



Security Council

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Letter dated 16 March 2021 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, a copy of the briefings provided by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres; Ms. Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director, Oxfam International; and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, as well as the statements delivered by Their Excellencies Ms. Eva-Maria Liimets, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia; Mr. Simon Coveney, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence of Ireland; Ms. Raychelle Omamo, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Kenya; Ms. Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Permanent Representative of the United States of America and Member of President Biden's Cabinet; Mr. Dag-Inge Ulstein, Minister for International Development of Norway; Mr. Saboto Caesar, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, France, India, Mexico, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Tunisia and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on "Maintenance of international peace and security: conflict and food security", convened on Thursday, 11 March 2021.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for this video-teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Afghanistan, the African Union, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, the European Union, Fiji, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, Indonesia, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Malta, Morocco, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Yemen, as well as a joint statement by the Dominican Republic and Germany.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of the members of the 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



briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Linda **Thomas-Greenfield**
President of the Security Council

Annex 1**Briefing by the Secretary-General**

[Original: English and French]

I thank you for this opportunity to brief you on the links between conflict and hunger, an urgent and important issue.

Today I have one simple message: if you do not feed people, you feed conflict. Conflict drives hunger and famine, and hunger and famine drive conflict. When a country or region is gripped by conflict and hunger, they become mutually reinforcing. They cannot be resolved separately. Hunger and poverty combine with inequality, climate shocks, sectarian and ethnic tensions and grievances over land and resources to spark and drive conflict. At the same time, conflict forces people to leave their homes, land and jobs, disrupts agriculture and trade and reduces access to vital resources like water and electricity, and so drives hunger. The Nobel Committee recognized this link when it awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to the World Food Programme (WFP) — a powerful call to action — recognizing the importance of food security to building peace and stability.

We have made enormous inroads into hunger over recent decades, thanks to improved productivity and reductions in global poverty. Famine and hunger are no longer about lack of food; they are now largely man-made, and I use the term deliberately. They are concentrated in countries affected by large-scale, protracted conflict. And they are rising. At the end of 2020, more than 88 million people were suffering from acute hunger due to conflict and instability — a 20 per cent increase in one year. Projections for 2021 point to a continuation of this frightening trend.

I must warn the Security Council that we face multiple conflict-driven famines around the world. Climate shocks and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic are adding fuel to the flames. Without immediate action, millions of people will reach the brink of extreme hunger and death.

Projections show hunger crises escalating and spreading across the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, and accelerating in South Sudan, Yemen and Afghanistan. There are more than 30 million people in over three dozen countries just one step away from a declaration of famine.

Women and girls face a double risk. They are more likely to be forced from their homes by conflict, and they are more vulnerable to malnutrition, particularly when pregnant or breastfeeding. Girls who are hungry are at increased risk of trafficking, forced marriage and other abuses.

Food insecurity is worsened by the reduction of humanitarian access. I am deeply concerned about the situation in Tigray, Ethiopia, where the harvest season has been disrupted by insecurity and violence and hundreds of thousands of people could be experiencing hunger.

In some countries, famine is already here. People are dying from hunger and suffering critical rates of malnutrition. Parts of Yemen, South Sudan and Burkina Faso are in the grip of famine or conditions akin to famine. More than 150,000 people are at risk of starving. In Yemen, five years of conflict have displaced 4 million people across the country. Many Yemenis are facing a death sentence as widespread hunger stalks their nation.

Around half of all children under 5 — 2.3 million children — are projected to face acute malnutrition in 2021. Some 16 million people face food insecurity.

South Sudan is facing its highest levels of food insecurity since the country declared independence, 10 years ago. Sixty per cent of the population are increasingly hungry.

Food prices are so high that just one plate of rice and beans costs more than 180 per cent of the average daily salary — the equivalent of about \$400 here in New York.

Chronic sporadic violence, extreme weather and the economic impact of COVID-19 have pushed more than 7 million people into acute food insecurity.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo experienced the world's largest food crisis last year, with nearly 21.8 million people facing acute hunger between July and December.

The targeting of World Food Programme vehicles in the east of the country last month and the tragic killing of our colleague Moustapha Milambo, as well as Italian Ambassador Luca Attanasio and his security officer, Vittorio Iacovacci, are the starkest possible illustration of the dark alliance between hunger and conflict.

This is the devastating reality in conflict zones around the world. We have a responsibility to do everything in our power to reverse these trends, starting by preventing famine. Last September, the Secretariat provided a white paper outlining the risks of famine in four countries. The situation has only grown more urgent. Hunger and death begin long before the highest levels of food insecurity. We must anticipate and act now.

I have therefore decided to establish a High-Level Task Force on Preventing Famine, led by my Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock. The Task Force will include representatives from the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). It will bring coordinated, high-level attention to famine prevention and mobilize support to the most affected countries.

I have also asked Under-Secretary-General Lowcock to draw on the support of other Inter-Agency Standing Committee members — and obviously including UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and UN-Women.

The group will cooperate with the non-governmental organizations that are our vital partners in feeding the hungry around the world. It will also work with international financial institutions and other specialized United Nations agencies, including the International Fund for Agricultural Development. I urge all members of the Council to support the Task Force in every way possible and to do everything in your power to take urgent action to prevent famine.

Our most serious concern must be the more than 34 million people who already face emergency levels of acute food insecurity. WFP and FAO have appealed for the emergency mobilization of \$5.5 billion in extraordinary resources to avert catastrophe for these 34 million women, men, girls and boys. These resources are needed for a comprehensive package of life-saving aid, including the distribution of food, cash and vouchers, targeted support for agriculture and medical treatment for people already suffering from acute malnutrition.

While all countries face some economic strain as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the solution does not lie in cutting aid to starving children. The disappointing outcome of last week's high-level pledging event on Yemen cannot become a pattern. I ask all countries to reconsider their responsibilities and their

capacities. The relatively small amounts of money involved in humanitarian aid are an investment not only in people but an investment in peace.

People suffering from acute hunger must be able to access food and vital assistance in secure conditions, especially during armed conflict. In line with resolution 2417 (2018) and on the basis of international humanitarian law, goods and products crucial to the survival of civilians — such as food, crops and livestock — must be protected in conflicts.

Humanitarian access must not be impeded, while the use of famine as a method of war is prohibited. Unfortunately, we do not lack for recent examples of the use of famine as a tactic of war. The conflict in Syria has plunged millions of civilians into terrible conditions, which in some instances has reduced them to famine. Famine was declared in 2017 in certain parts of South Sudan, as humanitarian access to the population was systematically refused. There are indications in Myanmar that hunger — resulting from the destruction of agricultural land and villages as well as restrictions on the freedom of movement — has been used against Rohingyas. The deliberate use of famine as a method of war constitutes a war crime.

I urge the members of the Council to act using every means so that those responsible for these atrocious acts are held accountable, as well as to remind the parties to conflict of their obligations in the context of international humanitarian law.

Addressing hunger is a foundation for stability and peace. We need to tackle both hunger and conflict if we are to solve either. Our blueprint for reducing hunger is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and particularly Sustainable Development Goal 2, on zero hunger.

We need to transform our food systems to make them more inclusive, resilient and sustainable. This will be one of the key issues of the Food Systems Summit, which I will convene later this year.

At the same time, ending hunger requires us to find political solutions to conflict. I urge all States to make ending conflict, not simply mitigating its impact, a key foreign policy priority.

I call on Council members to use your privileged position to do everything in your power to end violence, negotiate peace and alleviate the hunger and suffering that afflict so many millions of people around the world.

There is no place for famine and starvation in the twenty-first century.

Annex 2**Briefing by the Executive Director of Oxfam International, Gabriela Bucher**

In 1941, the people of Greece were facing a horrific winter. The Axis powers had plundered local supplies and introduced an extortionate tax on Greek citizens. Allied forces imposed a cruel blockade, cutting off imports. Prices skyrocketed. Hundreds of thousands of civilians perished.

I have been invited to address you today as the Executive Director of Oxfam International, an expression of people power that was first launched to stand with the people of Greece to demand their most basic of rights — the right to food — in the midst of conflict.

I am horrified that we are forced to confront the same basic injustice that gave birth to our founding, nearly 80 years ago. Indeed, as we witness blockades cutting off food and fuel to Yemen and millions going hungry in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Syria, we should all be horrified.

Three years ago, when the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018), we heard an unequivocal condemnation of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. We heard a recognition that peace and security in an armed conflict means the presence of food as much as the absence of gunfire. But is the promise of resolution 2417 (2018) being kept?

Many of the countries that were at risk of famine from conflict in 2017 are still at risk. And now more countries have joined them. Overall, at least 88 million people are suffering through acute hunger in countries where conflict and insecurity stalks. Women and girls are disproportionately affected, too often eating last and eating least.

People in these areas are not starving; they are being starved. It makes little difference to the hungry whether they are being starved by deliberate action, or the callous negligence of conflict parties or the international community — an international community whose most powerful States too often drive starvation with a plentiful supply of weapons.

