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Office of the Special Envoy
of the Secretary-General for Yemen



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مكتب المبعوث الخاص للأمين العام
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**Briefing of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen to the
open session of the UN Security Council
9 January 2019
(As delivered)**

Mr. President,

Thank you very much indeed Mr. President and thank you, to the members of this Council, and thank you for the opportunity you are giving me to brief this Council today. As Council members know, our efforts – and, indeed, the attention of the world – are focused on the momentum generated at the end of last year for the peace process by the consultations in Stockholm and the hope of a tangible improvement in the situation of the Yemeni people.

As I stated to this Council immediately after those consultations, the success in Stockholm was your success. I must start, therefore, by thanking the members of the Security Council for adopting that resolution to which you have referred Sir, Resolution 2451, which endorsed the Agreement, authorized the deployment of the advanced team to support and facilitate implementation, and expressed support for the continuation of consultations early this year, including on the Framework for Negotiations. I believe that this resolution that you passed last month, sends a very clear signal of the international community's support for the achievements that we were able to bring together in Stockholm and our plans subsequently to build on the momentum gained.

Today, I will take this opportunity to brief on the implementation of the commitments made by the parties in Stockholm, namely: the agreement reached on the city and governorate of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ras Issa; secondly, executive mechanism on activating the prisoner exchange agreement; and, thirdly, the statement of understanding on Taiz. I will also hope to provide an update, Mr. President, on our preparations for the next round of consultations.

Since the Stockholm consultations, and in very recent days in this past week, I have had the privilege of meeting with President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi and also with the Ansar Allah leader Abdelmalik Al-Houthi. President Hadi whom I met

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yesterday in Riyadh, warmly welcomed the progress made in Stockholm and the agreement made there to which he was the key decider, and he confirmed to me in very real and constructive terms his hopes as we all have, that this is an important first step towards a comprehensive solution to the conflict; and I was interested to hear a reflection of exactly those sentiments when I was in Sana'a on Sunday in my meetings with Abdel Malek Al-Houthi who firmly told me in no uncertain terms of the decision and commitment of his movement to implement all those provisions that were agreed in Stockholm. So they both expressed determination to find a way forward and to build further on the progress made, in subsequent rounds. I would like us all to bear that in mind as I do, when we look at the progress in the implementation of those agreements, but I am grateful to President Hadi and of course I am grateful also to Sayyed Abdel Malek.

This enthusiasm for actually making Stockholm work and provide tangible differences on the ground for the people of Yemen was also echoed by other concerned parties and key Member States I have had the privilege to meet since Stockholm and in particular in recent days and I am grateful for their support and they know who they are.

I am pleased to report that both sides have largely adhered to the ceasefire we agreed in Stockholm, in Hudaydah governorate that entered into force on the 18th of December, and that there has been a significant decrease in hostilities since then. Unfortunately, and perhaps unsurprisingly, there has been some violence, including in Hudaydah city, and in the southern districts of the governorate. However, this is remarkably limited compared to what we saw in the weeks before the Stockholm consultations. This relative calm, I believe sir, indicates the tangible benefit of the Stockholm agreement for the people of Yemen and it also illustrates the commitment of both parties to make their agreements work.

Thanks to the swift authorization provided by this Council through resolution 2451, the United Nations has deployed an advanced monitoring team to Hudaydah, under the leadership of my esteemed colleague, Major General Patrick Cammaert of the Netherlands, who arrived in Yemen on the 22nd of December. I should say here that I think it is a remarkable achievement that General Cammaert tore himself away from other commitments and launched himself with his team into the region at very short notice to establish the RCC, the Committee which will monitor those agreements in Hudaydah. We are very grateful to Patrick Cammaert. This rapid

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deployment has given a clear signal to the parties and the Yemeni people of the international community's desire to turn the agreement into facts on the ground. General Cammaert has chaired several meetings of the Redeployment Coordination Committee – with participation from representatives of both parties – to oversee the implementation of the redeployments and ceasefire as agreed in Sweden on Hudaydah. He is working with the parties on the details of the redeployments of forces, again as foreseen in Sweden, the provision of security in the city and the opening of humanitarian access routes agreed in Stockholm.

The activation of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, which has happened since that arrival in late December of General Cammaert is very welcome, and I urge both parties to continue to engage regularly and in good faith with General Cammaert and his team so that the security arrangements and crucially the improvements in humanitarian access can be implemented swiftly, in line with what was agreed in Stockholm. This will build confidence of the parties, the Yemeni people and the international community, that what was talked about in Stockholm can be a reality.

