

## **Co-Chairs' Statement**

### **Seventh Meeting of the Friends of Yemen Group**

**London, 29 April 2014**

The Friends of Yemen met in London on 29 April 2014 under the co-chairmanship of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom and the Republic of Yemen to discuss Yemen's political transition, humanitarian situation, economic and security reform, and restructuring the Friends of Yemen group.

The Friends of Yemen reiterate their full support to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen as well as commitment to the principle of non-interference in Yemen's internal affairs. They commend the efforts and determination of President Hadi, the Government and the people of Yemen as they deliver the GCC initiative and its implementation mechanism.

#### **Political**

The Friends of Yemen welcome the successful conclusion and outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) on 25 January, including the outcome that Yemen will become a federal state of six regions. The Friends of Yemen emphasize the importance of translating NDC outcomes into actions and recognise the importance of supporting Government of Yemen in delivering this process. The Friends of Yemen welcome the appointment of the Constitution Drafting Committee on 8 March. They also welcome the appointment on 25 April of the formation of the National Authority for the Implementation of the NDC outcomes. The Friends of Yemen commend the work of the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda in preparing for the creation of a biometric voter registry and urge the Government of Yemen to set out a clear timetable for the referendum and elections and call on the international community to support Yemen in this regard.

The Friends of Yemen welcome the progress achieved during the transition period and reiterated their full and continued support to its remaining phases.

The Friends of Yemen reiterate that the only way to a united, peaceful, stable and prosperous Yemen is through the implementation of the GCC Initiative and stress the importance of communicating to the Yemeni people the outcomes of the NDC, the work of the Constitution Drafting Committee, and subsequent steps in the transition.

The Friends of Yemen welcome the confidence-building measures taken, in particular the steps to implement the 20 points recommended by the NDC's preparatory technical committee and the 11 points approved by the NDC on southern and Sa'ada issues. They encourage the Government of Yemen to deliver on these points, and call on the international community to work with the Government of Yemen and the Executive Bureau to support projects in these areas.

The Friends of Yemen welcome UN Security Council resolution 2140 of 26 February which established a Sanctions Committee and Panel of Experts with a view to applying measures against individuals or entities engaged in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security or stability of Yemen, in particular obstructing or undermining the successful completion of political transition or impeding the implementation of the outcomes of the final report of the comprehensive National Dialogue Conference through violence, planning, directing, or committing acts that violate applicable international human rights law or international humanitarian law.

The Friends of Yemen also welcome the NDC commitment that all parties would disarm and peacefully participate in the political process, and reaffirm support for this effort.

The Friends of Yemen welcome the positive recommendations made by the NDC, including introducing a minimum legal age for marriage, and a minimum of 30% of seats on elected bodies to be reserved for women; and call for their implementation. They welcome the inclusion of women and youth in the political and transition process and support their continued participation comprising at least 30% of all groups.

The Friends of Yemen also welcome the NDC's recommendation to pass a law on transitional justice and establish a commission to investigate the alleged human rights violations in 2011. They also commend the work that has begun to establish an independent National Human Rights Institution. However for Yemen's human rights situation to improve, the government should work without delay to enshrine the NDC's recommendations into the new constitution and enforce them by law.

The Friends of Yemen acknowledge the commitment of the Government of Yemen to human rights, and encourage implementation of OHCHR recommendations accepted by the Government of Yemen.

## **Economic**

The Friends of Yemen note the continuing need for economic and governance reform, including tackling corruption, investment in infrastructure, and increased provision of basic services to set Yemen on the path to stability and self-sufficiency. The Government of Yemen and international partners have both made commitments under the Mutual Accountability Framework. These promises need to be kept in order to deliver tangible benefits to the Yemeni people and to reinforce and sustain the accomplishments of the transition process.