I want you to know about A'eshah Yahya Dahish, from Yemen. When her village was bombed, she was forced to flee. A'eshah had dreamed of becoming a midwife but, in an economy under attack from all sides, it takes all the energy she has just to survive. Her two-year-old brother Maydan depends on her, but all she can afford to feed him is a few crumbs in water. Maydan is so malnourished that A'eshah believes any exposure to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) will be fatal.

I want you to know Tesfay Getachew, a farmer in Tigray regional state in Ethiopia. He has faced blackouts and market and bank closures that have devastated millions, but felt he could rely on the food he grew to feed his family. Last November, his village was shelled and his crops were set on fire, leaving his family with nothing.

I want you to know Housseina, from the Central African Republic. The country has seen a deadly spike in violence over recent months that has led to insecurity on roads, meaning that food is not getting to markets. Food prices have skyrocketed by 240 per cent in some areas. Housseina's home and fields were destroyed in the fighting. With support from Oxfam, she replanted her crops, only to see them destroyed again in the recent fighting. "My pain was immense," she said. "I do not know how to feed my family. We ate almost exclusively the vegetables that I grow."

Women like Housseina want you to live up to your basic promise to keep their families safe. She and her fellow farmers are more than capable of producing enough to feed their families, but they cannot do so in the face of violence. Women in

conflict face impossible choices — to travel to market and risk crossing checkpoints or to watch their families go hungry; to harvest their crops and risk being attacked or to stay and face starvation?

Sometimes they have no choice. Sahar, 3 years old, and her sister Hanan, 8 years old, were displaced by the conflict in Yemen and forced to marry because their parents said they could not feed them.

I am here to amplify their call to the Security Council to make good on its unanimous agreement to break the vicious cycle of conflict and food insecurity. How?

First, the Council should deepen its work on this topic with a clear commitment for action. It should agree on depoliticized criteria facilitating the regular, mandatory reporting on situations where there is a risk of conflict induced famine or food insecurity. It should undertake quarterly reviews of action on the white papers considered under the early-warning system.

Secondly, the Council must take genuine action to support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire — urgently — while ensuring humanitarian access and the inclusion of women from the beginning of the process. It took four months for the Council to support the initial call for a ceasefire. People on the edge of starvation do not have the time to wait another year for action.

Thirdly, the Council should apply the principles it has endorsed in the abstract to the particular situations on its agenda. It should impartially condemn the starvation of civilians as a weapon of war, the targeting of critical food infrastructure, and all restrictions on humanitarian access. It should also take any opportunity to create meaningful accountability for starvation crimes. Today there is near-global impunity.

Fourthly, it should endorse, and its members should lead, the effort to fulfil the global appeal for \$5.5 billion to meet additional needs to avert famine, most especially in the light of COVID-19. To be most effective, this aid must flow as directly and urgently as possible to local organizations, especially women-led and women's rights organizations, which are on the front line in addressing hunger.

And fifthly, it should endorse a people's vaccine for COVID-19 that is free and accessible to all. Ending this pandemic will not end hunger, but we will not end hunger if we cannot end this pandemic. Rich nations must unlock global supply constraints and help get the vaccine to all who need it.

Our failure to address hunger before the COVID-19 crisis and the rampant inequality and climate change, which has so often triggered conflict, has left us scrambling to avert famine across the globe.

Let us also be clear: starvation is a symptom of a deeper problem. The growing crisis of starvation is taking place in a world where eight of the biggest food and drink companies paid out over \$18 billion to shareholders last year. Those dividends alone are more than three times what we are asking for in aid today to avert catastrophe. There is not a lack of food, there is a lack of equality. I know this from my own experience. Growing up in Colombia, life in conflict was all we knew. None of us were safe. But those of us with resources could eat. Even then, as a girl, I knew this was unjust.

There is an unnerving consistency in what people living through hunger and conflict around the world tell us they want. They want peace. But what does peace mean to them? Peace is not just the absence of war, but the ability to live in dignity and flourish. It means a job, a return home and stable, affordable food prices. If the Security Council aims to foster peace in their name, it should be no less expansive in its perspective and its actions.

Annex 3

Briefing by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, David Beasley

I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council today on this critically important issue. And let me also take this opportunity to welcome you to your new role as United States Ambassador to the United Nations.

In April 2020, as the world was still getting to grips with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), I addressed the Security Council (see S/2020/340) and warned that the world stood on the brink of two pandemics — a COVID-19 pandemic and, due to its economic impact and supply-chain disruption, a hunger pandemic. I said that, if we were not careful in how we addressed COVID-19, the cure could be worse than the disease.

Armed conflict, compounded by climate extremes and the COVID-19 pandemic, threatened to push the number of people in the world marching to the brink of starvation from 135 million before COVID-19 to 270 million. I warned that famines of biblical proportions were a real and terrifying prospect in three dozen countries. Thankfully, world listened. Leaders responded with economic stimulus packages and deferred debt for low- and middle-income countries. And safety programmes, among other things, were implemented. As a result, we globally averted a catastrophe.

I am proud and sad at the same time that last year the World Food Programme (WFP) reached 114 million people with life-saving assistance — the highest annual total in our history.

In 2020, we thought that by 2021 COVID-19 would be behind us and that economies and systems would be surging back to normal. Unfortunately, new waves of COVID-19 have been unrelenting, and the concerns of 2020 are now a reality for 2021. So today I must warn you that we are once again sliding towards the brink of the abyss.

While COVID-19 is undeniably exacerbating fragility around the world, man-made conflict is driving instability and powering a destructive new wave of famine that threatens to sweep across the world. The toll being paid in human misery is unimaginable. So I want to thank the Secretary-General for his leadership in trying to avert these famines.

The WFP's food insecurity projections for 2021 are truly shocking. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, where I was last week, is one of the world's forgotten conflicts. But this year it is set to become the world's largest hunger emergency, with 19.6 million people facing crisis, emergency or catastrophic levels of food insecurity — up from 15.6 million a year ago. In Afghanistan, that number is now nearly 17 million people — up from 13.9 million. In Nigeria, it's 13 million — a staggering increase on the 5 million in crisis before. In Syria, over 12 million people face crisis levels of food insecurity or worse — an all-time high and up from 9.3 million. The Sudan, South Sudan and the Sahel, I could go on and on and on — dozens of countries with millions of their children going hungry because armed groups won't lay down their guns.

Now 270 million people are facing a hunger crisis and, as the Secretary-General laid out, famine is a dangerous possibility in over 30 countries. The WFP estimates that at least 34 million people are knocking on the door of famine.

These looming famines have two things in common: they are primarily driven by conflict and they are entirely preventable. With modern forecasting, improved agricultural practices and effective humanitarian organizations, natural disasters no longer plunge populations into famine.

Make no mistake: man-made conflict is the real culprit. Displacement, a major consequence of armed violence, means lives are turned upside down, fields are abandoned and harvests are missed. Families forced from their lands become dependent on humanitarian assistance just to meet their basic needs.

The cycle of violence, hunger and despair pulls in more and more individuals and families as the weeks and months pass. But the potential consequences are truly global: economic deterioration, destabilization, mass migration and starvation.

In recent days I have seen the suffering inflicted on innocent families caught in the crossfire of these conflicts.

Two days ago I was in Yemen, where over 16 million people now face crisis levels of hunger or worse. We are heading straight towards the biggest famine in modern history. It is hell on Earth in many places in Yemen right now. I visited the Al-Sabeen children's hospital in Sana'a. While overwhelmingly I found stories of horror, there were also rare stories of hope. But most are stories of pain and hardship. Almost all the children I met were sick, skin and bones, and dying of entirely preventable or treatable illnesses. If I showed you some of the pictures, you would not believe it, and no one with a heart at all could sit idly by and let this continue. No one.

And what is really sad is that these are the fortunate ones, because they are actually receiving medical help. I asked one of the doctors how many beds they have. She told me, 25. I asked, what about the children you have to turn away, what happens to them? She replied, they go home to die. Understand, this is at the best hospital. Around 400,000 children may die in Yemen this year without urgent intervention. That is roughly one child every 75 seconds. Are we really going to turn our backs on them and look the other way?

Like a 5-month-old little girl, Soja, who I visited in one room where she was lying in the arms of her mother, on the verge of death. I talked with her mother, who told me that in desperation she had sold the only canister of cooking gas she had, so she could pay for the day's journey to the hospital to get help for her daughter. Tragically, I heard just this morning that little Soja passed away.

What about all the other families going through this hell. That have sold — what?— only to be denied care when they arrived because of the lack of beds.

And now, to add to all their misery, the innocent people of Yemen have to deal with a fuel blockade. For example, most hospitals have electricity only in their intensive care units, because fuel reserves are so low. The people of Yemen deserve our help. That blockade must be lifted, as a humanitarian act. Otherwise, millions more will spiral into crisis. The bottom line on Yemen: we need money, and lots of it. And above all, the war needs to end.

