



Security Council

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Letter dated 21 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of the briefings provided by Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; Mr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on the protection of civilians in armed conflict convened on Thursday, 17 September 2020.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdou **Abarry**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock**

Two years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 2417 (2018), asking that it be swiftly informed of the risk of conflict-induced famine and wide-spread food insecurity. And so I join members today, together with Qu Dongyu and David Beasley, to highlight rising food insecurity and the risk of famine in several countries.

Famines have existed throughout human history, and almost every country has suffered them. But, remarkably, the world got much better at preventing them in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Famines are now less frequent and less lethal for three main reasons.

First, agricultural output and productivity have expanded. Food has become more available and affordable to millions of people.

Secondly, the number of people living in extreme poverty has fallen drastically, and their purchasing power has increased. In recent decades, the extreme poverty rate dropped from nearly 36 per cent of the global population in 1990 to 10 per cent in 2015.

And, thirdly, when the threat of famine has arisen, countries and organizations have set aside their differences and shared knowledge and resources to avert the crises through decisive action.

Before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which may unfortunately reverse previous gains, we had got to the point where the risk of famines was confined to places in conflict. That is one of the reasons that resolution 2417 (2018) is so important. It explicitly recognized the links between armed conflict, food insecurity and the threat of famine.

Those links are clear. Conflict disrupts all aspects of life. Civilians are injured and killed. They are driven from their homes, losing land and livelihoods. Their farms, food supplies, livestock, infrastructure and public services are damaged or destroyed. That drives up the price of food and other basic necessities, like water and fuel. Over time, conflict tears apart the social fabric, undermines public institutions and erodes economic growth and development. The human and economic cost is astronomical. In the 10 most affected countries, the average cost of conflict is estimated at around 40 per cent of the gross domestic product.

And we can now see that COVID-19 is making hunger much worse. We know from the 2019 report of the Global Network Against Food Crises that 135 million people were facing acute food insecurity even before COVID-19. And now David Beasley and his colleagues at the World Food Programme project that the number of people suffering from acute hunger will almost double this year, to 270 million people. In the same vein, the World Bank predicts that the number of people in extreme poverty is set to rise for the first time since the 1990s. As always, the most vulnerable pay the biggest price — women, children, the disabled and the elderly.

David Beasley and Qu Dongyu will talk in more detail about some of the countries we are most concerned about, and I briefed the earlier in the week on two of them, South Sudan and Yemen. (see S/PV.8757). I would like to touch briefly on three other places.

I am particularly concerned about the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nearly 22 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are now acutely food insecure, the highest number in the world — a result of COVID-19 compounding the impact of decades of conflict.

In north-east Nigeria, as we told the Council in the white note, violence by extremist non-State armed groups is largely responsible for driving up humanitarian need. I am pleased to report that we have had constructive engagement in recent days with the Nigerian authorities, and the Government has taken important steps to improve access to people in need, which we look forward to building on further.

In the Sahel, an upsurge in violence and armed group attacks has forcibly displaced more than 1 million people, most of whom are dependent on agriculture. Some 14 million people are experiencing crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity — the highest figures in a decade. In Burkina Faso alone, 3.3 million people are now acutely food insecure and famine conditions are growing.

As I told the Council on 9 September (see S/2020/897), the pandemic is dramatically increasing wider humanitarian need. Things are going to get worse. I do not think we have seen the peak of the pandemic yet, but the indirect impact is already deepening poverty, destroying livelihoods, undermining education, disrupting immunization and exacerbating food insecurity, fragility and violence.

Humanitarian aid helps to avert food insecurity. And humanitarian workers are committed to staying and delivering. But they face unacceptable risks. This year more than 200 humanitarian workers have been attacked, including dozens in countries I have mentioned today. Humanitarian operations face repeated attacks and other forms of obstruction on movement and access.

International humanitarian law is an important line of defence against food insecurity in conflict. Starvation as a method of warfare is prohibited, as is the destruction of objects that are indispensable to civilians' survival. The problem is that too many people do not comply with the law. Parties must allow and facilitate humanitarian access and protect aid workers and assets.

Within the humanitarian system, we are doing what we can to meet growing needs. But the humanitarian agencies are in danger of being overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the needs, and that will get worse in the absence of a lot more financial help. There are concrete measures the Council and Member States more widely can take.

First, they can press for peaceful and negotiated political solutions to bring armed conflicts to an end. Secondly, they can ensure that the parties to conflict respect international humanitarian law. Thirdly, they can mitigate the economic impact of armed conflict and related violence, including by mobilizing the international financial institutions. And, fourthly, and by far most important of all, they can scale up support for humanitarian operations and take bigger and more ambitious steps to support the economies of countries facing severe, large-scale hunger.

Growing food insecurity is one of the major consequences of COVID-19, as we told the Council on 9 September when we briefed it on the issues covered by resolution 2532 (2020). History proves that, even in the midst of conflict, famine can be prevented. But in order to prevent it, we must act. And we have to act in time to make a difference. Unfortunately, in too many places, time is now running out.

Annex II**Statement by the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Qu Dongyu**

I thank you, Mr. President, for your invitation to brief the Security Council today. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) greatly welcomes the Council's engagement on this subject and its continued recognition of the relationship between conflict and food production and supply.

As Council members will recall, Mark Lowcock, David Beasley and I briefed the Council on this topic in April (see S/2020/340). Many members emphasized the value of early warning with early action. Well-established agrifood systems are crucial for durable peace, as has been proven by the great success of green revolutions and the adoption of proper policies in many parts of the world.

Since we spoke five months ago, the situation has not improved, and the risk of famine looms over Yemen, South Sudan and other countries due to natural and man-made disasters, including conflicts.

In Yemen, the continued presence of desert locusts has further threatened food availability. The FAO urges all those concerned to work towards granting access for control operations to prevent the pest from further worsening the deteriorating situation, in Yemen and beyond.

We note with great alarm the situation in Burkina Faso, where the number of people experiencing crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity has almost tripled.

We are deeply concerned by the most recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis, which shows that the Democratic Republic of the Congo now has the highest number of people experiencing crisis, or worse levels of acute food insecurity ever recorded in a single country. Today 21.8 million people are unable to access enough food on a daily basis.

In northern Nigeria, between June and August 2020, the number of people in crisis and emergency levels of acute food insecurity increased by 73 per cent as compared to the 2019 peak figure, and reached almost 8.7 million people.

Tragically, there are many more situations where conflict and instability, now also exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), are drivers for more serious hunger and acute food insecurity. This is particularly visible in areas where conflict and other factors, such as economic turbulence and extreme weather, are already driving people into poverty and hunger.

