

Speech by H.E. Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

to the United Nations Security Council

Yemen - Briefing

New York, 15 April 2019

Mr President,

I would like to thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General Marc Lowcock , as well as Under-Secretary-General Virginia Gamba and Mrs Muna Luqman for their briefings.

We share the **frustration** regarding the delay in implementing the Hodeidah Agreement. The humanitarian crisis means that the Agreement on Hodeidah cannot fail.

We welcome the announcement of an agreement on the first phase of **redeployment** and call on the parties to implement it as soon as possible. We call on all parties **to comply fully with the cease-fire**. We once again ask all parties to focus on implementing the Agreement in good faith. We reiterate our full support for the work of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and General Løllesgaard.

Efforts to **improve the catastrophic humanitarian situation** remain essential. I would like to echo Under-Secretary-General Marc Lowcock's appeal regarding humanitarian access and access to the Red Sea Mills. We have also heard his appeal for the funds announced during the Donor Conference in Geneva last February to be paid as soon as possible. Belgium's contribution to the Yemen Humanitarian Fund will be available in May, and we call on the other contributors to do the same.

We are particularly concerned by **the situation of children in Yemen**. They are the biggest victims of the conflict, as Special Representative Virginia Gamba has just described. Children are recruited, killed and even mutilated by all sides. Air strikes are still hitting schools and hospitals, even though the Coalition was de-listed last year for this violation. Sexual violence is a huge problem and the phenomenon of child marriages has significantly increased. Several cases have been reported of children being denied access to humanitarian aid. We call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and to take urgent and effective measures to end all these violations. In this context, we welcome the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between Special Representative Virginia Gamba and the Coalition and we look forward to the preparation of a programme of activities to implement this Memorandum in a practical, meaningful way. We ask Special Envoy Griffiths to ensure that child protection measures are at the heart of any peace process.

Lastly, Mrs Muna Luqman's account reflects the importance of civil society in Yemen. Your experience as a mediator in Taiz demonstrates the importance of **involving women** in any peace process and in the implementation of the agreements reached.

Thank you.