Sadly, many other nations bear similar scars from conflict and instability. During my visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo last week, I met many desperate families. It is a cruel irony that this country remains one of the poorest on Earth, despite its vast natural wealth. The Democratic Republic of the Congo's history of conflict and displacement, combined with economic and political instability and health crises such as Ebola have fuelled surging food insecurity. The WFP's food assistance is providing a lifeline to many of these people, preventing them from being overwhelmed by starvation and famine. But we urgently need more funding to continue this vital work.

In February I was in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, which has been convulsed by armed conflict in recent months. As you all know, from the humanitarian perspective, everyone has been gravely concerned about getting access to help those in need. I, along with other United Nations leaders, have visited Ethiopia several

times since hostilities broke out, including this week, and after detailed extensive negotiations with the Government we have achieved significant breakthroughs.

We have substantially improved access for humanitarian workers and cargo in the region, with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) being able to deliver more support to those in need. Also, the United Nations now has satellite dishes working: two new ones were approved for the International Organization for Migration yesterday and will be available for NGOs to use in Shire and Mekelle. I am hopeful that, in the next day or so, humanitarians will have additional approval for much-needed satellite phones and communications equipment.

But the real work is only just beginning. We believe 3 million people or more in the Tigray region require food assistance, so we have a great deal more to do. But we cannot get on with it unless we receive the funding urgently needed. Tragically, the list of countries in need, the casualties of conflict, just goes on and on.

Finally, I want to highlight the continuing crisis in South Sudan, where 7.2 million people face acute levels of food insecurity or worse. In early February, I visited western Pibor, and in recent days I have heard heart-rendering stories about the plight of people living in the area. In Western Pibor, in extreme circumstances, mothers are resorting to feeding their children with the skin of dead animals, or even mud. Just imagine.

This is a desperate situation that calls for urgent attention. Famine-like conditions have been identified in western Pibor. The local population calls 2021 “the year of starvation”. Their suffering is the result of widespread conflict and the unprecedented floods that came in 2019 and 2020. These people are in the crossfire of conflict while bearing the brunt of the climate crisis, just like vulnerable communities all around the world.

So when we ask Security Council members to provide \$5.5 billion immediately to avoid multiple famines around the world, I urge you to open your hearts, show compassion and give generously. Together we will use these funds to provide emergency assistance, to save millions of lives and to protect the livelihoods of the world’s poorest communities.

But we need the Security Council to play its part too. Because without the required monies, the world cannot stop famine. Beyond the immediate crisis, we also need to invest in peace, so that in future desperate families are not forced to the brink of survival by the bullet and the bomb.

The costs of this violence are immense: \$14.5 trillion a year, or 15 per cent of global gross domestic product in 2019. It would take a fraction of this money to fund the development programmes that could transform the lives of people in fragile, conflict-scarred nations and help lay new pathways to peace.

The Security Council has a moral obligation to do everything in its power to end these wars. But until we can achieve that, we need you to give us the funds to stop millions of people from dying from starvation. We were able to avert famine in 2020, and we can do it again. Please, do not ask us to choose which starving child lives and which one dies. Let us feed them all.

Annex 4**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Eva-Maria Liimets**

Almost three years ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018), which condemned the starving of civilians and unlawfully denying humanitarian access as a method of warfare. The resolution was conceived as a tool to break the vicious cycle of food insecurity, but it is we who must use this tool when required. Only in that way can we put the resolution into practice and break the cycle of hunger.

Compliance with international humanitarian law is of the highest importance in reducing food insecurity and preventing famine. The intentional starvation of civilians is a war crime. We welcome the amendments to the Rome Statute to include it as such. We call on State parties to take steps that would allow the amendments to enter into force quickly.

Most of the food-insecure people live in countries affected by armed conflicts. The intersecting drivers of food insecurity in conflict areas are complex, ranging from the conduct of hostilities and lack of humanitarian access to the broader drivers of risk, such as climate change and the pandemic. While rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access is key during an acute food crisis, early action is of the utmost importance. It is particularly important for safeguarding child and maternal health.

There are numerous cases on our agenda where we have seen an unlawful denial of humanitarian access. Moreover, various parties to conflict have raided and looted humanitarian aid storage sites and destroyed infrastructure that is indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. Resolution 2417 (2018) helps us deal with such problems by allowing us to impose restrictive measures. We must not shy away from using those provisions, on which we unanimously agreed.

I would now like to highlight three critical cases.

The first case is South Sudan. We have seen how the humanitarian situation there worsens on a yearly basis. About 70 per cent of the people need humanitarian assistance and, if we do not act swiftly, we will edge closer to the sad example that we see in Yemen. South Sudan's food security is in its worst state since independence. That is why today I have the honour of announcing Estonia's contribution to the World Food Programme to mitigate the humanitarian situation there.

The second is Ethiopia. Estonia is concerned about the humanitarian crisis in Tigray. We take note of the Government's recent efforts to alleviate the situation. However, more needs to be done. The humanitarian community has made calls to increase humanitarian assistance in order to avert famine-like conditions on the ground. To prevent the worst-case scenario, life-saving aid needs to be delivered to the people in need across the region, including in rural areas. It is critical that the Ethiopian Government fulfil its commitment to provide unfettered humanitarian access. We also call for the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Tigray. In addition, the growing number of credible reports of atrocities and human rights violations and abuses is extremely concerning. Independent investigations into reported human rights violations are an absolute must, and we acknowledge Ethiopia's announcements to that end.

The third case is Afghanistan. Forty years of war and poverty, coupled with a continuing drought, means that 45 per cent of the population is at risk of hunger this year. All signs show that the situation will deteriorate further. Nearly one in two children under five will face acute malnutrition. The stalled peace negotiations between Taliban and Afghan officials and excessive levels of violence across the

country not only keep people from securing their livelihoods, but also severely hamper the humanitarian aid from reaching those in need. In 2020, humanitarians faced 1,006 access constraints — more than double the incidents reported in 2019.

Finally, it is also up to us, the members of the Security Council, to respond to potential famine in the world. I call on all of us to put resolution 2417 (2018) into practice and convene on this pressing issue more often. That would allow for more regular reporting and would thus help us to prevent or mitigate future famines.

Annex 5**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Simon Coveney**

I would like to extend my best wishes to you, Madam President, in your new role and congratulate you on a powerful contribution today. Ireland deeply appreciates your leadership in dedicating the signature event of your presidency to the Security Council's responsibility to address the role that conflict plays as the most significant factor in driving global hunger today. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his remarks and David Beasley and Gabriela Bucher for their contributions and their organizations' important work.

My country, Ireland, has a historical memory of famine. The Irish famine was the worst humanitarian disaster of nineteenth-century Europe. One million people perished and another million were forced to emigrate. That historical experience has left a legacy in Ireland. That legacy is our belief that we have a shared global responsibility to act and to protect populations.

Famine is unconscionable. The use of hunger as a weapon of war is unconscionable. We have a collective responsibility, and the Council has a particular responsibility, to see famine become a thing of the past. I will make three main points today.

First, it is undeniable that conflict is now the main driver of hunger. We have too often seen starvation used as a weapon of war. Every time that the Council is briefed on Yemen and Syria, we are reminded that too many are facing death by hunger. In the twenty-first century, that should be a cause of great shame. Just a few months ago, the United Nations released emergency funding to help stave off famine in seven high-risk countries in which conflict is widespread.

We cannot claim to be surprised. Conflict-induced hunger is a phenomenon that we around the Council table are briefed on time and time and time again. By the end of last year, an estimated 88 million people, the majority women and girls, were suffering acute hunger in countries where conflict and insecurity played the key role in driving that food insecurity.

In Yemen, 24 million people are in receipt of humanitarian assistance. That is 24 million individual human beings — the kind of children whom we have heard about in the stories so far today. What conflict in Yemen means is that the Yemeni people now face the real possibility of facing the worst famine that the world has seen in many decades.

In Ethiopia, even before the conflict in Tigray, we anticipated that 1.4 million people in that region would need food assistance in 2021. As we speak, notwithstanding the commitments made by the Ethiopian Government, humanitarian access remains inadequate as compared to the urgent, large-scale needs there. Comprehensive assessment missions are not yet being permitted. An effective civil-military coordination system has yet to be properly facilitated to allow for the safe movement of humanitarian actors, some of whom are present today.

In Syria, 10 years into the conflict, 60 per cent of the population — and 80 per cent of those in the north-west of the country — face food insecurity. That is in a country that ranked in the top half of the Human Development Index some 12 or 13 years ago. I visited the Bab Al-Hawa crossing last month, where emergency humanitarian aid is channelled to 2.7 million people in the Idlib area. Speaking to Syrian and international non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies working in north-western Syria brought home to me again the sheer human misery and the utter waste of human potential that result from conflict.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 2417 (2018) was an impressive moment in the Council's recent history. It was a testament to the Council's unity on the need to counter conflict-driven hunger. The resolution is a call to action. It restates core humanitarian principles. It demands the effective application of international humanitarian law and accountability for those who violate it, and it emphasizes the importance of humanitarian access to vulnerable populations. Resolution 2417 (2018) gives us the tools that we need to tackle the issue of conflict and hunger. What we need is the collective political will to use those tools.

