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Item 10, Technical assistance and capacity-building – general debate

Joint oral statement by Save the Children International with: Action Contre la Faim, BADIL–Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Care International, Cooperazione Internazionale, Danish Refugee Council, Defence for Children International, Global Communities, Mercy Corps, Mwatana, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam, Saferworld, Sawasia, Tear Fund and ZOA.

Yemen

Mr President,

This statement is made on behalf of Save the Children International and 16 NGOs¹, comprised of national, regional and international human rights and humanitarian civil society actors, including organizations that provide humanitarian assistance and support to vulnerable children and families in Yemen.

We are concerned by the rapidly deteriorating situation in Yemen as highlighted in the High Commissioner's oral update on the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 33/16 of October 2016.²

Yemen is in a perfect storm of humanitarian, protection and economic crises, each fuelling the other – Yemen's civilian population, particularly children, women and other vulnerable groups, are in the eye of the storm and their prospects of survival are being diminished day by day.

The Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan launched last month estimates that 18.8 million people need humanitarian assistance, of which 10 million are children. 7.3 million Yemeni people do not know where their next meal will come from. Nearly 3.3 million people – including 2.1 million children – are acutely malnourished. If there is no action now, famine will happen in 2017.

New threats to the lives of children and other vulnerable people, such as cholera and measles, emerged in 2016 due to the collapse of the health, water and sanitation system and a population made increasingly fragile by forced displacement and malnutrition. More than half of all health facilities are closed or only partially functioning. Child mortality has risen by nearly 20% with every 10 minutes a child dying from preventable causes. This must be urgently addressed.

¹ Action Contre la Faim, BADIL–Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Care International, Cooperazione Internazionale, Danish Refugee Council, Defence for Children International, Global Communities, Mercy Corps, Mwatana, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam, Saferworld, Sawasia, Tear Fund, ZOA.

² Human Rights Council Resolution 33/16 of October 2016, “Technical assistance and capacity building for Yemen in the field of human rights”: http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/33/16

We are also extremely concerned about the unrelenting attacks on civilians, including attacks on schools and hospitals, and violations of human rights. We call on all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to fully cooperate with OHCHR in their investigations of violations of international law.

In the light of limited progress made in these investigations to date, the UN should act to establish an independent, international investigative mechanism to reinforce OHCHR's efforts and ensure accountability for violations against civilians, including those against children.

Finally, we call on all Member States to put pressure on all parties to the conflict to find a peaceful political solution to the current conflict that involves women and minority groups, step up the response, fully fund the 2017 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan to meet the most urgent needs.

Thank you.

