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OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR YEMEN

UN is racing against time to salvage food stocks in Hodeidah

Sana'a, 7 May 2019 – On 5 May, a UN technical team led by the World Food Programme (WFP) gained access to the Red Sea Mills on the eastern outskirts of Hodeidah City as part of initial efforts to salvage a stock of 51,000 metric tons of wheat flour stored at the facility. The Mills have been inaccessible for the last eight months due to intense fighting.

“Securing access to the Mills has been a long, difficult and frustrating process,” said Ms. Lise Grande, Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen. “We’ve tried and tried and tried to get into the facility. It’s a relief that we have finally been given the green light to use an existing corridor. It is very positive that the parties have taken this step.”

“Everyone knows we need the food in the Mills. It’s now a race against time to salvage supplies that can feed 3.7 million people for a month,” Ms. Grande said.

Twenty million people across the country are food insecure, including nearly 10 million who are suffering from extreme levels of hunger.

“The situation in Yemen remains deeply precarious. We know that our assistance has been critical in averting a famine in Yemen, but the scale of the need remains huge and every grain of wheat is vitally needed” said WFP Yemen Country Director Stephen Anderson.

“WFP’s emergency response in Yemen is the largest in the world,” said Ms. Grande. “What WFP does every month is heroic. WFP is already providing food assistance to nearly 10 million people and will soon be reaching 12 million people. It’s an incredible operation.”

“With so many lives at risk, we need everyone to do everything possible to ensure that all humanitarian partners have free, unimpeded and immediate access to people who need and deserve our assistance. Stopping humanitarians from doing their jobs by diverting resources or delaying funding or blocking access or interfering in assessments, targeting and monitoring is just not acceptable. The truth is that thousands and thousands of people may not survive if we can’t get to them.”

Yemen is the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. Nearly 80 per cent of the total population, 24.1 million people, requires some form of humanitarian assistance and protection. A total of 230 out of Yemen’s 333 districts face the risk of famine. Despite a difficult operating environment, 131 international and national partners worked across Yemen in the first two months of 2019, to respond to the most acute needs.

The 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) requires US\$4.2 billion to assist more than 20 million Yemenis including 10 million people who rely entirely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs each month. As of today, the operation is only 14 per cent funded. Humanitarian agencies are appealing to donors to provide funds as quickly as possible.