That brings me to my second point. Despite the unanimous commitments of the Council, the intention of resolution 2417 (2018) is not being realized for those most affected. We need to recognize that the issue of food security and armed conflict must now be at the heart of the Council's work. Conflict-induced hunger is not a rare or infrequent occurrence anymore. It calls for our close attention and prioritization.

Conflict displaces people, destroys livelihoods, disrupts trade and the supply of food and agricultural inputs, damages infrastructure and reduces access to vital resources. That suffering is not limited to the most severe contexts. It affects millions of vulnerable people in many conflict contexts across the globe.

Ireland is honoured to be working with the Niger as the focal point on hunger and conflict on the Council for the next two years. We will host the first of the biannual briefings for 2021 next month to discuss the findings of the upcoming joint report of the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to Council members on this issue. We intend to keep a strong focus on hunger and conflict throughout our two years on the Council.

My third point is that we must adapt our approach to unique country contexts and acknowledge the different ways in which food systems are damaged by conflict. In situations of armed conflict, the Council must be seized of the need to ensure the proper functioning of food systems and local markets.

While rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access is vital during an acute food crisis, the Council must look at early action to prevent food insecurity and famine, particularly to safeguard child and maternal health. Early warning and early action lead to prevention. Prevention saves lives, prevents misery, saves money and allows food systems to survive. Where there is good reason to fear that food insecurity could be setting in, including through the deliberate denial of humanitarian access, the Council must act, and it must act quickly.

In conclusion, let us remember that the relationship between conflict and hunger is not new. War, by its very nature, disrupts food systems. In the worst scenarios, hunger is used as a brutal and medieval tactic that is in direct contravention of international law. All parties to armed conflicts must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including in relation to humanitarian access. Those that fail to do so must be held fully accountable by the Security Council. Resolution 2417 (2018), unanimously adopted by the Council, demands no less. It is the Council's responsibility to implement that resolution. It is our duty, as States Members of the United Nations, to garner the political will to do so. History will judge us harshly if we fail to do that.

Annex 6**Statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Kenya, Raychelle Omamo**

I congratulate the United States on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. I applaud the choice of conflict and food security as the focus of this debate. I thank the Secretary-General and all the briefers for their illuminating remarks on this critical subject.

Food security is the core human need. All our other aspirations for development, security and human progress rest on achieving it.

That is why food security is one of the four policy priorities being pursued by the Government of Kenya under what is popularly known as the Big Four Agenda. The drivers of our initiative are ensuring food availability, increasing land under irrigation, scaling up smallholder production and value addition, ensuring affordability and establishing 1,000 targeted production-level small and medium-sized enterprises using a performance-based incentive model in the entire value chain.

Those interventions will deliver a paradigm shift that we believe will positively impact development, inclusion, cohesion and sustained peace. However, we are doing that in the face of growing climate-related and environmental challenges in our region. Climate change and associated droughts, desertification, land degradation and desert locust invasions are undermining food security and multiplying conflict threats. We are particularly concerned by the food insecurity experienced in communities and areas where there is ongoing violent conflict.

It is my hope that this debate will offer new, or better, ways to address food insecurity as a multiplier of peace and security fragilities and threats. I believe that many solutions to ensuring humanitarian access and linking humanitarian aid to national and local food production will emerge, in addition to the following four points, which I will make with the utmost brevity.

First, the United Nations, regional organizations and Governments should insist that civilian infrastructure that is critical to food delivery never be deliberately targeted by conflicting parties. Similarly, food-related civilian objects, including farms, markets, water systems, mills and food-processing and storage sites and hubs, should be protected as a non-partisan resource that has no role in hostilities.

Secondly, countries and regions experiencing armed conflict should do their utmost to provide and facilitate safe and unimpeded access by official humanitarian personnel to vulnerable civilians in need of aid, in line with existing international and regional obligations.

Thirdly, humanitarian agencies should extend support not only to food aid, but also to building local capacities for producing food and boosting nutrition resilience. In that regard, support for farm inputs, seed and fertilizers to the local populace in fragile countries is of the utmost priority.

Fourthly, and finally, is furthering compliance with resolution 2417 (2018) in mitigating conflict-induced food insecurity, particularly banning starvation as a weapon of war. Decisions and interventions of the Security Council should be based on facts and driven by empirical evidence to ensure a balanced approach to furthering international peace and security.

As I conclude, I urge all of us to work together as we explore all available options to end hunger and conflict-induced food insecurity for the sake of all vulnerable populations and international peace and security.

Annex 7

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield

I thank Secretary-General Guterres, Executive Director Beasley and Executive Director Bucher for their powerful advocacy to alleviate the scourge of conflict-induced hunger. I also thank the many Member States for submitting statements for this open debate, and I welcome ministers and senior representatives from other countries on the Security Council.

I would like to start with a moment that I will never forget. In 1993, I visited a refugee camp in northern Uganda. It was my first-ever visit to a refugee camp. When I arrived, it was overflowing with Sudanese refugees fleeing the civil war in the Sudan, and I saw a two-year-old. Her rib bones were poking out and she was so malnourished that she was unable to eat. Then, in an instant, she died right in front of me. That moment and that little girl are seared in my memory. I remember her big, gaunt eyes. I remember her mother's eyes, too, when I saw nothing but darkness and despair. That day was the first time that I truly understood what the words famine and acute malnutrition mean.

So, when we use these technical terms — food security, acute malnutrition, conflict-induced hunger — let us not forget what they really mean. We are talking about raw humanity. We are talking about pure suffering. We are talking about real people. We are talking about children and mothers, such as the ones whom I met in 1993, more than 20 years ago. And the problem is compounded today. Acute malnutrition can trigger other risks, such as gender-based violence or the exploitation and abuse of children. In other words, the cruelty of hunger drives more cruelty.

I wish that day in Uganda were the only time I saw that cruelty, that kind of cruelty up close. But it is not. The menace of hunger has been a repeated scene throughout my career, and I know many of you have seen it as well. Thirty years later, I have never stopped thinking about what happened that day. How that nameless child's suffering was, and still is, entirely preventable.

After all, in 2021 there is no reason that we cannot get resources to people in acute need. In today's world famine is man-made. And I use that gender deliberately. And if it is caused by us, that means it must be stopped by us too.

In 2018, the Security Council took a powerful step towards addressing this inhumanity. We acted together. We spoke with one voice in resolution 2417 (2018), which stated that we would investigate bad actors who violate international law and use starvation as a weapon of war and hold them accountable.

Last September, the Council was briefed on the status of conflict-driven hunger (see S/2020/930). The briefing painted a damning, if incomplete, portrait of the state of conflict-driven hunger around the world. In the six months since that briefing, the outlook for hunger and famine looks even worse, as you have heard from all of our speakers today. Why? Today's conflicts are lasting longer. They are growing more complex. And of course, the coronavirus disease and climate change have made a bleak situation even more dire. Here is what that means for vulnerable people around the globe.

In Yemen, over 70 per cent of the country needs food assistance. And over 2 million children under the age of 5 are at risk of starvation and acute malnutrition. And on my first day here at the United Nations, I spoke to humanitarian organizations on the ground in Yemen. And they shared how the country had been brought to its knees by six years of fighting, how they are desperate for consistent funding and

support and how their rival efforts have been seriously hindered by the need to cross multiple lines of conflict.

We are also alarmed by the situation in Ethiopia right now, as you heard from Mr. Beasley. Fighting in the Tigray region over the past four months has driven innocent citizens to the brink. Food stocks are depleted. Acute malnutrition is rising. The ongoing violence has prevented humanitarian aid from helping a desperately hungry people. Actors in Ethiopia, including Eritrean forces from across Ethiopia's borders, have restricted humanitarian access to the rural areas where the most Tigrayans live. We cannot allow this situation to deteriorate farther.

We call on all sides — and I stress, all sides — to stop the fighting and allow this man-made humanitarian situation to be addressed. Also, we need better, earlier, more consistent reporting on these crises. We need to ensure the Secretary-General has the mandate and the tools to bring these emerging conflicts and potential starvation into the spotlight. I commend the Secretary-General's announcement of the establishment of a High-level Task Force on Preventing Famine.

And I would note that it is not just Yemen and Ethiopia, as the Secretary-General and others noted.

In Afghanistan, nearly half of the country's children under 5 are facing acute starvation.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, violence has led to displacement, which has led to 5 million acutely malnourished children. And I want to take this moment to express my condolences over the loss of life, including the Italian Ambassador and the staff of the World Food Programme.

And in the Central African Republic, nearly 2 million people face high levels of acute insecurity. May through August is the lean season, when food supplies run out and, in fact, people refer to it as the "hungry season". If we want to help, now is the time.

