

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Intervention of

H.E. Marc PECSTEEN, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the
United Nations

Open VTC on Yemen at the Security Council

New York, 14/5/2020

Dear Mr. President, dear colleagues,

Let me begin with the **announcement by the Southern Transitional Council**: we are concerned, and urge all parties to exercise restraint and to engage in an inclusive dialogue that addresses the legitimate concerns of all Yemenis, including in the South. We emphasize the importance of implementing the Riyadh and Stockholm agreements and encourage continued political engagement under the auspices of the UN.

We fully support the **efforts of the Special Envoy** to secure a nationwide ceasefire, confidence-building measures and the restart of an inclusive political process. In this regard, we welcome the extension of the Coalition's unilateral ceasefire and urge the Houthis to join the Government of Yemen and immediately follow suit.

The **humanitarian situation** described by USG Lowcock remains deeply disturbing. Half of the people in need, about 12.24 million people, are children. As more cases of COVID are confirmed, I commend OCHA and the entire humanitarian community in Yemen for their efforts to save lives and preserve dignity. In response to your call last month for increased financing, Belgium will continue its contribution of 5 mio EUR to Yemen's Country-Based Pooled Fund this year. In these dire pandemic times for us all, our solidarity with the fate of the Yemeni people remains strong. Belgium's humanitarian assistance will reach a record amount of almost 200 mio EUR this year with a strong focus on flexible disbursement mechanisms such as the CERF and the CBPF's.

I also reiterate the importance of **humanitarian access**. We remain concerned about the obstruction of humanitarian assistance and remind all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. There must be accountability for violations.

Women have been particularly impacted by the crisis in Yemen. We are extremely concerned about reports of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence as well as of intimidation and arbitrary detention, including of women human rights defenders. It is impressive what women-led civil society organizations are achieving, such as negotiating prisoner releases, often with little means or official

recognition. We urge parties to fulfil their commitments for women to fully and meaningfully participate in the peace process - including by implementing the National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security- and count on the Special Envoy to promote and facilitate this.

In conclusion, I repeat the importance of economic recovery and of access for the UN to the SAFER tanker.

Thank you Mr. President.