#Brief− 1 November 2020

**The current status of the FSO SAFER**

The Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red sea and the Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) is actively engaged with UN agencies and its member countries, and in a collaborative efforts, to mitigate risks of oil spill from the FSO (Floating and Floating storage) “SAFER” which is moored off Yemen coast.

FSO SAFER was originally built in 1976 in Japan as a single-hulled ultra-large crude-carrier (ULCC) and converted to a FSO in 1986. The ship has been renamed SAFER and installed offshore the Ras Isa Marine terminal in Yemen, approximately 7 Km from Ras Isa, which is 60 km north of the port of Hodeidah, since 1988, thus serving as a direct oil export storage platform from the Marib oil terminal.

Since the outbreak of the Yemen conflict in 2015, inspection and maintenance of the FSO SAFER have stopped and the current technical status of the FSO SAFER poses a high potential risk for environmental disaster in the Red sea. According to the latest UN reports, the FSO holds an estimated 1.14 million barrels of Marib light crude oil onboard− and has no insurance cover should an oil spill happen.

Due to the lack of maintenance and the absence of inert gas to maintain the cargo tanks non-flammable, the risk of explosion and fire that could lead to a significant leak from the FSO is high and more likely. An oil spill from the FSO would have a detrimental impacts on the marine environment, the economy and the human health in the region and worldwide.

**The extent of environmental damage in case of oil spill and Fire due to an explosion**

The oil pollution incident from FSO SAFER is likely to threaten ecological sensitive areas, endangering corals, fish and other marine life. It can bring to serious and dire consequences for the Yemen economy, the food security and health.

The magnitude of the pollution might be extended to reach Kamaran Island. The international shipping through the strait of Bab el Mandeb where more than 20,000 ships transits each year could also be directly impacted.

The most important impacts and losses on the Red Sea Yemen coasts would be: (i) Huge losses on the fish stocks that could lead to the loss of livelihoods for thousands of families (ii) Loss of biological diversity and endemic species that are found nearby Yemen northern islands, including Kamaran Island (located at 14 km from FSO SAFER). Significant damage and losses to the largest and richest areas of seagrass and mangroves in the coasts of Salif, Beard, Khouba and Midi, (iii) closure of Hodeidah and Salif ports for a period of months with the import of oil and foodstuffs halted, and (iv) Acute and severe health impacts for the coastal populations and communities, especially in the event of an explosion, and propagation of toxic fumes plume and harmful pollutants.

**PERSGA’s efforts to prevent such catastrophic damage to the marine environment of the Red Sea**

Whilst PERSGA is proactively assisting in the contingency planning, all efforts shall be directed to avoid any source of pollution and all possible measures to be taken to avoid an environmental catastrophe with dire consequences.

PERSGA pursues its ongoing coordination and collaboration with IMO and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) to support the development of a Yemen national operational response plan to respond to any possible incident from the floating FSO SAFER. The regional contingency plan already prepared by the regional organization (PERSGA) and validated by its member states will supplement this national response plan.

PERSGA is working closely with UN active agencies such as IMO, UNEP and its member countries, including the Government of Yemen on this contingency planning effort.

PERSGA has also started and already implemented its first series of training courses/workshops as part of the long-term training capacity building program set in the regional contingency plan to prevent any potential oil spills incidents in the region from FSO SAFER.