And finally, in South Sudan, violence has driven people off of their land, separating innocent civilians from their families. In their search for safety, innocent civilians are hiding in swamps, where they barely survive off wild foods and contaminated river water.

And part of what is so devastating about the crisis in South Sudan is the lack of data and reporting, which leads us to believe the situation is even worse than what we already know. There is only one reason we are being prevented from seeing the entire data set: South Sudan's Government does not want us to know.

That brings me to my last point.

What is different today from when I visited the refugee camp in Uganda 30 years ago? Today we should have better information on where acute hunger is happening and where it will get worse. And we have seen major advances in therapeutic feeding for children suffering from acute malnutrition. We can save lives, if we know where to go and if we put the funding towards it. And if we do not have the data, we cannot deliver that life-saving assistance. That is a problem that the Security Council can solve today if it chooses to. This body has the unique ability to demand and secure timely reporting, data and action.

So, to that end, we ask Secretary-General Guterres and his team for two formal reports to the Security Council each year, in addition to the current mandate to urgently notify the Council when there is a risk. We have to — we must — depoliticize reporting and ensure that we have a regular mechanism for addressing these situations in the Security Council so that no more innocent civilians starve to death.

We also ask the Secretary-General to look specifically at how to enhance data collection and analysis methods. The United States is happy to be a partner in that effort, and we insist that the United Nations, as a matter of practice, work to analyse and identify who is responsible for hunger. After all, acute hunger is the callous weapon of warmongers. It is caused by people with names and faces, and the people who suffer at their hands deserve justice. It is my sincere hope that we can, as the Security Council, speak with one voice on this unifying issue.

There is nothing we will do here that will bring justice to the little girl I met all those years ago, or to her mother, or to the millions of others like them who have suffered needlessly and continue to suffer needlessly today. But it is within our power. It is within our power to honour their legacy. We can build a world where no one experiences extreme hunger. And we can start building that world today.

Annex 8

Statement by the Minister of International Development of Norway, Dag Inge Ulsten

As we meet, 700 million people in this world do not know where their next meal will come from, and 270 million of them are facing acute food insecurity. If you tried to imagine a room full of these people, what would they look like? Most would be women and young children. If hunger had a face today, it would surely be female. Tomorrow it would probably be her child. But what would we say to them? I am afraid we would need to say that we heard the warning but failed to agree on how to act.

Investing in ending hunger today is also investing in preventing hunger tomorrow. People go hungry because they live in areas affected by endemic poverty, climate change, the coronavirus disease and, most of all, conflict. Food security is security. In resolution 2417 (2018), the world came together and recognized the link between armed conflict and hunger. It is time we shift the Security Council's focus from recognition to action.

Let me therefore express my gratitude to the United States for organizing this debate. Let me also thank the Secretary-General, David Beasley and Gabriella Bucher for setting the stage.

Nearly all the countries experiencing acute food insecurity are affected by conflict and armed violence. These countries will never eliminate hunger unless peaceful solutions are found. I am particularly concerned about two situations.

In Yemen the situation is desperate. If we do not act, this may become the worst famine the world has seen in decades. After six years of armed conflict, the civilian population has little resilience left. More than 16 million people are food insecure. Nearly 2.3 million children under the age of 5 are at risk of malnutrition. This situation is first and foremost man-made. Only an inclusive, politically negotiated solution can bring this crisis to an end.

The crisis in Ethiopia's Tigray continues to deteriorate. There is widespread food insecurity and reports of starvation. Systematic looting and destruction of food, crops and agricultural equipment is cause for great concern. As Under-Secretary-General Lowcock warned last week, if food does not get through and there is no agricultural revival, there is a possible risk of famine.

The Security Council must speak out with one voice against violations of international humanitarian law, including the obstruction of humanitarian assistance or access and the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. Accountability must be ensured. Our response to such violations could include imposing targeted sanctions, where relevant and appropriate.

We urge States parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to ratify or accept without delay the recent amendment concerning the war crime of starvation in non-international armed conflicts.

Those with influence over parties to armed conflict must demand that the parties abide by international humanitarian law. Most hunger stems from politics. We need political will and political solutions.

The Council and its members must follow up more firmly and consistently when the Secretary-General activates the early-warning mechanism in situations of risk of famine and widespread food insecurity. We welcome further discussions on how to achieve this.

The word famine should be enough to trigger alarm bells. Yet millions of people live under famine-like conditions or in areas where the lack of food over time is bringing devastation and death.

But the declaration of famine does not tell the whole story. As we all know, famine has never officially been declared in countries like Yemen, yet hunger is causing enormous humanitarian suffering. Protecting civilians must be at the core of all our interventions, with priority given to the most vulnerable. The lack of protection fuels conflict, displacement and mistrust.

The Security Council has a Charter-based mandate to prevent conflict by peaceful means. We must pursue all possible avenues, both in preventing conflicts and bringing them to an end. The importance of the entire United Nations system, including the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, cannot be overstated in this context.

We must build resilience in local communities so that they can better withstand crises. We must take a more strategic approach as donors and test smarter means of funding, making wider use of multi-year and multi-sector funding. We must act immediately when we hear early warnings, while at the same time continuing to work to remove the reasons for early warnings. There are 700 million people who depend on us turning our words into action. The children in Yemen are crying out — crying for peace and food security. If we do not act now, it will be too late.

Annex 9**Statement by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry and Labour of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saboto Caesar**

Let me begin by conveying, on behalf of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, our appreciation to the United States of America for convening this timely discussion. We also thank our briefers for their insightful, but very sobering, remarks.

The fight against hunger remains one of the international community's most noble yet difficult endeavours. Decades of progress in the quest for global food security are being erased in the face of the worst global pandemic in over a century. We have to grapple with rampant climate change and ecological destruction, protracted conflicts and other acute challenges, such as the desert locust infestation. We can and we must do better to ensure that everyone everywhere has access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food.

For vulnerable and conflict-affected communities, including refugees, internally displaced persons and those made stateless as a result of political, socioeconomic and environmental forces beyond their control, addressing hunger is more than a moral imperative; it is an existential concern.

This challenge brings into sharper focus the need for a comprehensive and coordinated whole-of-system approach to address the root and proximate causes of fragility and insecurity. The Security Council, as the primary body tasked with maintaining international peace and security, must spare no effort in its attempts to protect the most vulnerable, including by facilitating full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need.

The Security Council must also work more closely with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to foster developmental solutions that meet the basic needs of people in conflict settings. The Peacebuilding Commission, with its strategic advisory capacities and its convening platform, is also useful in consolidating our efforts across the peace and security-humanitarian-development nexus. We must leverage these capacities more often.

For our part, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has accelerated its efforts to provide food security throughout its nation and across its region. Even though we have been tried and tested by this pandemic, we have ensured that life, living and production continue and that we can feed ourselves and our neighbours. We are the breadbasket of the southern Caribbean. Our farmers and fisherfolk remain crucial stakeholders in these efforts, and we will do what we must to support them as they continue to support us. In this regard, we reiterate our calls for urgent, concerted and decisive action to tackle climate change, which is inextricably linked to food insecurity. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations must continue to play a critical role.

While we agree that conflict is a primary driver of hunger in some contexts, extreme weather events, including floods and droughts, also undermine agricultural productivity and create food insecurity. The continued suffering of our brothers and sisters in Haiti, one of the most food insecure countries in the world, is a painful reminder of the interlinkages between natural disasters, political and economic stability and acute hunger. Greater efforts are therefore needed on all fronts to address the interconnecting challenges of conflict, climate change and food insecurity.

We are of the view that all parties to conflict, and those with influence over them, should heed our collective call for a global ceasefire; global action must

be accelerated to keep temperature rise below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels; emissions must be reduced and financial commitments towards adaptation measures upheld; and major donors, including the international financial institutions, should scale up the assistance offered to developing and conflict-affected countries, including by expanding debt relief and concessional funding.

In conclusion, we underscore the need for inclusive multilateral solutions to advance the sustainable development agenda. If we are to make good on our collective promise to end hunger by 2030, we must work together. We have a shared global responsibility. Let us hold offenders accountable. I have hope for success.

Annex 10**Statement by the Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon**

I thank you, Madam President, and thank you also to the Secretary-General. And may I put on record our thanks to both Mr. Beasley and Ms. Bucher for briefing us so comprehensively.

As we already heard from many colleagues on the Security Council today, it is undoubtedly a tragedy of epic proportions, but here we are in 2021, here we are in the twenty-first century: we still need to confront famine, and our task — and let us be clear about that — is made so much harder by those who pursue division and conflict. And we must work together to address this immediate priority. And that is why the United Kingdom wholeheartedly welcomes the United States initiative to bring the vital issue of conflict and food security to the Council today.

The situation is grave. There are no other words for it. Listening to our briefers' words, I note they spoke of the raw humanity of the situation — the human suffering unfolding in front of us. I assure them that that resonates with us all.