In Somalia, 3.5 million people faced crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity between July and September 2020. This increase of 67 per cent, as compared to the 2019 peak, is due to the triple shocks experienced this year — COVID-19, floods and the desert locust upsurge. While much progress has been made in controlling the locusts, the FAO is making every effort to sustain control operations.

In the Sudan, the number of people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance rose by 64 per cent between June and September 2020, reaching around 9.6 million people, the highest level ever recorded in the country, with serious floods further exacerbating the situation.

Worldwide, those hardest hit include the urban poor, informal workers and pastoral communities, as well as people who are already particularly vulnerable — children, women, the elderly, the sick and people with disabilities.

We need first and fast aid to stop hunger, we need prevention and production locally, we need political will, and we need collective action, as the forecasts for food security in 2020 continue to worsen.

To be effective in combating acute food insecurity, we need to put a package of solutions in place. Humanitarian-development-peace actions must be well coordinated and complementary. Our actions must be mutually reinforcing across global, regional, national and local levels. Humanitarian actors can provide first aid. Agrifood systems can perform a more sustainable function for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life. The good news on major harvested crops in 2020 is that we will have a bumper harvest globally. The FAO estimates we will have an all-time high year, and 58 million tonnes above the 2019 outturn. This is thanks to enabling policies; innovation — new cultivars, agri-inputs and marketing channels; investment; and the hard work of millions of farmers. Lasting peace and harmony can be achieved through good policies and investment in agriculture infrastructure and capacity-building in rural development, especially in conflict areas.

I firmly believe that the Council can play a pivotal role in addressing the threat of conflict-induced acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels by advancing dialogue between parties to find political solutions and innovative approaches to end conflict and violence. This would allow us to scale up urgent life- and livelihood-saving operations and to deliver better-integrated humanitarian and development responses that address the multiple drivers of acute food insecurity.

Once again, let me assure the Council of the FAO's continued support through policy advice, technical assistance, our Big Data platform and concrete services on the ground.

Annex III**Statement by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme,
David Beasley**

I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council today on this critically important issue.

Five months ago, I warned the Council the world stood on the brink of a hunger pandemic (see S/2020/340). A toxic combination of conflict, climate change and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) threatened to push 270 million people to the brink of starvation. Famine was a real and terrifying possibility in up to three dozen countries.

I am grateful the world listened, responded and acted. Countries large and small took extraordinary measures to save the lives of their citizens and support their economies, spending \$17 trillion on fiscal stimulus and central bank support. The International Monetary Fund and the Group of 20 nations threw a lifeline to the poorest nations by suspending debt repayments. Donors stepped up with advanced funding and additional life-saving dollars. And, with our donors' help, the global humanitarian community launched a huge and unprecedented global fightback against COVID-19.

Along with our partners, the World Food Programme (WFP) is going all-out to reach as many as 138 million people this year — the biggest scale-up in our history. Already, in the first six months of 2020, we reached 85 million people.

The WFP is doing what we do best — adapting and innovating to meet the unique demands of the pandemic: launching new food and cash programmes to support the hungry in urban areas; supporting over 50 Governments to scale up their safety nets and social protection programmes for the most vulnerable; and getting nutritious food to millions of school children shut out of the classroom during lockdown.

Every day, we are succeeding in keeping people alive and avoiding a humanitarian catastrophe. But this fight is far from over — the 270 million people marching towards the brink of starvation still need our help. We are doing just about all we can do to stop the dam from bursting. But, without the resources we need, a wave of hunger and famine still threatens to sweep across the globe. And if it does, it will overwhelm nations and communities already weakened by years of conflict and instability.

The Security Council made a historic decision when it adopted resolution 2417 (2018) and condemned the human cost of conflict paid in suffering and hunger. The resolution called for effective early-warning systems and, once more, I am here to sound the alarm.

The global hunger crisis caused by conflict, and now compounded by COVID-19, is moving into a new and dangerous phase — especially in nations already scarred by violence. The threat of famine is looming again; And so we have to step up, not step back: 2021 will be a make-or-break year.

Financially, 2020 was a record year for the WFP. We hit \$8 billion for the first time ever, but our budget was set before the pandemic hit. Economies were strong. Reserve and emergency funds were available. But now I am truly worried about what will happen next year. I know members' Governments are spending billions on domestic stimulus packages. National budgets are tight; reserves are running low, if not out; and economies are shrinking. But I urge members not to walk away from

their commitment to humanitarian assistance, and not to turn their backs on the world's hungry people.

As COVID-19 pushed countries everywhere to lock down, the equivalent of 400 million full-time jobs have been destroyed and remittances have collapsed. The impact has been felt hardest by the 2 billion people who work in the informal economy, mainly in middle- and low-income countries. Already only one day's work away from going hungry, living hand to mouth, they now have no money to buy their daily bread. This inevitably creates a risk of rising social tensions and instability.

It is critically important that we balance sensible measures to contain the spread of the virus with the need to keep borders open and supply chains and trade flows moving. We also have to be vigilant and guard against unintended consequences, which could hit the poorest people the hardest.

The virus itself thus far has not been as deadly as many people had feared in sub-Saharan Africa; this is the good news. But its toll has been devastating in other ways. The London School of Health and Tropical Medicine has analysed the closure of vaccination clinics in Africa during lockdown. It calculated that for every COVID-19 death prevented, as many as 80 children may die due to a lack of routine immunizations. There is a grave danger that many more people will die from the broader economic and social consequences of COVID-19 than from the virus itself, especially in Africa.

The Council's continued support for humanitarian programmes is therefore a matter of life and death — literally — for millions of people in the countries being discussed today, and for many millions more in the other countries edging closer to the brink of starvation. We know that already there are 30 million people who rely solely on the WFP for their survival.

Let me turn to the countries on today's agenda. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, conflict and instability had already forced 15.5 million people into crisis levels of food insecurity. The latest assessment indicates that the upsurge in violence and COVID-19 have sent that total skyrocketing to nearly 22 million people, an increase of 6.5 million people. I should warn the Council that these numbers assume that the WFP is able to maintain current levels of food assistance. If we are forced to scale back operations, the outlook is even worse.

In Yemen, meanwhile, the countdown to catastrophe continues following years of conflict-induced hunger, and now the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty million people are already in crisis due to war, a collapsed economy and currency, crippling food prices and the destruction of public infrastructure. We believe that a further 3 million may now face starvation due to the virus.

Already because of lack of funding, 8.5 million of our beneficiaries in Yemen receive assistance only every other month. We will be forced to cut rations for the remaining 4.5 million by December if funds do not increase.

