initiatives and financial support to overcome those challenges.

The A3+ condemns the Houthi attacks on civilian vessels in the Red Sea. The destabilizing attacks have increased insurance costs and disrupted trade in the region. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the war-risk insurance premiums for vessels transiting through the Red Sea have increased. We are gravely concerned about the attack on *MV True Confidence* on 6 March, which resulted in loss of life for the first time since the crisis started last year. We are also seriously concerned about the attack on the *MV Rubymar* on 18 February, which resulted in the spilling of 21,000 metric tons of ammonium phosphate sulphates fertilizer. A high concentration of those dangerous goods could pose a serious threat to the marine ecosystem and the Yemeni fishing industry. We call on the international community to support and enhance the capacities of Yemen's coastguard in protecting the country's coastline.

As Special Envoy Grundberg stressed last month, "What happens regionally affects Yemen, and what happens in Yemen can affect the region" (see S/PV.9548). The situation in Gaza, the maritime attacks in the Red Sea and the air strikes on Yemeni territory all have the potential to contribute to a full-blown regional crisis. An immediate ceasefire in Gaza is more urgent than ever, given its impact on security and stability in the region. In that regard, we urge all involved to exercise

maximum restraint and prioritize diplomatic channels over security options, whilst maximizing de-escalation efforts. In conclusion, we must safeguard the political space for dialogue and mediation towards peace in Yemen and the United Nations road map.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Ms. Wosornu for their briefings and welcome the presence of the representative of Yemen at today's meeting.

The growing tension in the Red Sea is indeed worrisome. The attacks and military operations in question have resulted in casualties, which we deplore. China calls on the Houthis to respect the right of the commercial vessels of all countries to navigate the waters of the Red Sea in accordance with international law, and to immediately cease their attacks. We also call on the parties concerned to exercise restraint and immediately cease any actions that might exacerbate tensions. I want to reiterate that the Security Council has never authorized any country to use force against Yemen. International law and the resolutions of the Council should not be subject to misrepresentation and abuse by any country.

The escalation in the Red Sea is seriously disrupting the political process in Yemen. The previous agreement reached by the parties concerned on a nationwide ceasefire, the improvement of living conditions and a resumption of the United Nations-led comprehensive political process was hard won and deserves to be nurtured. We hope that the parties concerned will adhere to the general direction of a political settlement, place the interests and welfare of the Yemeni people above everything else and continue to advance the Yemeni-led and -owned political process. China supports the work of Mr. Grundberg and expects all parties, especially those with major influence, to play a constructive role in easing the situation.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen persists, with more than 18 million civilians in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and about 2.4 million children suffering from malnutrition. China calls on the international community to increase its investment in Yemen's humanitarian and development efforts, and we look forward seeing the World Food Programme's humanitarian operations in northern Yemen resumed as soon as possible.

The tensions in the Red Sea are a clear manifestation of the spillover effects of the Gaza conflict. We are now in the midst of the holy month of Ramadan, which should be a time of peace and tranquillity for the vast majority of Muslims, but the people of Gaza remain mired in suffering and are deprived of any hope for peace. We once again call on Israel to immediately cease its military operations in Gaza and stop its collective punishment of the Palestinian people. We call on the country concerned to heed the overwhelming calls of the international community and act in a truly responsible and constructive manner by enabling the Council to take action as soon as possible on the demand for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I thank today's briefers, Special Envoy Grundberg and Executive Director Wosornu. I also welcome the representative of Yemen to the Chamber.

In this holy month of Ramadan, we reiterate our full support for the work of the Special Envoy in the attempts to secure a ceasefire and resume the political process through a United Nations road map in Yemen. With trust between the parties running low, and against the backdrop of a tense regional dynamic, it is critical that the Security Council remain united around the United Nations efforts to restore momentum in that process and encourage dialogue between all actors. A military escalation in Yemen must be avoided at all costs.

The humanitarian situation — food insecurity and malnutrition in particular — remains alarming, particularly for women and children, as Ms. Wosornu confirmed today. We must not allow our efforts to flag while there are still more than 18 million people in Yemen requiring humanitarian assistance in 2024. We are therefore concerned about the fact that World Food Programme food distributions have not yet been resumed in the north and that access issues persist.