Right now, famine is likely occurring in many parts of the world, but it is self-evident to us all in places such as South Sudan. In Yemen, more than 16 million people face a very bleak future in terms of starvation, likely death in the first half of this year and, as Secretary-General Guterres has warned us, on the brink of likely the worst famine the world has seen in decades.

In many of the countries on the Security Council's agenda, we know that conflict, as has been said today, is a primary driver of food insecurity and famine risk. We know that people affected by conflict are less able to source food and less able to buy it.

We also know, tragically, that armed groups use starvation bluntly as a weapon of war and see humanitarian assistance as fuel for their enemy. They wilfully disregard their obligations under international humanitarian law. They regard humankind as insignificant.

We know that the coronavirus disease and climate change compound this desperate situation. So the Security Council must redouble our efforts to break the cycle of armed conflict, which drives and sustains humanitarian crises around the world. And together, as the United Nations, we must do all we can to use the full range of tools at our disposal to prevent and end conflicts.

Resolution 2417 (2018) focuses the Council's attention on conflict-induced food insecurity in countries both on and off our regular agenda. As we heard from colleagues today, many of us, including, from the United Kingdom, myself and, most recently, our Special Envoy on Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, have visited these countries directly. We have spoken to people about the brutal realities they face on a daily basis.

Naming a few conflict situations or country situations, such as that in South Sudan, where famine is likely to take root in western Pibor, 60 per cent of the country's population faces severe levels of food insecurity. Fundamentally, the Government of South Sudan must do more to foster peace and stability and to de-escalate subnational conflict. And across the United Nations system, we need to work harder and coordinate better if we are truly to remove the barriers that stop us getting food to those who need it.

In north-east Nigeria, over a decade of conflict has left more than 1.2 million people unable to access basic humanitarian assistance. The horrifying recent attack by armed opposition groups in Dikwa, which affected civilians and targeted humanitarian workers, was utterly and totally unacceptable. Attacks like that have made the food situation and humanitarian situations so much worse, and therefore we need to work together to improve humanitarian access on an urgent basis.

As Mr. Beasley highlighted — indeed, Madam President, you yourself mentioned — across Ethiopia, around 18 million people will require humanitarian assistance this year alone. In Tigray, humanitarian access remains hugely constrained. Four months of violence has resulted in forced displacement, human rights violations, sexual violence allegations and the collapse of essential basic services. The risks of extreme food insecurity are significant. An estimated 4.5 million people, 80 per cent of the region's population, will need emergency aid over the coming months. Urgent action is needed to avert a major catastrophe. And these are just a few of the many tragic situations currently faced around the world.

Resolution 2417 (2018) needs to be implemented more effectively. Famine is not, as we heard today, inevitable. In line with resolution 2417 (2018), the United Kingdom stresses three immediate actions that we can take to prevent famine and the suffering caused by food insecurity.

First, we need to improve reporting and evidence of food insecurity and famine risk, including on who is blocking humanitarian access and, importantly, how they are blocking it. Reporting needs to be swift and timely so that the Security Council can take action before it is far too late.

Secondly, the Security Council must act on the reporting it receives. Words are simply not enough. Despite the provisions in resolution 2417 (2018), the Council has failed to encourage any independent State investigation into the use of starvation of civilians as an act of warfare.

And finally, and importantly, we also join the voices of those who say that the Council must hold to account those responsible for driving conflict-induced food insecurity — and that includes by the use of sanctions against those who restrict humanitarian access.

In conclusion, conflict is escalating famine and millions upon millions are suffering. If we are truly to prevent the starvation of more innocent women, men and, of course, tragically, children, it is vital that the United Nations reporting on this situation leads to Council action. We therefore welcome the announcement today of the High-level Task Force on Preventing Famine to more strongly coordinate the aid effort on famine protection. And we therefore look forward to working together with all of Member States — our colleagues, our friends, our fellow Council members and others across the United Nations family of nations — to bring about the actions that can properly respond to the harrowing evidence we heard today from our expert briefers.

The question often asked is, “why?” Put simply, the answer is: because it matters. Lives literally depend on it.

Annex 11**Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

[Original: English and Chinese]

At the outset, I thank the delegation of the United States of America for its initiative to convene this high-level meeting on food security. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres, Executive Director Beasley and Ms. Bucher for their briefings.

The briefers showed us a disturbing picture of reality. Food insecurity, rather than improving, has become a more serious problem. We still have a long way to go to accomplish the goal of zero hunger set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As the Secretary-General pointed out, food crisis in particular is acute in armed conflict-affected countries and regions in the Middle East and Africa, warranting high attention. We appreciate relevant countries' efforts in responding to the crisis. At the same time, with regard to the famine threat facing some Middle East countries and African countries, the international community must take emergency actions, scale up humanitarian efforts, ensure adequate resources and make sure that humanitarian assistance can enter the affected countries unhindered. Tailored actions need to be taken to alleviate the difficulties facing women and children.

China supports United Nations agencies, in accordance with United Nations guiding principles for humanitarian assistance, in engaging and consulting with the affected countries, strengthening early warning, coordinating among international agencies for the use of humanitarian resources, and making greater effort to address the threat of famine in the affected countries. China has provided, and will continue to provide, emergency food aid, among other related assistance, to the relevant countries through various channels to help them and contribute to alleviating the suffering of the affected people.

Food insecurity is nothing new. Armed conflicts, terrorist activities, natural disasters, extreme weather, global trade and supply chains and commodity prices: all these factors could be major triggers of food crisis. Meanwhile, fundamentally speaking, food insecurity is a result of global development deficits and a reflection of inadequate and uneven development. Some countries and regions, facing a constant and recurrent risk of famine, are trapped in a vicious cycle of non-development and armed conflict. Therefore, while focusing our attention on some pressing issues, we need to approach food security from a broader perspective. We must address both its symptoms and root causes and take integrated measures within the framework of international peace and development.

First, we must push for political solutions to hot-spot issues to create a conducive security environment for alleviating food crisis in relevant countries and regions. Food security needs to be ensured throughout the cycle of production, storage, transportation, marketing and distribution. Disruption in any of these stages, by armed conflict violence and terrorism, can lead to a food-security crisis. As long as conflicts and wars remain unresolved, people in conflict zones will continue to face food shortages. The international community should intensify efforts to facilitate the political settlement of hot-spot issues and create an environment of peace and security. It is necessary to urge all parties to conflict to respond to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and implement resolution 2532 (2020). All the parties concerned should adhere to the principles of international law, such as respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries, non-interference in internal affairs and non-use of force, and commit themselves to the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Secondly, sustainable development should be held as the master key to help affected countries stand on their own in solving their food-security problems. Emergency humanitarian aid can provide immediate relief but is not a fundamental solution. In the final analysis, to achieve food security, it is crucial to address the affected countries' development problems related to agriculture, rural areas and farmers, in accordance with local conditions, eliminate poverty and revitalize rural areas. Humanitarian aid is very important, but not a substitute for development assistance. Developed countries should honour their commitments on development assistance in a timely manner, help developing countries build up their rural infrastructure, promote green and high-tech agriculture and build their capacity to meet the challenges posed by climate change and continuously enhance the resilience and tenacity of their food systems. Farmers are the main actors in food production. All countries should heed their concerns, address their difficulties and help them become a backbone of economic development and social stability.

Over the years, China has consistently promoted South-South cooperation, bilaterally and multilaterally. By the end of 2019, with assistance from China, 24 agriculture demonstration centres had been established in Africa to pass onto African farmers and agricultural technicians agro-management expertise to improve their comprehensive agricultural production capacity, benefiting half a million local people. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)-China South-South cooperation programme has achieved substantive results in several countries, directly benefiting over 70,000 farmers in 10 years. China will continue to share its experience and practice, and to work with other parties to help developing countries eradicate poverty and solve food-security problems.

Thirdly, international macroeconomic policy coordination should be strengthened and strong synergies formed to ensure food security. The international community must strengthen coordination at the policy and operational levels to focus on and address the deep-rooted problems that have triggered food-security crises. First, speculation on international capital on agricultural commodities, especially food, has triggered panic in the global market, driving up food prices across the board. Secondly, the agricultural-subsidy policy of developed countries has seriously distorted the international market, which has in turn impacted on the markets of developing countries and dampened the enthusiasm of farmers in developing countries to produce food. Thirdly, unilateral coercive measures and economic blockade have curbed agricultural development and trade cooperation. Only by solving these problems can the global food industry and supply chain be kept open and stable, and food shortages, price distortion and abnormal fluctuation caused by human factors be prevented.

The United Nations needs to play a better role in coordinating and promoting multilateral cooperation. The Group of 20 should accord higher priority to the promotion of agricultural development. The FAO, the World Food Programme and other United Nations agencies should continue to play a major role in strengthening coordination, with Resident Coordinators, among others, effectively allocating resources and helping the countries concerned strengthen capacity-building in the food industry.

