I would like to thank Secretary General Guterres for his leadership, bringing the global community together to address the famine we’re seeing in many parts of the world. This has been a great example of how humanitarian-development collaboration can keep a major humanitarian crisis from getting progressively worse.

There is much more to do, but I’m encouraged by what we have achieved collectively since we last met, during the World Bank Group’s Spring Meetings in April.

As a development institution, let me emphasize that we are deeply concerned because we know the lasting impacts that famine can have on people – especially on children. Long after the crisis is over, famine can affect their health, their ability to learn and to earn a living, which can hinder development progress for a generation.

This is why we took immediate action, not only to address the current crisis, but to build resilience for tomorrow, to avoid the cycle of panic and neglect,
where we respond immediately to the crisis in front of us, but turn our attention elsewhere once the famine has abated.

I’m pleased to report that we’ve made good progress in implementing a 1.8 billion dollar Famine Response Package consisting of 17 projects, with 927 million dollars coming from new projects and 874 million dollars from existing projects.

I’d like to share with you some of the important lessons that we’ve learned through our interventions.

First, expanding new partnerships is important to deliver in challenging environments. In Somalia, we partnered with the International Committee of the Red Cross for the first time to reach people that we couldn’t reach on our own. Through a 50 million dollar emergency drought response and recovery project, we’ve successfully distributed food to tens of thousands of families, rehabilitated water infrastructure, and provided access to health services for nearly 400,000 people.

Second, flexibility is key to adapting to emerging needs. In Yemen, facing a triple threat – conflict, famine, and now cholera – we acted quickly last month to provide an additional 200 million dollars for cholera response. This funding will help meet immediate needs and prevent future outbreaks by building the capacity of national health and water authorities. We also restructured existing projects, and we’re now partnering with UNICEF to finance cash transfers to 1.5 million households – about 8 million people – to provide them with the means to purchase food.

Third, with protracted and recurrent crises as the new normal, we must do more to ensure that we have in place the information, systems, and processes to help countries cope, and to find new solutions through innovative partnerships – including the private sector.

We’re conducting wide-spread surveys in the countries that are hit by the famine to identify critical constraints, so we can adjust our response to the
famine based on current conditions. As part of strengthening data systems in crisis and early warning, we also launched an Agricultural Intelligence Observatory, and we’re improving the joint World Bank Group-UN exchange on crisis analytics.

Of course, we know that famines are not just about food. Ultimately, ending the suffering from famine and severe food insecurity requires political solutions, unity of purpose, and investments in peaceful and inclusive societies.

We are firmly committed to do everything we can to support efforts to eliminate famine. I hope that today’s discussion will bring more ideas and synergies between us to take the Roadmap forward, to help the most vulnerable, and prevent crises like this from happening in the future.

Thank you.