Madam President,

We remain gravely concerned by ongoing human rights violations and crimes under international law in the Philippines, fuelled by entrenched impunity and continued incitement by the President himself.

Despite commitments made to this Council last year, and agreement to the UN Joint Programme of Action, the human rights situation continues to deteriorate. The past year has been marked by continued unlawful killings of activists and alleged drug offenders, and increased targeting and harassment of human rights defenders, journalists, Indigenous peoples, judges, lawyers and other government critics. There have been no credible outcomes from domestic processes to hold those responsible for these abuses to account. There are concerns that the situation will only further worsen in the context of the upcoming elections.

The Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has reported that based on available information, it has found reasonable basis to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in the context of the so-called “war on drugs” and opened an investigation into the situation. This announcement stands in stark contrast with this Council’s decision to merely provide capacity building and technical assistance.

We again urge this Council to urgently revise its approach, and to launch the long-overdue investigation into the situation that has been requested by civil society for some years.

Madam President,

We fully support the Council’s efforts to provide capacity building and technical assistance to national entities in Yemen as provided by the resolution tabled under Item 10 at this session. Those efforts, however, are complementary to – and no substitute for – the vital work that is being done by the Group of Eminent Experts for Yemen. The situation demands an international mechanism, independent of all parties to this regional conflict.
Nearly a quarter of a million people have lost their lives, including 102,000 as a direct result of over seven years of hostilities. Over 4 million people have been internally displaced due to the conflict. Serious violations of international humanitarian law and egregious human rights abuses by all parties to the conflict have contributed to the world’s worst human-made humanitarian crisis. The country is facing the imminent threat of large-scale famine, and as of June 2021, 16.2 million Yemenis are food insecure.

At this moment the Council must use all tools at its disposal to promote compliance with international law, as well as justice, accountability and redress, to help reduce the intolerable suffering faced by countless people in Yemen.

Thank you, Madam President.