Eradicating poverty and hunger bears on the basic rights of the people. We have made significant progress, but we still have a long way to go. Under the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), global food security is facing new challenges. According to a United Nations report, COVID-19 may cause an increase of 83 million to 132 million in the number of under-fed people in the world. In November 2020, President Xi Jinping made it clear, when attending the fifteenth Group of 20 Summit, that China supports the United Nations in holding the World Food Summit and proposes to convene an international conference on food loss and waste in due

course. China has achieved the goal of lifting all its rural poor out of poverty under current standards. China looks forward to joining hands with the international community in solidarity and cooperation, forging a strong synergy of global food security and making new contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the achievement of common development.

Annex 12**Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Director of Oxfam International and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme for their briefings.

The figures that have just been shared speak for themselves: the risk of famine and acute food crises is worsening day after day.

Conflicts, climate change, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the resulting economic recession are contributing to the daily rise in the number of people facing a severe food crisis. I am thinking here in particular of Yemen, South Sudan and Nigeria, as well as of the Sahel region, especially Burkina Faso, where the situation remains particularly worrying. I am also thinking of the Tigray region, in Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Council has a collective responsibility and a moral obligation to prevent such a tragedy.

Only collective, coordinated and integrated action will make it possible to avert humanitarian disasters. States, United Nations agencies, regional and subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations, as well as the private sector and international financial institutions, must be mobilized to reduce the risk of famine and, more broadly, of food crises.

We must strengthen prevention and early-warning mechanisms in order to better anticipate, prevent and mitigate the effects of such crises. It is vital to strengthen national and local production systems and to promote social safety nets that will help the most vulnerable people to meet their food needs. To do so, it is essential to strengthen cooperation between humanitarian and development actors.

France will continue to work towards that end through its bilateral and multilateral support. Our funding of food aid has increased by 51 per cent in two years, to total more than €50 million in 2020. That figure will continue to grow this year to more than €72 million, an increase of 43 per cent compared with last year. The French Development Agency earmarked €1 billion in 2020 in the areas of agriculture, rural development and biodiversity.

We can never say it often enough: because conflicts are the main drivers of the risk of famine and food crises, it is vital to accelerate the implementation of resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021), on COVID-19, through a ceasefire and a humanitarian pause.

Preventing famine and food crises requires that all parties to the conflicts abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law. It is unacceptable that it is being flouted every day. The protection of civilians and civilian infrastructures is critical. The use of starvation against civilians as a method of warfare is a war crime and should not go unpunished.

France condemns the rise in attacks against humanitarian and medical personnel and the many obstacles that prevent access to people in need. I am thinking in particular of Yemen and the Tigray region, where we are calling for concrete progress on humanitarian access.

While conflict remains the main driver of food crises, we must step up our efforts to find sustainable political solutions to conflicts. You can count on France's continued and unwavering support.

Annex 13

Statement by the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, T. S. Tirumurti

Let me begin by congratulating the United States delegation for having organized this important open debate on conflict-induced food insecurity. I thank Secretary-General António Guterres and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), David Beasley, for their briefings. I thank the Executive Director of Oxfam International, Ms. Gabriela Bucher, for bringing the civil-society perspective.

I wish to start by paying tribute to all humanitarian, health and aid workers for their assistance to people in need, especially in these challenging times of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Mahatma Gandhi once said,

“There are people in the world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread”.

Food security is the basic minimum required, especially when we are facing such a devastating world crisis as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The World Food Programme estimates that the number of people suffering from food insecurity is projected to more than double by the end of 2020, to 270 million people, with the COVID-19 pandemic making it worse. The 2020 Global Report on Food Crises, brought out by the World Food Programme and 15 other humanitarian and development agencies, mentions that more than 77 million people are suffering from acute food insecurity in conflict-affected countries.

While resolution 2417 (2018) recognizes the link between armed conflict and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine, it is important to note that food insecurity is by itself not a sufficient condition for political violence and conflict. The link between the two is context- and region-specific and varies according to a country's level of development and the strength of its political institutions and social safety nets.

Fragile States generally have weak capacities to design, implement and monitor policies and programmes related to food, thereby increasing their vulnerability while facing a conflict situation. The solution to a lack of food security in conflict-affected States therefore lies elsewhere, as such conflict-induced food-security issues should be taken up by the Council only in the context of specific countries where it may pose a threat to international peace and security.

We are of the view that armed conflict and terrorism, combined with extreme weather, crop pests, food-price volatility, exclusion and economic shocks can devastate any fragile State, leading to food insecurity, and increase the threat of famine. Armed groups have time and again resorted to scorched-earth tactics and deliberately targeted civilian infrastructures such as land, farm animals and water wells, which erode economic growth and development. The inability to fight locusts, for example, can affect an entire region and even beyond, and directly affect food security.

COVID-19 has served only to make food insecurity more complex by, inter alia, forcing countries to impose restrictions on the movement of people, thereby depriving farms of workers to bring in the harvest, resulting in a loss of farm-based employment, limiting access to food in rural areas and eroding the ability of the State to cope with the socioeconomic pressure of the pandemic. For the displaced, particularly women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, the lack of

access to dietary energy, clean water and sanitation has had adverse nutrition and health implications.

At the recent inter-agency dialogue on the impact of conflict-climate change-COVID-19 nexus on Africa's food systems, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the African Union, the experts agreed that building resilience to conflict-induced food insecurity calls for reshaping food systems to be more inclusive of poor and marginalized populations. We are of the view that inclusive food systems that empower marginalized people by giving them a voice in local food policies will usher in a food-secured future. This would enable young people and women to find remunerative jobs and small farm holders to have access to agricultural markets, as well as make possible the adoption of climate-smart policies that promote seed diversity, innovation and the spirit of self-reliance.

Civilians in conflict-affected areas need safe, unhindered and rapid access to basic services, and humanitarian workers need safe ways to ensure that their teams and emergency supplies can reach communities in need. For example, in north-east Nigeria, thousands of people are trapped without life-saving humanitarian assistance. In Yemen, restrictions on land, sea and air trade routes have led to severe cuts in vital supplies of commodities such as food, fuel and medicines. In Mali, counter-terrorism measures limit civilian access to humanitarian aid. The 10-year-long conflict in Syria has adversely affected food security, putting millions of Syrians at risk. Unilateral measures can only make those situations worse.

The United Nations and its Member States must make ensuring access a priority by engaging with national and regional authorities. While all humanitarian action must be primarily guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, we are, unfortunately, witnessing an increasing tendency to politicize humanitarian situations. We need to resist the trend of linking humanitarian and developmental assistance with progress in the political process. Such a position by donors will only enhance food insecurity in conflict situations. There is an urgent need for the donor community to scale up assistance to conflict-affected countries and to ensure that humanitarian agencies receive the necessary funding to fully execute their plans without any politicization of the basic needs of the people.

The global community has a moral obligation to act in situations where there are credible reasons to believe that millions of people are in desperate need of assistance. Food assistance alone surely cannot be a long-term sustainable solution to food insecurity. Promoting peace and stability and development is paramount and must include livelihood support, social protection programmes and community-based approaches including investment in agriculture, infrastructure and capacity-building in rural development, especially in conflict areas. That calls for a multi-stakeholder approach that is coherent and devoid of politics. India stands ready to extend support to all such efforts.

At the onset of the COVID pandemic, India enacted a series of measures nationally to augment its food security and to ensure that it emerged from the crisis much more resilient. Those include developing the Indian digital ecosystem for agriculture as a modular, interoperable digital platform that aims to improve the welfare and income of farmers, increase productivity and efficiency in agriculture and allied sectors, and unlock new opportunities for innovation. With a view to encouraging the use of modern technologies in agriculture, the guidelines of the national e-governance plan in agriculture were revised in June 2020 by providing support for the projects involving the use of modern information technologies. The creation of a national database of farmers, which already covers more than 50 million farmers, is also being taken up as a priority.

India remains strongly committed to the cause of global food security and has over the last several years contributed to the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in response to several humanitarian crises. Furthermore, India has always stepped forward to extend aid amounting to millions of tonnes of food grains to several vulnerable countries across the world. In 2019 alone, the WFP sourced approximately 11,000 metric tons of pulses, sorghum, wheat and rice from India to assist vulnerable populations.

More recently, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, India has provided food aid in the form of thousands of metric tonnes of wheat, rice, pulses and lentils to several countries across the world, including Myanmar, Maldives, Afghanistan, Djibouti, Eritrea, Lebanon, Malawi, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, South Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe and many others, to strengthen their food security in these challenging times. As recently as last month, India gifted 2000 metric tonnes of rice to strengthen food security in Syria. Even as I speak, a ship is en route from India to deliver 1,000 metric tonnes of food aid each to Madagascar and the Comoros.

We remain committed to providing assistance to all vulnerable countries to support them in their quest for food security. Our spearheading the resolution on declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets is in that direction. We are equally committed to providing vaccines to the world so that we can tackle COVID and food insecurity at the same time.