The Friends of Yemen welcome the appointment of the Head of the Executive Bureau in Sana'a and stress the need for donors to work together with the Executive Bureau to facilitate the disbursement of pledges. They encourage the Government of Yemen to swiftly identify a timetable for economic reform, take decisions on critical areas of reform to increase the pace of pledge disbursement and signal a commitment to meaningful reform, chiefly by tackling fuel subsidies to alleviate the looming fiscal crisis and prioritise resources towards those who need

them. Friends encourage the Government of Yemen to increase economic stability by continuing negotiations to secure an IMF programme.

The Friends of Yemen recognise the on-going efforts to support the Government of Yemen in addressing Yemen's manpower and unemployment issues. This should take the form of job creation, training of Yemeni labour, and encouraging foreign direct investment to create employment opportunities inside Yemen. They recognised Yemeni aspirations to explore ways of reducing barriers for Yemenis working and travelling abroad.

## **Humanitarian**

The Friends of Yemen note that in spite of the progress made during the political transition the overall humanitarian challenges remain largely unchanged 14.7 million people are in need of some form of humanitarian assistance. 10.5 million people are food insecure; 8.6million people have insufficient access to health services; more than 1 million children are suffering from acute malnutrition; and 13 million people still lack access to clean water and sanitation; They note that this year's appeal requires \$592 million: and urge the international community to ensure this is fully funded and to give multi-year resources to enable the most effective response to this protracted humanitarian crisis.

The Friends of Yemen acknowledge the efforts made by Government of Yemen in response to the increasing numbers of refugees and call on the international community to assist Government of Yemen in improving the conditions for internally displaced, migrants and refugees.

The Friend of Yemen welcome the Regional Conference on Asylum and Migration form Horn of Africa to Yemen held in Sanaa from 11-13 November 2013 and emphasise the importance of implementing The Sana'a Declaration.

## **Security**

The Friends of Yemen strongly condemn the deadly terrorist attacks in Yemen and acknowledged the sacrifices of the Yemeni defence, security and police personnel who have been killed or injured, and extends condolences to their families and friends.

They support the Government of Yemen's drive to establish and implement counter-terrorism legislation and welcome the Government of Yemen's continuing efforts to combat terrorism , smuggling and piracy and confirm their commitment to continue its support to build Yemen's capacities in this regard.

The Friends of Yemen welcome the objective to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Yemeni defence, security and police forces through improved coordination and cooperation between the ministries and with the donor community.

The Friends denounce all forms of violence and armed confrontations and call on political parties to refrain from any acts undermining, or contradictory to, the GCC initiative and its implementation mechanism in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions.

The Friends of Yemen welcome the steps taken to restructure the defence, security and police forces and look forward to further programmes of reform in line with the National Dialogue outcomes.

They reiterate their condemnation for the attacks on electricity lines as well as oil and gas pipelines which entail heavy losses for the national economy and exacerbate the suffering of all Yemenis.

The Friends of Yemen unequivocally reject the payment of ransoms to terrorists and call on countries and companies around the world to stamp out this lucrative source of income for terrorists.

Friends welcome the Yemeni government's efforts to establish an extremist rehabilitation program in coordination with UNICRI, and commit to supporting this effort.

The Friends of Yemen agree to follow through on commitments made at the outset of the Gulf Cooperation Council transition initiative to provide training and necessary equipment to a range of Yemeni security forces and criminal justice institutions with the objective of fostering a secure Yemen that effectively administers justice.

### **New structure**

The Friends of Yemen have agreed to revise the structure of the Friends of Yemen Group in order to enhance its work and fully support Yemen as it undertakes the political transition and associated reform processes. The underlying principles of this new structure are Yemeni ownership and support for the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism in three main areas: the political transition, economic reform and development, and security and justice sector reform.

The Friends of Yemen agreed to establish a Steering Committee and Working Groups in each of the three areas. The Groups will report back to the Steering Committee which will report to the annual Friends of Yemen meetings to be held at Foreign Minister Level in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York each September.

The Friends of Yemen expressed their appreciation and thanks to the United Kingdom for hosting this meeting and to the Co-Chairs for the preparation for it.

The Friends of Yemen decided to meet again in September 2014 in New York at Foreign Minister level in the margins of the UNGA to assess progress.