Echoing the representative of Malta, I also want to recall that we are meeting during the session of the Commission on the Status of Women. It is therefore incumbent on me to reiterate our firm belief that a truly inclusive process is required to achieve peace in Yemen. That is why we support the Special Envoy's bottom-up approach. As with all conflicts, women have borne the brunt of the war in Yemen. And yet time and again they have displayed their relentless commitment to peace at the grass-roots level, from mediating the restoration of

water access to negotiating the release of detainees. The increasing exclusion of Yemeni women from public and political life, including restrictions on their freedom of movement, is unacceptable and harmful to the peace process. We call on all the parties to uphold women's rights and ensure their participation in all stages of all diplomatic efforts to find peace.

Finally, allow me to address the situation in the Red Sea. We remain extremely worried that the Houthi attacks have continued since our last briefing (see S/PV.9548). We condemn last week's attack on the *MV True Confidence*, which tragically resulted in the loss of civilian lives. Those attacks must cease immediately, as stipulated in resolution 2722 (2024), and the *MV Galaxy Leader* and crew must be released. The disruption in the Red Sea has far-reaching implications, not only for the global economy or the political landscape. It is essential that critical goods such as food, energy supplies and humanitarian assistance be able to transit that vital maritime corridor. The environmental imperative is also clear. The threat posed by the sunken *MV Rubymar* to the Red Sea marine ecosystem and the local Yemeni fishing industry is cause for great concern. On 19 February, the European Union (EU) launched its own defensive Operation Aspides to assist in ongoing efforts to restore maritime security and freedom of navigation, in line with the relevant international law and resolution 2722 (2024). The EU is playing its part, for the sake of the wider international community and the region.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking our two speakers for their briefings and their work. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Yemen and wish him *Ramadan kareem*, a generous Ramadan.

As my colleagues from Malta and Slovenia mentioned, in parallel with the work of the Council, the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women has been under way since Monday. It is an opportunity for us to record the progress we have made and to strengthen our efforts in the area of gender equality. Human rights defender Najiba Al Naggari made the following observation on Yemen before the Council in 2021.

“Despite the critical role that Yemeni women have played in humanitarian action as well as peacebuilding, they have been excluded from formal and meaningful roles [and] completely excluded from [the] Government” (S/PV.8797, p. 7).

We have heard from our colleague from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs how much strength and innovation women could contribute, especially to the economic development of the country. I would also like to highlight the following three points.

First, as we heard from the Special Envoy and many others, Switzerland is concerned about the growing tensions and attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea. We must work collectively to de-escalate and remedy the situation, which has already had significant human, economic and environmental costs. We therefore call on all parties to exercise caution and restraint, comply strictly with international law and redouble their diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the current tensions.

Secondly, Switzerland calls for preserving the gains made in the peace talks in Yemen, which must be concluded rapidly. In that respect, we welcome the opening of several roads in Taiz and elsewhere and call on the parties to coordinate and capitalize as well as they can on that progress. Today we want to reiterate the need for an inclusive political process under the auspices of the United Nations and reaffirm our full support for the Special Envoy. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women at every stage of the diplomatic efforts aimed at peace is both obvious and essential, and we would like to remind everyone of the 30 per cent quota agreed at the National Dialogue Conference in that regard. We also welcome the efforts of the Office of the Special Envoy to involve more women and young people in its activities and encourage it to continue those important initiatives.

Thirdly, Switzerland notes with concern the increase in the price of basic foodstuffs, which is being aggravated by the tensions in the Red Sea, as well as the deterioration of the humanitarian environment in both the north and south of the country. On that point, too, we have heard worrisome figures from OCHA. The parties are obliged by international humanitarian law to authorize and facilitate the rapid, safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid. In that respect, as we regularly underscore, humanitarian personnel, including women, are protected by international humanitarian law and must have safe access to the people in need.

As Ramadan begins, and in the spirit of that celebration, Switzerland urges the parties to take a further step towards each other and open up a space for reconciliation. For example, allowing the release of prisoners would bring relief to many families who have been forced to spend this holy month apart.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for the information provided by Special Envoy Grundberg and Executive Director Wosornu, and I welcome the Permanent Representative of Yemen to today's meeting.