The decision by the Ansar Allah authorities to close Sana'a international airport last week has made an already impossible situation worse. As the only airport in northern Yemen, it is a critical access point for humanitarian staff. The inability to move people in and out will hamper our efforts to stave off famine. The alarm bells in Yemen are ringing loud and clear, and the world needs to open its eyes to the Yemeni people's desperate plight before famine takes hold.

In Nigeria, too, COVID-19 is forcing more people into food insecurity. Analysis shows that the measures imposed to contain the virus reduced incomes in 80 per cent of households. In the north-east of the country, 4.3 million people are food-insecure, up by 600,000, largely due to COVID-19, while in the large urban

area of Kano, the number of food-insecure people skyrocketed from 568,000 in March to 1.5 million in June — an increase of 1 million people.

The outlook in South Sudan is similarly worrisome, where even before the pandemic 6.5 million people were expected to face severe hunger at the height of the lean season, made worse by the violence in Jonglei state in recent months. That has resulted in the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians, a large number of abducted women and children and widespread loss of livestock and livelihoods. In addition, virus outbreaks in urban areas such as Juba could put as many as another 1.6 million people at real risk of starvation.

Finally, even though it is not on today's agenda, I also want to highlight the disaster unfolding in Burkina Faso, driven by the upsurge in violence. The number of people facing crisis levels of hunger has tripled to 3.3 million people, as COVID-19 compounds displacement, security and access problems. For 11,000 of these people living in the northern provinces, famine is knocking on the door as we speak.

We know what we need to do. We have made huge strides forward in spotting the early warning signs of famine and in understanding its causes and consequences. But, tragically, we have seen this story play out too many times before. The world stands by until it is too late, while hunger kills, stokes community tensions, fuels conflict and instability and forces families from their homes.

I recently learned that in Latin America hungry families have started hanging white flags outside their houses to show they need help. There are a lot of them: 17.1 million severely hungry people today, as compared with 4.5 million in December last year. A white flag is the sign of surrender — of giving up. We cannot, and we must not, surrender, or tell ourselves that there is nothing we can do, because millions of people around the world desperately need our help.

The truth is that we are all out of excuses for failing to act — swiftly and decisively — while children, women and men starve to death. Today, as humanitarians, we are here to warn the Council that the pressures caused by conflict and COVID-19 are rapidly building, and I am terrified the dam protecting us from famine may be about to burst.

But there is hope amid the turmoil. The peace agreements signed in the Sudan and in the Middle East in the last couple of weeks show that, if there is a real commitment to peace, miracles can happen. Now the world needs political leadership to build peace and avert this hunger crisis, and I urge Security Council members to lead the way. Resolution 2417 (2018) was a landmark moment. It is time to live up to our pledge and mobilize immediately to save countless lives, in an effort to promote peace and stability around the world.

We need everyone on board. I understand that Governments everywhere are facing unprecedented financial pressure due to the pandemic. I believe, therefore, that it is time for the private sector to step up and help fund the relief effort.

Some may be wondering why I am bringing this up at the Security Council, but I will take every opportunity I get to raise the alarm before it is too late. We need \$4.9 billion to feed 30 million people for one year — people who will all die without the WFP's assistance.

Worldwide, there are over 2,000 billionaires, with a net worth of \$8 trillion. In my home country, the United States of America, there are 12 individuals alone worth \$1 trillion. In fact, reports state that three of them made billions upon billions during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am not opposed to anyone making money, but humankind is facing the greatest crisis of our lifetimes.

It is time for those who have the most to step up in order to help those who have the least. It is time for them to show that they truly love their neighbours. The world needs them right now. It is time to do the right thing.

Annex IV**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Geng Shuang**

I thank Under-Secretary-General Lowcock, Director-General Qu Dongyu and Executive Director Beasley for their briefings. I also thank the Secretariat for the update it provided on food security risks with regard to resolution 2417 (2018).

According to the update, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, north-east Nigeria and South Sudan the food crisis remains dire, affecting millions of people. The grave humanitarian situation in those countries deserves serious international attention.

As a matter of fact, the situation in those countries represents only a small fraction of conflict-induced food insecurity problems worldwide. Armed conflicts and violence pose a serious threat to food production infrastructure, force people to leave their homes and cause labour shortages. Obstruction and damage to humanitarian operations and facilities result in food crises, in which large numbers of civilians suffer malnutrition and famine. Meanwhile, food crises always lead to rising discontent and provide breeding grounds for violence and extremism, thus exacerbating volatilities and conflicts.

Food insecurity in conflict areas not only impacts international and regional peace and security but also the national development and livelihoods of people in affected countries. The Security Council should continue to play an important role in finding a solution to this problem and breaking the vicious cycle of conflict, violence and food insecurity.

We should promote the political settlement of conflicts and do our best to reduce food security risks in conflict areas. China supports the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire and calls for all relevant parties to ensure the full implementation of resolution 2532 (2020), comply with international humanitarian law, agree to a ceasefire and cease all violence. The Council should undertake its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. It should work for the political settlement of disputes through peaceful and diplomatic means in order to maintain peace and stability in affected regions. It should make every effort to guarantee humanitarian access and strive to mitigate humanitarian disasters, including conflict-induced food insecurity.

We should promote sustainable development and food security so as to address the root causes of conflict. This year kicks off the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. We must focus on areas of common concern for developing countries, such as food, agriculture and poverty reduction. More resources should be mobilized to support developing countries through funding, technology and capacity-building in order to achieve better economic and social development and create the necessary conditions for food security. Development should always be at the centre of international cooperation, and the default critical solution for the settlement of conflict.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues to spread across the world. The trade restrictions imposed during the pandemic are hindering food transportation and interfering with global food industrial and supply chains. Food prices are being pushed up by unstable supply chains and market panic. Cross-border travel restrictions are resulting in labour shortages in some areas, thus disrupting the seasonal production cycle. The combination of all these challenges could aggravate food insecurity and exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in affected countries and regions.

Under these circumstances, the international community should strengthen its cooperation in fighting COVID-19, build back the economy and minimize the impact of the pandemic on food security. We should ensure the stability of global food industrial and supply chains by resuming production, while taking all the necessary epidemic-related preventive measures. We should give special attention to developing countries, especially African countries, and provide them with targeted humanitarian assistance. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme and other international agencies have a key role in that regard, and we should support them.

As the largest developing country, China takes food security as a governance priority. In response to COVID-19 challenges, China launched a nationwide campaign to prevent food waste. We also work closely with the FAO and are actively engaged in international cooperation, thus contributing to the stability of the global food supply. In addition, we are helping other developing countries tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and locust infestations through information-sharing and technical assistance.

