The European Commission and Sweden hosted a Humanitarian Senior Officials Meeting on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, with the participation of the main humanitarian actors on 13 February in Brussels. All participants – donors, United Nations Agencies, and International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) – assessed the situation and expressed a shared concern and commitment to act collectively along the following lines.

Yemen is the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. The scale and severity of humanitarian needs in Yemen are unprecedented. Millions of people depend on humanitarian assistance to survive. All humanitarian actors remain firmly committed to continue providing vital support to the people of Yemen with humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality.

The operating environment in Yemen, particularly in the north, has rapidly deteriorated shrinking the humanitarian space dramatically. Obstacles are constantly imposed impeding access and hampering the delivery of aid. International and national humanitarian staff is under threat and direct attacks in many parts of the country. Donors reaffirmed their full support for the UN, INGOs and other humanitarian actors, who are operating under such extreme and difficult conditions on the ground.

Participants unanimously stated that this situation is untenable and has reached a breaking point. The delivery of life-saving assistance is at risk. A concrete step change of the situation is urgently needed. All restrictions, obstructions and interferences violating humanitarian principles should be sustainably removed immediately and once and for all.

They agreed on moving forward with a common plan re-calibrating humanitarian aid activities, including a phased downscale, or even interruption, of certain operations, if and where principled delivery is impossible and as long as this occurs. It will include indicators, based on risks, to measure and verify progress allowing for resumption of aid. The scale of future funding will depend on the ability to carry out operations in line with humanitarian principles and donors’ regulations.

They agreed to enhance measures assessing the evolution of operational restrictions regarding the minimum standards for programming, accountability, risk management and security. Assistance to vulnerable people will continue as long as they can be reached in line with humanitarian principles and with full accountability.

They remain committed to a constructive dialogue with all parties concerned to support the humanitarian operations on the ground and the overarching imperative to reach and help people in acute need. They note the recent indication of willingness to remove constraints for aid delivery on the ground. An intensified engagement will therefore be immediately pursued and urgently followed up by high-level missions by the UN and donors to Yemen.

Humanitarian and development actors agreed on a shared commitment to remain engaged and stand ready to help reduce the vulnerabilities of Yemeni population. In this context, participants underlined the need to ease the restrictions of imports into all parts of Yemen, and to prevent a further fragmentation of the financial sector which worsens the current crisis.

They recalled the obligation by all parties to protect civilians and to comply with International Humanitarian Law. They reaffirmed their conviction that any long-term solution to the situation in Yemen requires a comprehensive peace agreement and urged all parties to actively engage and support the UN-led comprehensive negotiations aiming at a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Co-Chairs’ Summary