There is no doubt that the escalation of hostilities in the Red Sea, the regional tensions linked to the conflict in Gaza and the worrisome developments inside Yemen have made the task of mediation even more complex. As a result, the implementation of the road map for the commitments made in December 2023 to achieving a ceasefire, improving the people's living conditions and restarting an intra-Yemeni political process is being affected by various priorities and interests. The major challenges to the road to peace in Yemen underscore the need to safeguard the progress made towards reaching an agreement that lays the foundations for an end to the conflict — a process that must include the participation of women and young people. That is why Ecuador supports the efforts of the Special Envoy to create an environment that is conducive to implementing the road map, while also calling on the parties to refrain from provocations that could destabilize the truce that has helped to reduce the violence.

As the Secretary-General's most recent monthly report says, the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden have continued and for the first time have unfortunately resulted in fatalities among the crews of the vessels attacked. In addition to constituting a serious security threat, the attacks are also likely to have a serious impact on the environment — as is feared following the sinking of the *MV Rubymar* — and the economy. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has warned of the economic impact that the disruption of logistics chains may have on countries in East Africa whose trade relies heavily on the Suez Canal, and of the risk that poses to food security in Yemen and the wider region. My delegation is concerned about the possibility that those factors may worsen the humanitarian situation caused by the conflict in Yemen, where more than 80 per cent of the population is living in conditions of multidimensional poverty, according to the United Nations Development Programme. We applaud the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme and others to reach the most vulnerable. In accordance with resolution 2722 (2024), Ecuador reiterates its condemnation of the attacks on commercial vessels, which have absolutely no justification or

legitimacy, and demands that the Houthis cease their attacks immediately. At the same time, the action taken by States in defence of their vessels must be within the framework of international law.

In conclusion, I want to stress the importance of the Council maintaining a united position on Yemen's long-term trajectory, which must be a just and sustainable peace achieved by the people of Yemen through negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations.

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

We are deeply concerned about the continuing militarization of the waters around Yemen, including the Red Sea. Now another destabilizing factor has been added to the presence of the so-called coalition led by the United States and the United Kingdom — the dispatch of naval vessels from European Union countries as part of Operation Aspides. Of course, no one is disputing the fact that ensuring the safety of international navigation is important. We strongly condemn attacks on peaceful vessels that threaten the lives of their crews and the safety of their cargo, as well as any action that impedes freedom of navigation. We express our sincere condolences to the friends and families of the crew members of the *MV True Confidence* who lost their lives and demand the immediate release of the *MV Galaxy Leader* and its crew. We consistently pass on messages to that effect in our exchanges with representatives of the Ansar Allah movement. We are all, without exception, interested in de-escalation in this extremely important area for commercial navigation.

However, in practice, rather than stabilizing the situation, the operation in the Red Sea initiated by the United States and its satellites has done the exact opposite. The already complex military and political situation in this part of the world has escalated to an extreme. And even the American military admits that the use of force by the so-called coalition is not producing the results that Washington wants. As far as we can judge, they have been unable to destroy or even reduce the Houthis' military potential, because the attacks have not only continued but have become more frequent. One ship has already been sunk altogether

and crew members have been killed. That has been the cost of the escalation. Now the level of military hysteria in the region has skyrocketed. But that has not stopped our American colleagues, because the only diplomacy they recognize is gunboat diplomacy.

While views of the Houthis and their demands may differ, it would be difficult not to acknowledge that to some extent the crisis in the Red Sea has been provoked by Israel's brutal actions against hundreds of thousands of innocent Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. And it is Israel's American allies who will not permit an end to those flagrant violations of international humanitarian law. Yet Washington, London and a number of other capitals are trying to ignore the obvious and are pouring fuel on the fire. That is the effect that any new strikes on Yemeni territory will have. They are simply yet another aggression against a sovereign Arab State. We want to emphasize once again that Washington and London's justification of their actions based on the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations is absolutely untenable. The Security Council has not authorized the use of force either in Yemen or its surrounding waters under Chapter VII of the Charter, and resolution 2722 (2024) envisages no such mandate either.

Needless to say, the current escalation could reverse all of the promising work that has been done to find a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in Yemen. The internal political situation in the country is still relatively calm, but the window of opportunity is closing rapidly. The current circumstances are complicating the work of the Special Envoy even further, including his efforts to finalize the road map for an inter-Yemeni settlement. Our support for Mr. Grundberg's efforts remains unwavering. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind the need to update the international legal framework for a settlement in Yemen.