China is ready to work with all parties in order to end armed conflict, maintain food security and make unremitting efforts for global peace and development.

Annex V**Statement by the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic, José Singer Weisinger**

I would like to thank the presidency for convening this meeting, and our briefers for their presentations. Their presence here is truly a privilege and a testament to the severity of the situation at hand for far too many civilians in far too many countries. We face a critical challenge. In our view, the first step to address it is to find out why we have failed to prevent this preventable dire situation.

As our briefers outlined, the evidence shows that armed conflict is the primary driver of hunger and risk of famine in the countries under discussion today. There are also multiple other drivers, such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its related economic impact, as well as extreme weather and other factors, but it is conflict and armed violence that we in the Security Council are mandated to address, and address it we must.

Innocent civilians are paying the price for us collectively not doing enough here in the Council to protect them from conflict and for failing to protect them from economic hardship, hunger and sudden external shocks. We are not pointing fingers at anyone. We are simply reflecting on the fact that hunger seems to be a recurrent, persistent threat for conflict-affected countries, and yet — like in 2018 and many times before that — we continue to try to solve a problem that could have been avoided in the first place.

We must do better. We need to make this a point of no return, from where we take concrete steps together here at the Council on a range of issues in the countries on our agenda in order to collectively avert the risk of millions of people facing the tragedy of hunger and the risk of famine forever. It is because we believe in the power of multilateralism and solidarity and in the Council's unique role in building bridges for peace that we are here today to help build a global, coordinated response that meets those challenges and makes up for our failures.

We call for the Council and the States Members of the United Nations to take all the necessary steps, including supporting the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, through supporting and encouraging peace processes and, where necessary, holding to account those who prevent humanitarian access. We can do all of those things here in the Council.

The Council has a decisive role to play in ensuring that the parties to armed conflicts comply with international humanitarian law and the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence so that humanitarian organizations can reach affected people — wherever and whoever they are.

We also call for humanitarian operations to be scaled up and for the further development and implementation of coordinated, joint efforts between the humanitarian, development and peace pillars so that we can effectively ensure strong, resilient livelihoods for people, enhance development and reduce humanitarian needs. That must all be done in the context of a strong and sustainable environment for building and sustaining peace.

The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed highlighted the undeniable need to build local capacities in order to create resilience and break the dependency on humanitarian assistance, and we must do more to support those efforts. It has also shown that even humanitarian assistance can be subject to unexpected shocks and uncertainty. The evidence demands action now, in the midst of this crisis. It is time for enhanced solidarity and a strong and renewed sense of common humanity.

Finally, in that spirit, I would like to encourage donor countries to increase their official development assistance and promote innovative financial and debt relief programmes for the countries most affected by food insecurity in the current global crisis.

Annex VI**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations**

I would like to thank all the briefers for their overviews.

As all will recall, two years ago we unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018), which acknowledged the link between armed conflict, food insecurity and famine.

Most of the food-insecure people in the world live in countries affected by armed conflict, which has devastating consequences for their civilians and often severely hampers humanitarian relief operations. Those conflicts are the reason why people must survive on what they receive from emergency assistance. At the same time, they make the job of aid workers extremely difficult. The importance of safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid to civilians in armed conflicts cannot be overstated. Estonia highly values the work of all front-line humanitarian and health workers, who continue to carry out their tasks in already dire circumstances, now further aggravated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Today four of the worst food crises are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, north-east Nigeria and South Sudan, with Afghanistan, Somalia and Burkina Faso not far behind. The common denominator is armed conflict. In addition, this year a new enemy has been ravaging those countries — COVID-19. The pandemic, in conjunction with natural disasters such as desert locusts and flooding, have exacerbated the situation in those vulnerable settings to such a degree that all four countries are potentially facing famine.

Over the years, Estonia has supported the World Food Programme, the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNICEF in providing urgent assistance to all four countries. We will continue to do our part. However, a holistic response is needed to address the root causes of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity and offer people a real possibility of putting their dreadful situation behind them. We, the international community, must keep advancing the dialogue to find political solutions, mitigate economic crises and address deprivation in order to help put an end to conflicts and violence. Otherwise, we keep treating the symptoms without paying attention to the disease.

In that regard, I take this opportunity to reiterate Estonia's full support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and to call on all parties to armed conflict to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Annex VII

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nathalie Broadhurst Estival

[Original: English and French]

At the outset, I wish to thank Mark Lowcock, David Beasley and Qu Dongyu for their comprehensive briefings.

The figures they presented are alarming — the risk of famine continues to increase. There are multiple causes. Conflicts, climate change and, now, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its attendant economic crisis are daily compounding the number of food insecure and malnourished people. The number of countries affected by the risk of famine is extremely worrisome. They include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, north-east Nigeria and South Sudan. The situation is also very alarming in the Sahel, particularly in Burkina Faso.

Urgent action is therefore required. First and foremost, only coordinated and integrated collective action will make it possible to avert a humanitarian disaster. States, United Nations agencies, regional and subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector and international financial institutions, must all be mobilized if we are to reduce the risk of famine.

Cooperation among humanitarian and development actors is more essential than ever. It is not just a matter of providing important food aid, but also of strengthening national and local production systems and promoting social safety nets that will help the most vulnerable avoid the risk of famine and, above all, meet their food needs in dignity. This food crisis calls for bolstering the resilience of food systems and accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We must also enhance prevention and early-warning mechanisms to better anticipate, prevent and mitigate the effects of food crises. That requires collecting reliable data in real time.

France will continue to work towards that goal through bilateral and multilateral support. Our funding for food aid has risen from around €40 million in 2019 to more than €50 million in 2020. It will continue to grow next year. In addition, France is currently mobilizing its European partners to strengthen the Team Europe response to food security and nutrition, with a focus on Africa, a region of particular concern to us. That must be done in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, whose budgetary and other consequences have been highlighted by all.

Secondly, we must do all we can to ensure absolute respect for international humanitarian law. As many pointed out, the use of famine as a strategy of war is a war crime under international criminal law and must not go unpunished. Furthermore — we cannot repeat it enough — all parties must guarantee the protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical personnel, as well as civilian infrastructure. We will not compromise on that issue.

Finally, preventing famine means ensuring safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need. In that regard, it is essential to accelerate the implementation of resolution 2532 (2020) through ceasefires and a humanitarian pauses.

We have a collective responsibility and a moral obligation to avoid a new humanitarian tragedy in the case of a famine. While conflicts remain the primary drivers of food crises, we must intensify efforts to find lasting political solutions to conflicts. The Council can count on France's unflagging and ongoing support.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Muhsin Syihab

At the outset, Indonesia thanks the presidency of the Security Council for convening today's meeting. I would also like to thank all briefers for their very comprehensive and insightful briefings.

