25 April 2017 – Sweden and Switzerland have hosted a fund-raising event for Yemen today, where UN Secretary-General has appealed for $2.1 billion to deliver crucial food, medication and other lifesaving assistance to the country's population.

"On average, a child under the age of five dies of preventable causes in Yemen every ten minutes," said António Guterres. "This means fifty children in Yemen will die during today's conference – and all those deaths could have been prevented. Many of the children who survive will be affected by stunting and poor health for their entire lives."

Nearly two-thirds of the Yemeni population – or almost 19 million people – need emergency support in what is currently the largest humanitarian and hunger crisis in the world.

But the fighting must stop and the blockade of the country's ports must first be removed, in order to allow people facing starvation to access food and life-saving medical supplies, say UN experts Hilal Elver and Dainius Pūras.

Air strikes have reportedly targeted local markets and lorries delivering food. Nearly 300 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed by shooting, shelling or air strikes. This means that only 37%of the country's healthcare facilities remain fully functional.

With the highest maternal mortality in the region and more than a million malnourished pregnant women, the consequences are grave. To make matters worse, cholera looms as sanitary conditions in urban areas are inadequate and 45% of the population lacks access to improved drinking water.

With today's conference, however, donors begin to pledge additional funding towards the goal of $2.1 billion. Already, Norway has promised to increase humanitarian assistance in Yemen for 2017 with almost $25 million, while co-host Sweden has pledged an additional $26 million.

The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien expressed his gratitude to all donors at today's conference, where $1.1 billion were pledged for Yemen. "It will make a world of difference", O'Brien said on his Twitter account.

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