Mr. President,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Council on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine on behalf of Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos.

Ongoing efforts to find a political solution to the crisis have borne little fruit. Therefore insecurity and violence prevail in conflict areas, resulting in a steadily worsening humanitarian situation, which will continue to deteriorate for as long as violence persists.

An estimated 3.9 million people live in areas directly affected by violence. Those remaining in the conflict zone face imminent security threats from fighting that is increasingly occurring in densely populated urban areas. Fighting has caused significant damage to infrastructure, affecting the power and water supply and access to basic services.

In Donetsk and Luhansk, home to a total of 1.5 million people, the water supply is reduced to a few hours per day. Health supplies are running low, and an estimated 70% of health personnel have fled the area. That leaves access to medical care significantly reduced. Damages to housing have so far affected 1,600 families. Supply routes are increasingly disrupted by conflict, and coping mechanisms among the affected populations are inevitably deteriorating.

The protection of civilians is a key concern. As conflict intensifies, casualties are on the rise. OHCHR’s Human Rights Monitoring Mission and WHO report at least 1,367 people – both civilians and combatants – have been killed and 4,087 people have been wounded by fighting in eastern Ukraine since mid-April.

Since the last humanitarian briefing to the Security Council by Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos on 16 June, the number of displaced persons has increased
significantly. There are now 58,000 additional people who have fled their homes since the start of July. Reportedly more than 1,000 people are leaving the conflict zone each day. Today there are 117,910 people registered as internally displaced throughout Ukraine, 87% of whom are from the east of the country. Most have left with few belongings, and are in need of shelter, food and other essential assistance. This places pressure on host communities in neighbouring regions.

At the same time, many people from areas affected by fighting in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are fleeing to the Russian Federation. Since the start of the year 168,677 Ukrainians are registered as having crossed into the Russian Federation, with nearly 60,000 of these having applied for refugee status, and a further 115,952 having applied for other forms of legal stay.

However, this is not the full picture, as many Ukrainians who have fled their homes do not register with the Ukrainian authorities or officially apply for assistance. The Russian authorities are reporting that 740,000 people have crossed the border since the start of the year, availing of the special 270-day visa programme for Ukrainians. UNHCR is also reporting on this figure.

Mr. President,

The majority of the humanitarian response to date has been delivered through local and community-based organizations. The local authorities have been successful in restoring water and power in areas where fighting has subsided. However, as prolonged fighting starts to exhaust the capacity of the local authorities to respond, UN partners are scaling up to support response efforts.

Over the last weeks, we have been working with a range of partners, including national and local authorities, civil society organizations and communities, to undertake emergency preparedness measures, and address the most urgent needs of affected people. UNHCR is reaching IDP-hosting areas, and areas to which people are able to return with food, hygiene kits and essential household items. UNICEF is working with national partners in the provision of health services to displaced people. A UN-led Response Plan, detailing planned interventions sector-by-sector, will be published this week.

UN OCHA has deployed a Humanitarian Advisory Team to Ukraine to assess needs and to support coordination of the response. Two senior missions from OCHA headquarters have been deployed in recent weeks to support assessment of the situation and the humanitarian response.

Our priority remains to support the Government-led humanitarian response effort and to ensure that we are ready to complement the response with direct support to people in need as necessary.
Humanitarian corridors from badly-affected areas to areas under Government control exist, and are open for several hours each day, but these are regularly blocked by combatants, and the evacuation of people through these channels is impeded.

Therefore, we call upon all sides to the conflict to enable free and safe movement of the population, while at the same time ensuring full access by the humanitarian community to the affected people remaining behind.

Mr. President,

We call on the Ukrainian Government to address some key challenges to the implementation of relief activities.

A unified registration system of IDPs is crucial to enable comprehensive analysis and understanding of existing needs. Humanitarian assistance should be exempted from taxes and the signing and ratification of the UN/Government customs agreement facilitating the entry for humanitarian workers and the import of humanitarian goods should be expedited. Finally, we request the Ukrainian Government to adopt a temporary exception to facilitate the import of WHO-certified medical supplies required in response to the immediate health needs of the affected population.

The humanitarian situation is deteriorating, and the worrying increase in violence in urban areas puts a greater number of people at risk. Until violence is ended we will continue to see an increase in numbers killed and deterioration in the overall humanitarian situation. Urgent action is therefore required to prevent this.

Thank you.