Before the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), an estimated 690 million people, almost 10 per cent of the world's population, was suffering from hunger. Some 75 per cent of the world's malnourished people live in conflict zones. Again, this was the situation before the outbreak of COVID-19.

I join with what the Under-Secretary-General said in his September briefing (S/2020/897, annex III) that we need concrete measures to break the vicious cycle between armed conflict and violence and food insecurity. The recommendations contained in his briefing are a good starting point for us to focus on our actions going forward.

The protection of civilians will remain Indonesia's top priority and should always be the core aim of the Security Council. The implementation of resolution 2417 (2018) is becoming increasingly relevant, particularly in the time of COVID-19. Allow me to focus on the following pertinent points.

First, famine should never be used as a method of warfare. All parties should comply with international humanitarian law, which is something that Under-Secretary-General Lowcock has also mentioned, as did several other Council members. Parties must adhere to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and access for humanitarian assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, the most active parties in most conflicts today continue to violate the Secretary-General's appeal. Furthermore, attacks against humanitarian workers and medical facilities remain a deliberate disruption to humanitarian access.

Secondly, international cooperation is vital for protecting civilians. We need to close the gap between a country's responsibility in protecting civilians and its capacity to do so. The countries mentioned in the *2020 Global Report on Food Crises*, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, Burkina Faso and Afghanistan, need international support, including through technical and financial assistance, which is truly vital to enable capacity-building.

It is regrettable that the humanitarian response is funded at less than 35 per cent. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that number is as low as 22 per cent, as a staggering 21.8 million people are acutely food-insecure. In contrast, 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted each year. We believe it is important to cite these statistics in order to place today's debate in the proper context. The Council must be able to facilitate measures to strengthen countries' capacities to protect civilians, including their food security.

Thirdly, the imperative of protecting civilians must be embedded across the peace continuum, from conflict prevention and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and sustainable development. For peace to flourish, it is clear that sustainable development is required. It is a question of synergy, including among the existing United Nations bodies and agencies that are addressing this particular issue. For example, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture are tools available to us for achieving this end. Let us utilize these tools.

In closing, Indonesia will maintain its current determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, the purpose and principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. This is our collective effort. It is time to step up, not to step down. No one should be left behind. No one should be left hungry.

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

[Original: French]

I too would like to thank Mr. Mark Lowcock, Mr. Qu Dongyu and Mr. David Beasley for their additional briefings on the latest developments in the food situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, where, according to the *2020 Global Report on Food Crises*, 53 per cent of the population is facing a food crisis.

We are very sensitive to the briefers' repeated poignant testimonies to the Security Council on the difficult situation of these populations having been exposed to food crises for far too long. These crises have been aggravated in recent weeks by serious flooding in the Sahel, the effects of the war in Yemen and the crises in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In all of these situations, the populations are forced to leave everything behind to save their lives, when that is in fact still possible. On behalf of my country, allow me to renew my expressions of sympathy for the innocent victims of all these disasters.

My country, the Niger, has in recent weeks experienced serious floods, which, according to the latest estimates, have affected more than 350,000 people. Entire families have lost their livelihoods. Populations facing multiple vulnerabilities, in particular refugees and internally displaced persons, have not been spared either: following these floods, some 9,000 people under the protection of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees now need shelter. At a time when we are debating the protection of civilians in relation to food insecurity, the combined effects of climate change and conflict remind us just how great the humanitarian impact can be for these populations.

The Secretary-General's note to the Security Council of 4 September 2020 reminds us of the gravity of the situation and the increased risks of famine and widespread food insecurity in four conflict-affected countries — a total of 43.5 million people, including 15.9 million in Yemen, 15.6 million in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 7 million in South Sudan and 5 million in north-eastern Nigeria.

Conflict is now the main cause of acute hunger in the world, forcing people to flee and abandon their fields, livestock, property and other sources of livelihood. Conflict also exacerbates food insecurity for both forcibly displaced people and host communities that are often the providers of relief, despite very often already limited resources.

I would like to recall, for example, that, during the Arria Formula meeting we had on 15 July, the briefers unanimously illustrated for us, through poignant testimonies, the intimate link that exists between the activities of armed groups in the Great Lakes region, the massive displacement of populations and the situation of food insecurity to which these populations are exposed. Like those in the Sahel, South Sudan and Yemen, these populations, trapped by armed conflict and the activities of terrorist groups, are in urgent need of humanitarian aid. Women and children in particular continue to pay a heavy price; in 55 countries around the world, nearly 17 million children under the age of five are severely malnourished. This situation is worrying and requires urgent action.

It must be said that the various factors linked to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic have, as we know, exacerbated the problems in these regions

already hard hit by conflicts. The shortage of labour has substantially affected both the production and the processing of crops. Disruptions resulting from transport-related blockages and quarantine measures have prevented farmers from gaining access to markets and hindered humanitarian aid, thereby wreaking havoc in the urgent distribution of vital aid to refugees and displaced persons. In the light of the multiple disasters these populations face — the torments of armed conflict and the risks of a spread of the COVID-19 pandemic — it is more than urgent to act if we are to avoid witnessing tragedy on an even greater scale.

In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to pay a heartfelt tribute to all humanitarian workers for their remarkable efforts to provide a lifeline to these populations and to contribute to the protection of vulnerable communities, especially in these times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Humanitarian workers do this work with dedication and commitment — often, alas, imperilling their lives.

For the humanitarian response to be effective, even more resources need to be mobilized, and efforts to ensure that they are better used must be made, removing all obstacles and freeing humanitarian aid from political considerations. On this latter issue, I thank Mr. David Beasley for his excellent advocacy.

As everyone agrees, the most effective way to protect civilians is to prevent conflict. Prevention is first and foremost about identifying and addressing the chronic and deep-rooted vulnerabilities that affect these countries through concerted action by Governments, the humanitarian community and development actors. As the President of the Republic of the Niger, His Excellency Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, has said, the zero-hunger objective set by the international community for the year 2030 is within our reach. For its part, since 2011, the Niger, through the Nigeriens Feeding Nigeriens initiative, has been implementing a programme to move from emergency to structural solutions, which has brought the country out of the chronic cycle of food insecurity it experienced in the past.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that, in May 2018, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018), which commits all parties to protecting civilian infrastructure essential for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to ensuring the proper functioning of markets and food systems in situations of armed conflict. Resolution 2417 (2018) must continue to guide our actions to break, as soon as possible, the cycle of conflict-related hunger that inflicts untold suffering on already vulnerable civilian populations.

