Good afternoon everyone.

I am happy to see how different the situation in Sloviansk is today compared with the beginning of July.

We at the United Nations have been extremely concerned at the way the situation in Ukraine has deteriorated over the last few months. We are seeking to give support [to the Government] in three specific areas. First, with the ongoing political discussions, which we hope will conclude and bring peace, security and stability to Ukraine. The longer the conflict goes on, the more impact it has on ordinary people and the greater the number of people who are displaced.

We are, of course, supporting the Government’s own efforts but recognize that there are parts of this region where the conflict makes it difficult to get to the people who need assistance. So, the second area in which we are seeking to give support with respect to humanitarian response efforts is scaling up operational capacity, additional supplies, and looking at ways in which we can get into those more difficult parts of Ukraine.

Thirdly, there will be longer-term rehabilitation efforts which are required, given the destruction of essential infrastructure. So we are supporting the assessment of the damage. Imagine the money required to repair that infrastructure. We are working to ensure that there is a wide range of partners, donor countries, the World Bank and others who may be able to support with resources the longer-term reconstruction efforts.

We’ve been able to see here, in Sloviansk, how, over a very short period of time, basic services have been restored. Substantial numbers of people are already returning to the city. It demonstrates what peace means and we hope that it will be repeated in the parts of the country where there is continued, ongoing fighting.

Thanks to the local authorities here, who I had the opportunity to meet, and to the representatives of the national Government I met yesterday and Thursday, for their ongoing close cooperation with the United Nations. Thank you.