Mr. President,

Regarding Taiz, as Council members will recall, the parties agreed in Stockholm to the creation of mechanisms to reach consensus on how to address the situation in that city and governorate. Taiz is of enormous historic significance for Yemen as a whole and the city and its people have been a driving force in Yemen's economic and cultural life for many years. To give it a sense of proportion, the governorate of Taiz has a population of 2.5 million people and the city of Taiz has been divided by virtue of this conflict for some considerable time. The civilians in Taiz have suffered far too much, far too long, and the destruction in the city has been dreadful, and the flow of humanitarian aid of course needs to increase, needs to cross the lines between parties and the people need the chance to rebuild. These are the issues that we believe that the joint mechanism, the committee that I will refer to, is there to produce. I have talked since Stockholm, with the parties and with many prominent Taizis, including my office has met the governor yesterday, and they all want the city to return to calm and for the people to have hope that the city will flourish once again. I am glad that Stockholm provides a potential platform for this. We plan with the agreement of the parties to hold the first meeting of that committee as soon as

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possible, ideally this month. We also are working on a civil society mechanism including significant participation of women, to support that joint committee in its endeavors. I am hopeful Mr. President that what we might plan to see in Taiz is something that we might also be seeing achieved in Hudaydah. Hudaydah should not be the only beneficiary of the agreements that we made in Sweden. On the agreement for the exchange of prisoners, we are working with both parties to finalize the lists of prisoners submitted by each in Stockholm. I particularly want to record our appreciation of the invaluable support provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross in this regard. As agreed in Stockholm, we plan to hold a meeting of the Supervisory Committee which includes both parties and I am hopeful that this will take place in Amman, from which I am speaking, next week. This will be a step towards that day that we hope to see of an airlift of many thousands of prisoners exchanged and released to return to their families.

I am grateful for the commitment and patience that both parties have shown since Stockholm. Progress on some of the issues has been gradual and indeed somewhat tentative, but there is a tangible contribution to peace. There are, no doubt, many hurdles to be overcome in the days, weeks and months ahead, but I would say here that the parties must not be diverted from their commitments, through issues of delays or difficulties which were unexpected. I ask for the support of the Council in encouraging the parties to stay the course and to overcome together any challenges that may be encountered along the way and that we are here to help them.

Mr. President,

I am under no illusion that these are very sensitive and challenging days for both parties and for Yemen as a whole. The war continues in other parts of the country, which is why we need to make progress quickly.

I call on the Parties to recognize that these first steps need to be protected so that we can reach those other parts of the country in due course. The conflict also continues to have a terrible impact on the economy and the overall humanitarian situation, I know Mark will be describing so in a minute. It was unfortunate that we were unable to reach consensus on a way forward on the Central Bank of Yemen while we were together in Sweden and on the opening of Sana'a airport during those consultations in December. Both of these issues, if resolved, would make a significant contribution to relieving humanitarian suffering, and of course as we discussed in the Security

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Council meeting of December we continue to work on trying to get solutions before the resumption of the next round of consultations.

I should mention that as ever; the demands of southern groups are also a key part of the solution to the Yemeni equation. I am grateful for the effort exerted by key Yemeni stakeholders and the international community to improve stability in the southern governorates in recent months, which has been a remarkable achievement. As I have always said, I am committed to ensuring the participation of southern groups in the peace process, and I am continuing to work with this goal in mind with a range of those groups. Their contribution will be of vital importance to fulfilling the hope of peace.

Mr. President,

To conclude, the message that I have been receiving particularly from the parties but also from key member states and those with interest in peace in Yemen, has been consistent in these past days and it is this: it is that we must implement what was agreed in Sweden and show substantial progress in those commitments if we are to build the confidence that we have hoped to create from them. There is a sense of tangible hope. There is a sense of optimism as well as concern. It is my view, and it is shared by leadership of both parties, and also others. The substantial progress particularly on Hudaydah of course is something that we would like to see before we convene the next consultations. You will remember that in the Stockholm Agreement there was an agreement to open those consultations without conditions. This is not a matter of conditioning, that decision, it is a matter of making progress so that in the next round, we will not be dealing with the issues that have been agreed upon in the first. So, I am still hopeful that we can proceed to a next round of consultations within the near future. I am working with both parties to make sure that that will happen at the earliest possible date and that in those consultations we will begin both to monitor the progress made out of Sweden but also to discuss the fundamental issues that need to be addressed to resolve this conflict.

Mr. President, Thank you very much.