Annex X**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Dmitry Chumakov**

We thank our briefers today — Mr. Mark Lowcock, Mr. Qu Dongyu and Mr. David Beasley — for their substantive overview of the current trends in food security around the world. Relevant reports of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) on the matter are always on our radar. The recent report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which triggered today's discussion, confirms how alarming the situation is.

Indeed, the countries that are the focus of that OCHA report — namely, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen and South Sudan together with the north-eastern part of Nigeria — are experiencing human suffering not only because of problems with access of those in need to food, but also because those States have suffered overall instability for quite a number of years and lately have witnessed an aggravation of insecurity. But, unfortunately, this issue is relevant to a number of countries, which clearly makes our discussion much broader.

We also take note of the emphasis some speakers have placed on the so-called humanitarian-development nexus. Despite being so extensively promoted, this term nevertheless lacks a clear definition. To date, we have not heard any explanation of what kind of new dimension the concept brings to the existing cooperation between different agencies on the ground. That said, we take this opportunity to pay tribute to all humanitarian workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, Nigeria and South Sudan for the everyday fight they undertake with one goal in mind — to help people most in need. Unfortunately, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic imposes additional difficulties and restrictions on their work.

Armed conflicts are not the only reason for the increase in the number of food-insecure people in the world today. Instead of focusing in the Security Council on the exclusive link between conflicts and hunger, we need to consider other factors of food insecurity, namely, price volatility in the world food market, world economic stagnation, insufficient exploitation of scientific and technological potential in the field of agriculture, a deficit in investment, environmental degradation and, now, another significant challenge, the COVID-19 pandemic. Unilateral economic measures, undermining the countries' rights and capacities for development, also have their place in this sad list.

The solution to the problem of conflict-induced hunger should therefore be sought in the political domain alone. The United Nations development system's and the humanitarian agencies' toolkit plays a primary role in effectively addressing food-insecurity challenges and building the industrial and agricultural potential of countries. Another important aspect is ensuring compliance by all parties of international humanitarian law, which is essential. Respect for United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182, promotes the understanding of unbiased nature of the provision of humanitarian aid.

The Russian Federation considers the fight against food insecurity to be of vital importance. The FAO and the WFP are our main partners in this area. In 2018-2019, we allocated over \$80 million for emergency food aid through these institutions. In 2020, together with the WFP, we have been implementing a food-assistance programme for Yemen with funding in the amount of \$4 million. This year, we provided \$10 million in support of the FAO's work to fight the locust outbreak in East African countries, including South Sudan.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate our position that every conflict is unique and there is no universal recipe for overcoming crises in every conflict-affected country. In this regard, we adhere to the position that food-security issues should be taken up in the Security Council only in the context of examining the situations of specific countries that pose a threat to international peace and security, with a close look at the root causes of those situations. At bottom, the Council already and inevitably touches upon these issues in its discussions relevant to the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, South Sudan and Nigeria.

Annex XI**Statement by the Political Coordinator of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Isis Gonsalves**

At the outset, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks the briefers for their sobering remarks, and we commend the President of the Security Council for convening today's important and timely discussion.

The hazards of climate change, the continued spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and the proliferation of desert locusts are today erasing decades of progress in the global fight against hunger. For vulnerable groups in conflict-affected countries, including refugees, internally displaced persons and those made stateless as a result of political, socioeconomic and environmental forces over which they exert little influence, overcoming food shortages proves an insurmountable task. As millions suffer from acute food insecurity and conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, South Sudan and other contexts, more must be done to combat these scourges.

In many situations on the Security Council's agenda, acute food insecurity and conflict are inextricably linked, and both are exacerbated by climate change and compounded by other risk multipliers. For instance, the rise of intolerance, disinformation and hate speech creates an atmosphere of distrust where peace and security challenges emerge along ethnic, communal and political lines. This is exemplified by the painful and recurring cycles of violent conflict between Hema herders and Lendu farmers over long-standing land disputes in north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, leading to increased displacement and food shortages. Similarly, as a result of its six-year history of conflict, cycles of heavy rains and flooding and the associated factors of human displacement and economic disruption, food security in South Sudan has deteriorated significantly.

Amid the coronavirus disease pandemic, which may further erode fragile peace processes, urgent multilateral action that brings together all actors across the peace, security, development and humanitarian nexus is needed. Against the backdrop of disrupted supply chains, movement restrictions and reduced funding, which significantly hamper humanitarian operations, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates its full support for resolution 2532 (2020). Again we echo the calls for a global ceasefire and request that all parties to armed conflict engage in a durable humanitarian pause to ensure the sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance. International law, including international humanitarian law, is non-negotiable, and we encourage all parties that are well positioned to influence the course of events in conflict-affected countries to work towards the full implementation of resolution 2532 (2020), while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of affected States.

At this precarious moment there is an urgent need for the donor community, including the international financial institutions, to scale up assistance to conflict-affected countries and to ensure that humanitarian agencies receive the necessary funding to fully execute their response plans and continue their life-saving work. Likewise, in the same vein, we encourage more debt relief. If we are to make good on our collective promise of ending hunger by 2030, the entire United Nations system, including Member States and regional and subregional organizations, must renew their efforts to protect those made vulnerable by conflict and hunger.

Annex XII**Statement by the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations**

I thank you, Mr President, for convening this briefing to address conflict-induced hunger. I would also like to thank Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and Head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, for their insightful briefings and for bringing these realities to our attention.

South Africa is deeply concerned about the increasing number of people suffering from malnutrition and food insecurity globally, including on the African continent and in the Middle East. Hunger is on the rise, and millions of people are at risk. Hunger is both a cause and an effect of war and conflict and remains a worrying threat to international peace and security. In that regard, the Security Council has a clear responsibility to act when such a situation is linked to threats to international peace and security.

Armed conflict has a devastating impact on livelihoods. It disrupts food systems, causes mass displacements of people and triggers food insecurity. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated the already existing food and nutrition insecurity and has driven vulnerable communities deeper into hunger and poverty. As a result of the pandemic, countries that are heavily reliant on humanitarian assistance, including basic food aid, are now facing a triple burden.

Civilians are the primary victims of these vicious cycles of food insecurity and armed conflict, particularly women, children, the elderly and disabled persons. In that regard, we wish to emphasize the plight of internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants, who are subjected to difficult living conditions during conflict situations and are fully reliant on humanitarian assistance.

Civilians, essential infrastructure, aid convoys and humanitarian workers remain targets during conflict situations. We therefore underscore the importance of ensuring the swift, unimpeded and impartial delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance to all those who require it, in line with the provisions of international humanitarian law and the need to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers.

