

**Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief  
Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, Opening Remarks on the High-Level Side Event on  
the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, at the 76<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly**

*Virtual 22 September 2021*

*As delivered*

Thank you Nima. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I want to thank the European Union and the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland for hosting this important event.

It has been almost seven months since we met for the high-level pledging conference on Yemen in early March.

Since then, the crisis has continued unabated. Fighting has escalated in Ma'rib, Ta'iz, Hudaydah and other places.

Tens of thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes. Millions remain a step away from starvation.

The country's economy has reached new depths of collapse, and a third wave of the pandemic is threatening to crash the country's already fragile health-care system.

As always, the most vulnerable people bear the highest costs of this crisis.

For too many of Yemen's children, war is a fact of life – one that has robbed them of safety, education and opportunities.

Women and girls are more likely to be hungry, sick or exposed to gender-based violence.

Millions of internally displaced people face a daily struggle to survive, with little access to essential services.

Yemen has, however, seen one positive turnaround this year – an increase in support for the humanitarian aid operation.

And that is a credit to all of you gathered here today.

Yemen's Humanitarian Response Plan is among the most well-funded. Ninety-eight per cent of the pledges made at the event in March have been fulfilled. In total, over \$2 billion has been received, representing over half of the appeal's requirement.

This funding has helped the UN and our partners to prevent famine and pull people back from the brink of despair.

I thank you deeply for your commitment to Yemen.

Thanks to our donors' generosity, we have been able to deliver assistance in every single one of the country's 333 districts.

Each month, we provide food, clean water and other life-saving assistance to more than 10 million people.

These are important achievements – but our work is far from done.

We are nowhere near the funding levels of 2019, when our appeal received \$3.6 billion – almost 90 per cent of what we required.

A number of sectors still face alarming funding gaps. Humanitarians providing health care, clean water, sanitation and shelter have less than a fifth of the money they need this year.

Without additional funding, these and other forms of critical life-saving support – including food assistance – will have to be reduced in the coming weeks and months.

Excellencies,

Your presence here today is a demonstration of solidarity with the people of Yemen.

However, Yemenis need more than our words or our good intentions. They need our action. Without it, they will not weather this crisis or be able to build a better future – one of safety, dignity and self-reliance.

My ask of you today is threefold.

First, please continue to give generously to the humanitarian operation. Ensuring timely, adequate and balanced funding across the Humanitarian Response Plan is the best way to save lives, protect people and keep famine at bay.

Second, maintain focus on the country's most vulnerable groups by advocating the need to respect international humanitarian law and protect civilians. We must also listen to people – to women and girls, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups – and include and empower their voices in all our planning and decision-making.

Third, we must address the root drivers of this crisis. If not, millions of Yemenis will remain stuck in this cycle of suffering. New measures to boost the country's economy and people's incomes must be enacted. Imperative among these is lifting restrictions on commercial imports to bring down the price of fuel, food and other essential goods.

It also means doing everything in our collective power to stop this war. Because at the end of the day, peace is what will provide Yemenis the most sustainable form of relief.

Thank you.