I am delivering this speech on behalf of INGOs working in Yemen. Our teams stand and deliver, despite ongoing access, funding, safety and security challenges, and COVID-19.

We ask donor countries not to give up on Yemen, to restore aid to the pre-2020 levels, lift suspension, restrictions and blockades, ensuring the humanitarian needs of the conflict and displacement affected people in Yemen are timely and sufficiently addressed. Yemen needs generous funding commitments in 2021, with early pledging disbursements, allowing for a timely humanitarian response.

We ask donors to recognize the need to address structural issues and integrate more recovery and conflict-sensitive programming. There is a need for donors to increase multi-year flexible funding to allow comprehensive, multi-sectoral and longer-term integrated programming. We request donor countries to support investment in reform measures that permit for Yemen to enter into the nexus, where next to saving lives, there is also space and opportunity for recovery, livelihoods, investment in economic, institutional and social development. Active engagement with development actors is a must. Humanitarian actors cannot do the job alone. We must ensure financial support for health workers, teachers and other frontline service providers, as many did not receive their salaries for years. Also, longer term capacity building and flexible funding for the Yemeni organisations must be secured, applying minimum standards of quality and accountability, as part of a responsible localisation agenda for Yemen.

Today, fewer Yemenis consider the return to their areas of origin as a viable option, which stresses the urgency for durable solutions for 4 million IDPs. The current situation of protracted crisis has fostered a sense of hopelessness. We call upon donor countries to support 3 key conditions for IDPs to consider returning to their areas of origin: 1) safety and security, 2) access to livelihoods, and 3) access to basic services and functioning civilian infrastructure.

Important progress was made on humanitarian access in 2020, thanks to joint efforts of donors and humanitarian actors, and more specifically through high level direct engagement with the relevant authorities in all Yemen. More senior level engagement is needed, as this is an incredibly important factor in improving access. INGOs we have worked effortlessly to increase accountability, cost effectiveness and improved risk management. We appreciate the efforts made by most donors to ensure continued funding streams. Funding should be made available on the basis of needs and not be politicized, as civilians’ access to humanitarian assistance should not be dependent on who controls the area where they reside.

Working towards an end of the conflict is pivotal. All possible efforts must be made to stop to the war and end the cycle of violence, destruction and deprivation, to help avert an even bigger humanitarian catastrophe. Such efforts can only materialize if there is an honest and direct engagement with all parties to the conflict.

To conclude: The Yemeni population deserves more than living with the fear of not having enough food to feed their children, they deserve to regain hope. The international community should not let them down.