In that regard, South Africa wishes to appreciate and commend the efforts of the United Nations, its personnel, its implementing partners and its agencies for their sterling efforts to provide the necessary aid and assistance, in particular in situations of conflict.

There is a need to do more to reduce and prevent conflict-induced hunger. Allow me to highlight the following elements for the consideration of the Security Council.

First, prevention and early-warning systems should be used more effectively to prevent cases of hunger. That can be done by integrating indicators on alarming food insecurity levels and the restriction of humanitarian access to populations into peacekeeping operations and country reports submitted to the Security Council.

Secondly, all parties to conflict should ensure their full compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Those responsible for violations of such international law, including by preventing the provision of food

assistance or undermining the means of producing food during conflict, should be held accountable.

Thirdly, humanitarian assistance provided in conflict areas should be gender- and age-sensitive and remain responsive to the different needs of the population, thereby ensuring that those needs are integrated into humanitarian responses.

Fourthly, enhancing and providing adequate health services in conflict areas, such as to deal with infectious diseases, should be part of a strategy to eradicate hunger.

Finally, economic sanctions imposed on countries in conflict may inadvertently give rise to conflict-related hunger, as civilians may have less access to nutrition and medicine and are faced with higher prices for foodstuffs due to the failing economy. In that regard, South Africa reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's call to waive all economic measures imposed on countries in conflict, particularly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The imposition of unilateral coercive measures also has an impact on countries in conflict, and we call on countries that impose such measures to lift those sanctions.

Let me conclude by highlighting that, in order to reverse conflict-induced hunger, it is imperative that the international community stand firmly against the use of hunger as an unacceptable weapon of war and ensure that those who suffer from such tactics receive the humanitarian assistance that they need.

Annex XIII**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

I want to thank the Dominican Republic for its leadership in calling for today's meeting. Let me also thank our three United Nations principals for their briefings, in the context of resolution 2417 (2018). It is important that we meet today to consider our role in preventing harm. That is what resolution 2417 (2018) is about, so I am very pleased to see this meeting taking place today.

The prospect of famine in the twenty-first century is a human-made and preventable failure, as our briefers have set out. The link between conflict and hunger could not be clearer: armed conflict and violence are playing a central role in denying civilians their basic rights to food and to life.

The United Kingdom shares the strong concerns raised on the rising risk of famine and acute food insecurity in Yemen, north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are just as concerned about the deteriorating food security situation in several other conflict-affected countries, including Somalia, Burkina Faso and Afghanistan. It is clear that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has further compounded by such humanitarian emergencies, increasing pre-existing vulnerabilities.

Armed actors are violating the rights and safety of civilians, deploying tactics that use the suffering of civilians as a weapon of war and wilfully disregarding their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians. That includes the prevention of humanitarian access to life-saving support through bureaucratic impediments, delays to aid delivery, blockades and inhibited monitoring. But, as we know from our discussions, unfortunately and tragically aid workers who try to serve populations in many different theatres face deliberate attacks.

The rising risk of famine and acute food insecurity in conflict zones requires immediate action on the ground, first, by both Governments and non-State armed groups. With regard to the countries cited in today's briefing, I want to make a few brief comments.

On Yemen, famine can be prevented only by urgent external financial assistance to the Central Bank of Yemen to improve the affordability of food and medicines through immediate funding for the desperately underresourced United Nations humanitarian response and urgent progress towards a nationwide ceasefire. All States Members of the United Nations, I think, have a responsibility to provide funding to the United Nations-led response, particularly those that have made commitments to do so. Of course, the Yemeni parties bear the primary responsibility to agree urgently to United Nations peace proposals.

In north-eastern Nigeria, the deliberate targeting of aid workers by non-State armed groups in the north-east is an abhorrent and unacceptable violation of international humanitarian law. Close joint work between the United Nations and the Nigerian Government is essential to ensuring the full protection of civilians, as well as progress on humanitarian access.

In South Sudan, we continue to see a stalling peace process and escalating violence at the subnational level. Again, it is vital that the Government of South Sudan and also any non-State groups ensure unrestricted access for humanitarian workers and reduce the risk that aid workers face there.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, an expanded security and political effort that works with regional, national and subnational authorities is needed to address the conflict drivers.

But, more broadly, the international community must come together. We must coordinate and prioritize our efforts. We must break the cycle of armed conflict and humanitarian crisis. We have a collective responsibility to act fast, but we have heard today that our contributions are not keeping up with needs.

Earlier this month, the United Kingdom announced a call to action to prevent famine. That included the announcement of an additional aid package worth over \$150 million, which aims to alleviate extreme hunger for more than 6 million people. I say additional, as the United Kingdom is proud to be one of the main humanitarian donors not just to individual country appeals, but also to core funds, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund. I believe that in 2020, the United Kingdom has given just over \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance. We have given just under \$1 billion in assistance to deal with COVID-19.

The United Kingdom has also announced the appointment of Nick Dyer as the United Kingdom's first Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs. We call on all Member States to rapidly mobilize all financial means to support swift humanitarian action before it is too late.

We, the members of the Security Council, must also play our role. Not only is it incumbent upon us to step up our funding, but we can also mobilize our diplomatic efforts. We can use our influence with actors on the ground to insist on unfettered humanitarian access and ensure the protection of civilians in that regard.

Having welcomed this briefing today and the white note that preceded it, I would like to set out what I hope will be a common expectation that United Nations reporting on such situations, and on others of concern, should continue. That should include updates on progress with regard to the recommendations of the United Nations, and it should include evidence on wrongdoing, where collection is possible, to increase accountability and to allow us, as members of the Council, to focus on those responsible.

If the risk of famine continues, the Council needs to take action to improve the protection of civilians and work against denial of humanitarian access in whichever situation that occurs. We believe that the Council must remain fully engaged in this agenda over the coming weeks. We believe that we should return to this discussion later this autumn and hear from our briefers whether the situation has changed for the better or for the worse, and consider what further action we could take.

Famine and hunger should not be inevitable consequences of war and conflict. A famine declaration means that it is already too late to save lives. It is a collective failure, including by us here. We must not stand idly by and allow ourselves to get to that point. We must act now to prevent a catastrophe in the coming months.

Annex XIV**Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Cherith Norman-Chalet**

I want to thank Mark Lowcock, David Beasley and Qu Dongyu for their briefings. Ambassador Craft sends her regards and is sorry that she was not able to stay for the whole briefing, but she very much appreciates the work that they all are doing. The briefings that they gave today very much are, and realized, the stark warnings, not just the updates — the stark warnings today of the disastrous consequences when conflict and hunger collide. The United States welcomes this important discussion on the eve of the General Assembly's high-level week — a time when we collectively reflect on the state of the world and consider ways to use our voices and actions to better people's lives.