Russia continues to maintain close contacts with all leading Yemeni political forces and key regional partners. For example, we hosted Mr. Ahmed Awad Binmubarak, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen, in Moscow from 26 to 29 February. We have consistently emphasized the need to resolve the situation exclusively through negotiations and political and diplomatic means as part of an inclusive intra-Yemeni dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations. We call on all stakeholders to focus on the domestic agenda in their own country. That is the priority now.

We also call on the international community to continue its work to put an end to Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip. Resolving that issue will be key to stabilizing the situation not only in the Red Sea but also in other parts of the Middle East where Israel's actions are provoking righteous anger and outrage. The Palestinian question, unresolved for so many years, is also having an impact. Without a just solution, based on the agreed international legal parameters, the region will always be a ticking time bomb. Burying one's head in the sand in that regard is not appropriate and could destabilize the situation at regional and global levels. Russia stands ready to do whatever it takes to prevent that from happening.

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

I thank Special Envoy Mr. Grundberg and Ms. Wosornu for their informative briefings.

The Houthi attacks in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden have led to serious and escalating consequences. Among dozens of incidents, particularly alarming are the sinking of a ship carrying tons of fertilizer and the deadly attack on another ship, which tragically killed three sailors and injured several others.

Japan strongly condemns the Houthis' outrageous and unjustifiable conduct, which is impeding global commerce and undermining navigational rights and freedoms, as well as regional peace and security. The Houthis must stop attacking commercial vessels and immediately release the Japanese-operated *Galaxy Leader* and its 25 crew members. The Houthis must also refrain from further threats to maritime security, the environment and innocent civilians.

Yemen has been gravely affected by years of conflict. It desperately needs peace and stability. The Security Council should remain united in this time of crisis and continue supporting Special Envoy Grundberg's efforts to facilitate the fragile peace talks and work towards bringing lasting peace to Yemen. As Ms. Wosornu's sobering briefing makes clear, we must strengthen our efforts to improve the dire humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen. Japan, as a major donor, remains steadfastly committed to that end.

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, Mr. President, on your country's presidency of the Council for this month and wish you every success in your tasks. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the friendly nation of Guyana, for her successful presidency last month. I would also like to thank Mr. Hans Grundberg and Ms. Edem Wosornu for their briefings.

The Presidential Leadership Council and the Yemeni Government reiterate their commitment to achieving comprehensive and sustainable peace in Yemen and support United Nations efforts, through the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, to revive the political process based on the agreed 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).

Peace in Yemen is a priority and in the utmost interest of the Yemeni people. Peace cannot be achieved without the serious engagement of the Houthi militias in all regional and international peace efforts led by the United Nations. They must stop their military escalation and war against the Yemeni people and their aspirations and put an end to their threats to regional and international peace and security. They must seek peace and revive hope in a return to the desired peace.

The Yemeni Government calls on the international community and the Council to reconsider how they address the continued violations by the Houthi terrorist militias of agreements and initiatives aimed at achieving peace and ending the conflict. Those militias must be prevented from exploiting the current situation and carrying out military mobilization to reposition in various areas, which would pave the way for new cycles of violence and escalation. Efforts must be redoubled to compel the militias to fulfil their commitments, foremost of which are the opening of crossings and main roads in Taiz governorate and other cities and the release of prisoners and detainees in accordance with the all-for-all principle. In that regard, we commend the good offices of our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who have sought to address the crisis in Yemen, achieve peace and alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people.

The Yemeni Government warns once again of the continued influx of Iranian weapons to the Houthi militias, which endangers regional and international peace and security, prolonging the conflict and exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. We stress that it is more urgent than ever to reconsider ways to counter the activities of the Iranian regime's proxies which are destabilizing the security and stability of Yemen, the region and the world. To that end, support must be provided to the Yemeni Government to strengthen its capabilities and restore State institutions, protect Yemeni territorial waters, secure international shipping lines and enable it to exercise its sovereignty and authority throughout the Yemeni territories. That will ensure security and stability, including in the cities and ports that have been turned into bases for targeting the security and safety of international navigation in the Red Sea, the Bab Al-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden.

The Yemeni Government is working to adopt measures aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people; mitigating the catastrophic socioeconomic and humanitarian consequences of the war launched by the terrorist Houthi militias; and achieving security, stability and development, while fighting corruption, in the light of the enormous challenges stemming from the cessation, for more than a year and a half, of crude oil exports, which constitute 70 per cent of total State revenues, due to Houthi militias' targeting of vital oil export facilities, thereby depriving the Yemeni people of their most important resources. That is part of the Houthi militias' policy of starvation and systematic economic war on the Yemeni people, which must not be tolerated. The Yemeni Government calls again on the international community and the Council for assistance in seeking possible ways and means to enable Yemen to resume its export of oil, which is a vital resource and essential to its fulfilment of its duties and commitments.

