Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank very much indeed for joining us for this discussion on the devastating crisis in South Sudan, a crisis that threatens to spiral out of control if leaders cannot find a peaceful solution to the violence.

Humanitarian needs are rapidly escalating. Some 7.5 million people - 60 per cent of the population - now need urgent humanitarian assistance, that is 1.4 million more than this time last year.

Most of these people are children.

UN agencies and NGOs have arrested famine in the Leer and Mayendit counties of Unity State. But the conflict has caused the number of people, just one step away from famine, to increase from 1 million to at least 1.7 million since February.

However, the suffering goes far beyond hunger and malnutrition. In this conflict, civilians face widespread egregious human rights violations by armed actors on all sides. Thousands of villages have been burned and looted. Rape and gang rape are systematic and widespread. Children and women are forcibly abducted into fighting forces. The country is facing its largest-ever cholera outbreak. And one in three of South Sudan’s schools has been destroyed, damaged, occupied or closed, leaving the country with the lowest school enrolment in the world.

At last year’s General Assembly, we lamented that more than 2 million people had been forced to flee their homes since the conflict began. Today more than 4 million are displaced, two million inside the country and another two million having fled across borders.
Aid agencies are doing all they can, but the operating environment in South Sudan is increasingly hostile. South Sudan is still the most dangerous place in the world to be an aid worker. This year alone, at least 18 have been killed, taking the toll to 85 since the conflict began. Others continue to be harassed, detained, arrested and delayed by deliberate bureaucratic impediments.

Despite all this, humanitarians have helped or protected more than 4 million people this year, with food, livelihoods, water and other essential help.

Donors have been very generous. The South Sudan Humanitarian Fund has allocated nearly $600 million and the Central Emergency Response Fund has allocated over $250 million since conflict began.

But the appeal faces a 35 per cent funding gap.

This is a very prioritized appeal. Every missing dollar prevents us from saving lives and upholding human dignity.

I now give the floor to South Sudan’s First Vice President to deliver his remarks.