Just over two years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 2417 (2018), which made clear the linkages between insecurity and hunger. These past two years have underscored that connection. Insecurity and violence, borne of various sources, from terrorism to political violence, have a profound impact on vulnerable populations. Families are torn apart. Livelihoods are upended. The rule of law falls apart. Food production is disrupted. Health clinics and schools close. As a result, food insecurity rises dramatically.

We cannot of course discuss hunger without also addressing the profound impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In a conflict environment it is inherently difficult to make a living, put food on the table, go to school or consult with a medical professional. It is profoundly more challenging for those who face a range of systemic inequalities, including women, children, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and the displaced. As David Beasley rightly told us in April (see S/2020/340), and again today, the economic and health challenges from COVID-19 will be made worse if authorities fail to address both the root causes of the conflict and the societal fragilities that have been exposed by the pandemic.

The situations in the four countries that we are focused on here today — the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen — underscore just how difficult it is to address food insecurity and hunger when conflict pervades. In all those contexts, we highlight the need to look in earnest at the root causes of conflicts and use peaceful means to end impunity and break the cycles of violence.

Moreover, the United States stresses that parties to armed conflict must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including by respecting civilian objects and objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ongoing and long-term displacement due to conflict, compounded by multiple public-health emergencies, has left millions of Congolese facing hunger. Persistent conflict and violence in several provinces, including North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri and Tanganyika, has caused millions of families to flee their homes, livelihoods and support systems. The continued violence in remote, often inaccessible regions makes it all the more difficult for the local authorities, supported by the international community, to deliver life-saving assistance. We urge more attention to the regional dimension of the conflict in the Great Lakes, where Heads of State could turn the page on a tragic history by boosting regional economic integration.

In Nigeria, 1.9 million people in Borno state cannot return home due to ongoing terror by non-State armed groups and terrorist groups, including Boko Haram and

the Islamic State West Africa Province, which have no regard for international humanitarian law or the neutrality of those risking their lives to help. Case in point — over the past year, 15 humanitarian aid workers in Borno state have been the victims of heinous crimes carried out by terrorist groups. Constant insecurity prevents people from going to their farms or local markets and from accessing health care and social services. Fear and violence also prevent humanitarian actors from reaching the most vulnerable populations.

In South Sudan, despite glimmers of hope there has been little progress for the people since the Security Council last discussed conflict and hunger two years ago. The ongoing violence throughout the country, compounded by flooding, COVID-19 and access impediments, leaves the lives of thousands in the balance. The scale and severity of acute food insecurity are dire and at the highest levels recorded in South Sudan since 2014. We are also deeply concerned by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan reports on the deliberate starvation of civilians, with parties to the conflict obstructing humanitarian aid on the basis of perceived ethnic or political identity. These acts may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. Food must never be used as a weapon of war.

In Yemen, the United States continues to be deeply concerned that the deteriorating economic outlook, Houthi interference in aid operations and major funding gaps are driving higher levels of food insecurity. We reiterate our call upon the Houthis to cease interference in aid operations, and we call upon all donors to contribute further and disburse funds to this emergency.

The United States remains proud to be the largest single humanitarian donor, including to the four countries of concern, which have received over \$2 billion in aid in 2020 from the American people. In Yemen alone, the United States has responded with an additional nearly \$200 million since the last Yemen pledging conference in June. We thank those here today and other United Nations Member States that have similarly contributed resources in support of the most vulnerable populations. We continue to urge donors that have not yet disbursed their 2020 pledges to do so expeditiously, as well as to consider additional financial support to prevent famine before it is irreversible.

The Trump Administration will continue to focus on this issue and will continue to lead on this issue. I know that the other members of the Council will join us. We can make the world better by working together towards a common goal and ending hunger and food insecurity for vulnerable populations around the world. And it is indeed a noble goal to work towards.

Annex XV**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lowcock, Mr. Qu Dongyu and Mr. Beasley for their briefings. Let me also thank their teams in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, respectively, for their untiring efforts on the ground.

Viet Nam joined the Dominican Republic and others in requesting today's briefing to discuss the alarming situation of conflict-induced hunger, in particular with regard to the four largest food crises reported by OCHA, namely, the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, north-eastern Nigeria and South Sudan. In those cases, the fragility of peace and security at different levels are compounded by such factors as poverty, food insecurity, diseases, natural disasters, the negative impacts of climate change, poor access to aid and funding and the economic shocks caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The World Food Programme has estimated that, by the end of 2020, 265 million people will face acute food insecurity. This is a concerning number. Without a healthy population, how can peace and development be sustained? We often say that children are the future. What will be the future of a country when millions of children suffer from acute malnutrition and are at risk of under-five mortality? Conflicts and violence continue to be one of the major drivers of food insecurity. They destroy crops, livestock and critical food infrastructure and impede humanitarian assistance. Food insecurity in turn can create tension, prolong conflicts, breed new ones and hinder reconstruction. My delegation reiterates the need to break the vicious cycle between armed conflict and hunger and would like to highlight the following points.

First, respect for international humanitarian law is a must in all situations of armed conflicts. We call on parties to armed conflicts to ensure the protection of civilians, in particular women, children and the most vulnerable; ensure unhindered and unimpeded humanitarian assistance to the people in need; and guarantee the safety of impartial humanitarian and essential health workers. Civilian infrastructure indispensable to agriculture and food production and distribution, which is critical to the survival of the civilian population, must be protected.

Secondly, there will be no sustainable solution to these crises unless we address the root causes of conflict and advance dialogue among relevant parties to find lasting political solutions. The Security Council should keep up its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. We reiterate the call on all parties to armed conflicts to adhere to the Security Council's demand for an immediate cessation of hostilities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thirdly, in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic, a solution to food insecurity in countries in conflict situations is made more challenging. Given the fact that resources tend to stretch domestically, it is crucial to strengthen international humanitarian assistance, in funding and in kind, and to coordinate our joint efforts. International and regional organizations, as well as countries in and outside the regions, all have a role to play in this regard. We must support relevant countries, especially those affected by armed conflicts, in building resilience, guaranteeing the availability and accessibility of food, and enhancing adaptation capabilities in the face of multidimensional global challenges. The needs of vulnerable population, especially children and women, must be adequately addressed.

Food security has proved to be highly correlated with international security in certain situations. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated food and security risks. This is the time to foster greater collaboration among Governments, international and regional organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders to ensure accessible, safe, nutritious foods for all, especially the most vulnerable in conflict situations.