The Houthi militias' continued targeting of commercial ships carrying food and humanitarian assistance to Yemeni ports constitutes an economic siege on the Yemeni people and exacerbates the humanitarian situation by triggering spikes in the prices of food staples, transportation and insurance and by disrupting supply chains, leading to food insecurity.

The Yemeni Government looks to its development partners — both States and international organizations — for support in advancing reforms and alleviating the suffering of its citizens. In that regard,

we commend the fraternal support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which has contributed significantly to overcoming many of our financial and service challenges. The Yemeni Government calls on the international community to provide technical and financial support within the framework of a comprehensive programme that would lead to reconstruction and economic recovery. The focus should be on development work as a key starting point in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

The Government of Yemen is also working to continue the integration of women in its comprehensive sustainable development process and to harness support from the international community to promote opportunities and established long-term strategies to support various economic sectors and build governmental institutional capacities so that it can assume its responsibilities and provide essential services, the lack of which indirectly hamper the effective participation of Yemeni women in the development process.

The Government's unilateral initiatives to open roads is in line with the instructions of the Presidential Leadership Council, led by His Excellency President Rashad Mohammed Al-Alimi and the Yemeni Government to facilitate the movement of citizens and the influx of goods and food supplies among the governorates and alleviate the suffering of the patient Yemeni people in various regions. That step also answered important questions that have been the subject of controversy for years regarding who was responsible for obstructing roads between governorates, which compounded the suffering of the Yemeni people.

Over the past years, the Houthi militias have deliberately thwarted all initiatives presented by the Yemeni Government to open roads, including the Stockholm Agreement and the humanitarian truce sponsored by the United Nations, which stipulated, in one of its provisions, the lifting of the unjust siege on the Taiz governorate, which is the most densely populated in Yemen, and the opening of main roads. Nevertheless, those militias disavowed their responsibilities and refrained from opening the roads. Instead, they opened new, rugged and unsafe roads.

The stance of the Houthi militias pertaining to such initiatives coincided with increased terrorist attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea, the Bab Al-Mandab Strait and the Gulf of Aden under the pretext of lifting

the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip. As a result, the humanitarian situation and the political track have become more complicated and have revealed the militias' true stance regarding de-escalation efforts and establishing peace in Yemen. The militias do not care about the harsh economic and humanitarian situation of the Yemeni people. For 10 consecutive years, they have continued to fragment Yemen and impose an unjust siege against multiple governorates and cities, leading to the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

My country's Government condemns the dangerous escalation in the frequency of Houthi terrorist attacks against international navigation, especially the attack by the Houthi militias against the *MV True Confidence*, which led to the death of three sailors and the injury of four others. We also condemn the attack against the *MV Rubymar*, off the coast of Yemen, which carried approximately 21,000 metric tons of highly toxic fertilizers and oil. The vessel subsequently sunk about 11 miles off the coast of Yemen. That was an expected outcome, especially following more than 12 days of no response to the continued appeals of the Government of Yemen to prevent such an imminent catastrophe.

Here we are today facing an escalating possibility of an environmental disaster, with grave consequences, regarding the marine environment of the Yemeni territorial waters and the Red Sea, along with an economic

and humanitarian disaster that will affect hundreds of thousands of Yemenis whose livelihoods depend on marine resources.

The Government of Yemen once again calls on States, international organizations and bodies working to preserve the marine environment to expeditiously address the vessel's crisis, support the Yemeni Government and support its emergency plan to avert a dangerous environmental disaster. We also stress the need to have effective international mechanisms to expeditiously address such crises and catastrophes, especially in the light of the continued direct attacks by the Houthi militias against vessels carrying oil and chemicals along international shipping lanes.

Finally, my country's Government recalls that the dangers of the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker still persist, especially after the suspension of the emergency rescue plan led by the United Nations due to the recent developments in the Red Sea. That comes as the Houthi militias continue to turn a blind eye to the danger of the leakage of more than 1 million barrels of oil and have persisted in manipulating and blackmailing the international community for the past eight years.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.