

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, MARK LOWCOCK**

Statement on Yemen

I remain deeply concerned about the ongoing crisis in Yemen, where more than 22 million people need humanitarian assistance – 8.4 million of whom are already on the edge of starvation. Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure have continued and must stop. I am encouraged, however, by the news that the first commercial fuel imports into Hudaydah port since 6 November docked today, while commercial food imports that resumed in recent weeks have continued.

Yemen imports approximately 90 per cent of its food and nearly all its fuel and medicine. The steady flow of these imports is a lifeline for millions of civilians. Commercial food imports are needed to keep food available and affordable in markets across the country. Fuel imports are essential to run generators in hospitals and health facilities, as well as to power water networks and sanitation systems, among other essential activities. Millions of people depend on these critical services. Hudaydah port is the closest port to the majority of Yemenis.

As Yemen continues to grapple with widespread hunger, malnutrition, internal displacement, the world's largest cholera outbreak, an alarming diphtheria outbreak and other challenges, it is essential that we work together to keep commercial food, medicine and fuel imports flowing into all ports. We must also ensure that life-saving humanitarian assistance is able to enter all ports swiftly and quickly reaches the millions of people who need it. Humanitarian aid is often shipped on commercial vessels, further underscoring the importance of keeping all ports open to humanitarian and commercial vessels. I am committed to working with all stakeholders to achieve this as a matter of urgency, and I look forward to seeing commercial imports of critical supplies stabilize at adequate levels.

Commercial imports alone will not be enough to address the vast humanitarian crisis in Yemen or to provide a sustainable solution. I therefore reiterate my call for all parties to the conflict to provide unconditional, sustained humanitarian access – for both staff and supplies – across the country and without interference. I also call on all parties to the conflict to cease hostilities and engage meaningfully with the United Nations to achieve an inclusive, negotiated political settlement.

New York, 24 December 2017