United Nations in Yemen

Key messages on the UN-Coordinated Plan for the FSO Safer – 30 June

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The FSO Safer is an aging supertanker off Yemen's Red Sea coast with one million barrels of oil aboard. It could break up or explode at any time. If the world does not act soon, the spill will happen, unleashing an environmental and humanitarian catastrophe with profound economic costs across the region. The UN has a plan to prevent the catastrophe and deliver a longer-term solution. Funding is urgently needed to begin the work.

- **Moored off the Red Sea coast of Yemen, the FSO Safer is a rapidly decaying supertanker at risk of a major oil spill. It could break apart or explode at any time**. The result would be an environmental, humanitarian and economic catastrophe with its epicenter on the coast of a country already devastated by more than seven years of war.
- **The UN-coordinated plan to address the threat has the necessary support of the parties to the conflict and key stakeholders.** The operation comprises the installation of a replacement vessel or equivalent capacity and a four-month emergency operation to transfer the oil to a safe temporary vessel before it is too late.
- **The plan is contingent on funding.** The budget for the two-track plan is $144 million, including $80 million for the emergency operation. Donors have so far pledged three-quarters of the amount needed for the emergency operation. The remaining $20 million is urgently needed to begin the work.
- **The funding gap has already delayed the start of the four-month emergency operation**, pushing part of it into the October-December period when high winds and volatile currents make the work more dangerous and increase the risk of the ship breaking up.
- **The United Nations thanks** Saudi Arabia, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, the European Union, Qatar, Norway, France, Finland, Switzerland and Luxemburg for pledging funds, as well as the many individuals that have generously contributed to the crowdfunding campaign to support the plan. We urge everyone to do their part to prevent this catastrophe waiting to happen.

The high cost of inaction

- A major spill would devastate fishing communities on Yemen's Red Sea coast, with 200,000 livelihoods likely wiped out instantly. Whole communities would be exposed to life-threatening toxins. Highly polluted air would affect millions of people.
- The spill could also close the ports of Hodeidah and Saleef – which are essential to bring food, fuel and life-saving supplies into Yemen, where 17 million people need food assistance. Desalination plants would close, cutting off a water source for millions of people.
- The spill could reach the African coast and affect any country on the Red Sea. The environmental impact on coral reefs, life-supporting mangroves and other marine life would be severe. Fish stocks would take 25 years to recover.
- The cost of cleanup alone is estimated at $20 billion. Likely disruptions to shipping through the Bab al-Mandab strait to the Suez Canal could cost billions more every day.
- Tens of millions of dollars in funding now will save tens of billions of dollars in the future.

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