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**Remarks to the UN Security Council on Ukraine**

*New York, 21 October 2022*

Thank you, Mr. President,

I will speak briefly about the human toll of this war, the new dimensions of the humanitarian crisis and the challenge of access to non-government-controlled areas.

Deaths and suffering of civilians, ravaged urban and rural areas, and total loss of livelihoods for millions. This is the impact of the war on the civilian population of Ukraine – now in its 239<sup>th</sup> day.

The people of Ukraine are under tremendous stress. Huge mental health issues are emerging, and this will be one of the most devastating and long-lasting legacies of this war.

I was recently in Mykolaiv oblast, where the mayor told me that since the 24th of February, they have only had 33 days of silence - 33 days without explosions, and air raid sirens.

Let us do the math. That comes to only one day a week with no reprieve from the sounds and the terror, let alone the physical toll, of the war.

**The sheer depth of the humanitarian catastrophe is staggering.**

Almost 18 million people – more than 40 per cent of the entire Ukrainian population – need humanitarian assistance.

Some 14 million have been forced to flee their homes, including 6.2 million internally displaced, and nearly 7.7 million refugees.

According to UNICEF, some 5.7 million school-aged children have been affected since the start of the war, including 3.6 million due to the closure of educational institutions.

The World Health Organization says there have been over 630 verified attacks on health care, barring the sick from medicine and treatment.

The gender and protection dimensions of this crisis, while extremely sensitive, are great and need to be addressed through strengthened programming and monitoring.

**Mr. President, with each passing day, we face new dimensions to the emergency.**

First: Temperatures are plummeting in Ukraine as winter approaches.

The destruction of civilian infrastructure has recently become more widespread.

Energy supply, telecommunications and transport infrastructure have been devastated, affecting people's access to water, electricity and heat and their ability to communicate, in some locations.

The damage to power and thermal plants means that life will be even harder for the already vulnerable, including elderly people and those with disabilities. There is an increased risk of even more death in the months ahead because civilians may not have access to the essential services to survive.

International humanitarian law is very clear: attacks must never be directed against civilians or civilian objects and constant care must be taken to spare them.

To address essential needs, we have developed a separate, specific plan for the winter months, built at the oblast level in coordination with authorities.

Focus is on collective center and household repairs, and the provision of blankets, mattresses, clothes, food, generators for schools and much-needed thermal heating for hospitals.

The aim is for civilians to have a safe, dignified and warm place to be over the winter months.

Despite the challenges, we are helping people. Already this year, more than 590 humanitarian partners are now delivering critical assistance and protection countrywide.

Many of them are national and local aid organizations, women-led organizations and volunteers who are on the forefront of these efforts. We must commend their leadership, bravery and commitment.

Together, we have reached over 13 million people across the country.

And we continue to explore options for reaching others where the need is greatest.

Second: Newly accessible areas mean that we can reach entirely new communities with humanitarian assistance and essential services.

Aid workers are acting quickly to reach those in need, taking into consideration the security risks while upholding our commitment to stay and deliver.

However, in accessible areas of Kharkiv, Kherson and Donetsk, the threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance contamination hinders humanitarian operations.

The immediate priority for the humanitarian mine action sector must be to prevent civilian casualties from explosive ordnance and to help enable the safe delivery of humanitarian relief.

Third: Psychosocial trauma.

The Ministry of Health and WHO report that at least 10 million people will need psychosocial support due to the trauma from this war.

This includes women and girls suffering sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence, children hearing warning sirens daily, families who have been separated, or people just trying to survive every day.

In areas where the Government of Ukraine has regained control, particularly in rural areas, civilians who have witnessed or experienced terrible violations and ongoing hostilities, are among the most at risk.

Just a few weeks ago, I visited the community of Balaklia in the newly accessible district of Iziium in the Kharkiv oblast.

The majority of those who remained were very old people and those who stayed behind to care for them and had been unable to flee the area. They appeared traumatized by their experience.

The UN and our partners are working to strengthen our capacity to address the growing psychosocial needs of Ukraine.

**Humanitarian access to those most in need has been a consistent challenge in this conflict.**

Right now, one of the most significant challenges remains access to the parts of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia.

We are extremely concerned about the people in these territories who we cannot reach.

Regular requests continue to be made to cross the frontline, yet we are not receiving the necessary agreement from all parties.

Operationally, we are ready to move with interagency convoys and aid personnel into non-Government controlled areas.

The consequences of not delivering assistance to the estimated millions of people in these areas are dire, particularly with the winter months already upon us.

We must be able to alleviate the human suffering caused by this war.

International humanitarian law, which already embodies a balancing act between humanity and military necessity, clearly requires parties to allow and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for all civilians in need and through all possible routes.

Obstructions that leave the civilian population without the essentials to survive run contrary to this obligation.

Finally, the Flash Appeal has seen unprecedented donor support – more than USD \$2.9 billion has been received against requirements of USD \$4.3 billion for this year. This is second most-funded, country-level appeal in UN history; only behind Yemen in 2019 at USD \$3.6 billion.

The Ukraine Humanitarian Fund has also received significant new funding with more than \$230 million in contributions and pledges. Of that, \$117 million has already been disbursed, and we have now included \$20 million for local, volunteer organizations.

I thank the donors for their generous support.

In closing, the people of Ukraine have shown incredible resilience in this last year. Our urgent humanitarian task is to continue to help them to survive and to be safe.

Thank you.