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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Friends of Yemen meeting

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission Catherine Ashton issued the following statement today:

“Today’s meeting has once again demonstrated the usefulness of the Friends of Yemen group. It underlined how committed the international community is to helping Yemen make a success of its transition.

The National Dialogue which will begin on 18 March will be a great step forward. I call on all Yemenis to participate constructively and to avoid any action which could obstruct the process of adopting a new Constitution and preparing for elections in February 2014. The EU is prepared to assist in any way it can.

The pledges made in Riyadh and New York put a heavy responsibility on the international community and on Yemen to deliver and to ensure that the benefits of these pledges reach the population. The first signs of improved basic services are now visible and this should be pursued with determination.

Of the 172 million euros pledged by the EU last September, 60 million are already committed to support economic development, trade, health and strengthen civil society. This year, the EU will spend 33 million euros on humanitarian assistance.

Security, political and economic reform go hand in hand. A lack of progress or delays in one sector has immediate effects on the chances of success in the others.

Large parts of the Yemeni population live in extremely difficult, often life-threatening conditions. In particular, it is the children of the country who suffer: this threatens the future of Yemen. We must continue to make all the efforts we can to combat this threat.”

P R E S S

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