I would like to conclude by quoting from the Indian scriptures: “Annam Brahma” — that is, food is God. Let us resolve to collectively work together in ensuring that no one ever has to be without food.

Annex 14**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez**

[Original: Spanish]

Mexico welcomes the convening by the United States of this debate on the impact of armed conflict with respect to famine and food security, which represents an opportunity to make progress on a critical issue and which urgently requires, as has been said here, a unified, collective decision on our part. The statements we have heard from high-level officials have broadened our perspective, and the reports from the Executive Directors of Oxfam and the World Food Programme (WFP) leave no doubt that this is a very serious and urgent crisis. It is to be hoped that the Council will act accordingly.

Armed conflict is the primary cause of famine and increased food insecurity. We have already heard the numbers from the World Food Programme; I will not elaborate on them for the sake of time.

We must therefore begin by acknowledging out loud the fact that food insecurity, like famine, is exponentially increased in situations of armed conflict. Problems with respect to the production, processing and distribution of food, as well as unequal access thereto, give rise to economic grievances and social inequality and spark violence in fragile and even not-so-fragile contexts.

Resolution 2417 (2018) represented an important step in recognizing the links between conflict and food insecurity, but, as we have seen, recognizing them is not enough to resolve them.

Food security is vital to conflict prevention. A reduction in hunger and malnutrition are necessary for social cohesion, for stability and peace; all of this also constitutes a crucial aspect of the post-conflict phase. They are essential to a fair and just reconstruction.

Food insecurity, which is being aggravated today by the pandemic, also disproportionately affects women and girls. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in low-income countries women make up 48 per cent of the workforce in agriculture but have less access than men to virtually any kind of support. That is another compelling reason for the empowerment of women and girls if we really want to eradicate hunger.

On a different scale, it remains worrisome that given the natural disasters resulting from the climate crisis, which is also of concern to us, the fact that food chains are affected, even temporarily, can lead to serious situations of food insecurity in all regions of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean.

In short, we are faced with a situation that requires our immediate attention. Famine and food insecurity are central issues on the international peace and security agenda.

Mexico emphasizes that in accordance with the Rome Statute, deprivation of access to food constitutes a crime against humanity, which is why we categorically condemn its use as a method of warfare. It is simply inadmissible.

The Security Council must play a decisive role in ensuring that the parties involved in armed conflict respect international humanitarian law and ensure the unrestricted access of the civilian population to humanitarian assistance. In that regard, we condemn once again, and in the strongest terms, the attack on the WFP convoy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which the Italian Ambassador, a police officer and a WFP official were killed. Our condolences go out to his relatives.

In accordance with resolution 2417 (2018), the Council can and should continue to work to ensure that its decisions are based on the most current information on the ground. We need reliable and timely data, as others have said here today. That is why we believe that the early-warning systems of the Council, and of the United Nations as a whole, must also be strengthened. Effectively preventing hunger is the ethical imperative that binds us all. We welcome the Secretary-General's initiative on the establishment of a task force to prevent hunger and to convene an inclusive summit on food systems. We need pragmatic and proactive initiatives.

Mexico recognizes your leadership, Madam President, and echoes those who call on the Security Council to bolster its actions aimed at comprehensively addressing the multiple drivers of conflict, including, in alarming terms, food insecurity.

Annex 15**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

[Original: French]

I would like to thank you, Madam President, for using your presidency to shed light on a particularly important theme — exploring the link between hunger and armed conflict. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. David Beasley, as well as Ms. Gabriela Bucher, for their updates on the food situation in conflict areas and for their firm commitment to help break the vicious circle of conflict and its corollary, food insecurity.

During my country's presidency of the Security Council in September, following a note published by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on this issue, my country, together with other members of the Security Council, organized a meeting on the same theme — the protection of civilians in armed conflict (see S/2020/930). Six months later, it is now clear that the conclusions drawn then are still relevant today. Already in April 2020, Mr. Beasley aptly stated (see S/2020/340) that we were heading towards a hunger pandemic, in addition to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

As Security Council focal point, together with Ireland, on hunger and armed conflict, the Niger will continue to work with all interested States. In that regard, the Niger welcomes the fact that, as early as next month, the Council will receive a briefing on the joint World Food Programme/Food and Agriculture Organization biannual report on the monitoring of hunger in countries experiencing armed conflict.

Indeed, we now know that conflict zones, notably because of the resulting displacement of people, cause populations in distress to leave their means of production, which exposes them and those who take them in to hunger. My country, the Niger, located in the Sahel region, knows full well the link between conflict and food insecurity, as this region, already exposed to the scourge of terrorism, is among the first to suffer the harmful effects of climate change. Thus, the overlap between the map of conflict zones and that of food insecurity is by no means a simple coincidence.

In the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, where a large part of the population lives on agriculture and where climate change is already exacerbating tensions, an acute food crisis has been amplified by armed terrorist attacks on civilian populations. Recent forecasts by specialized agencies show that 3.5 million people in the Lake Chad basin will face acute to severe food insecurity, and an additional 3.3 million people in central Sahel already need immediate assistance.

In addition to those constraints, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated problems in areas already facing major humanitarian crises. Labour shortages are compromising crop production and processing. Disruptions due to transport blockages and quarantine measures are preventing farmers from accessing markets, and containment measures are hampering the delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced people.

Attacks on humanitarian convoys and obstructions of same are unacceptable. We call on all parties in conflict areas to allow rapid and unhindered access to populations in territories under their control and to refrain from rendering unusable, attacking, destroying or removing food aid and infrastructure essential to the survival of the civilian population. Equally intolerable is discriminatory access to aid or the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

That is why my delegation would like to join the other members of the Council in strongly condemning such practices, which constitute a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, and their perpetrators must face the full force of the law.

Aware of the link between conflict and famine, in May 2018 the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018), which we hope will continue to guide our actions in order to expeditiously break the cycle of conflict-related hunger, whose victims are vulnerable populations, including women and children. In that regard, my delegation would like to make the following recommendations.

In the context of the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018), there is urgent need to establish an independent, data-driven early-warning mechanism that could enable an early response so as to prevent the situation from worsening. In that regard, my delegation would welcome regular reports by the Secretary-General on risk areas, based on information provided by United Nations entities and Member States.

Peacebuilding efforts must go hand in hand with investment in sustainable development. Indeed, in many conflict-affected countries the majority of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods. It is therefore imperative that Governments be supported in laying the foundation for an agricultural policy that is resilient to the impacts of climate change, including droughts, extreme weather events, fires, locust infestations and floods.

Finally, breaking the vicious cycle between food insecurity and conflict will also require concrete actions to stop the proliferation of weapons, which in turn inflicts untold suffering on populations, including famine. The Sahel, my region, is one of the most telling examples.

Annex 16**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

[Original: Russian]

We thank our briefers — the Secretary-General, Mr. David Beasley and Ms. Gabriela Bucher — for sharing an analysis of the food security situation.

We believe that the choice of such a pressing issue as this topic for the flagship event of her first Security Council presidency highlights the President's support for more robust joint action to address food insecurity. Strengthening cooperation among the States Members of the United Nations on this issue is a priority for us. The international community needs to make coordinated efforts to respond to the growing socioeconomic challenges related to poverty, famine, climate change and migration. Without collective efforts and mutual confidence, we cannot ensure the effective implementation of the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals.

At the same time, we believe that, to achieve tangible results, the Security Council must not start interfering in the fine-tuned and effective work of the General Assembly on this issue, or in efforts to address food security and combat hunger undertaken by specialized United Nations agencies mandated to do so — notably the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The WFP's contribution to resolving the acute problem of food shortages in countries with a complicated military and political situation can hardly be overstated. We regret that today's list of briefers did not include a representative from FAO, since it is a leading United Nations agency operating in the area of food and agriculture and an knowledgeable organization with a unique methodological capacity that enables it to provide a comprehensive assessment of food security. The WFP and FAO work on risk assessment and stand at the helm of the United Nations humanitarian cluster in the area of food security.

As I mentioned, real, thorough and productive work to improve international coordination in this arena is under way through the specialized platforms of the WFP and FAO in Rome, and in other bodies of the economic cluster. We are not entirely sure that the Security Council's involvement in this discussion would have any added value. We therefore stand against the idea of appointing a focal point to monitor the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018), as such activity would only add turmoil to the work of the Rome agencies.

Our position does not mean that we consider these topics and hunger unimportant. We do not deny that, for some regions and countries, issues like climate change, hunger and migration can exacerbate conflict, but such phenomena should be analysed on a case-by-case basis. It would be unjustified to speak of it in globally and in generic terms, and it may even be harmful to assert their interconnectedness. Besides, not every conflict poses a threat to international peace and security — the area under the Council's purview — and not every hunger-engulfed country is afflicted by conflict.

Similarly, we do not agree that we should focus on conflict rather than other causes of hunger, such as the actions of some countries that escalate internal political crises. By a strange coincidence, the tragedy of hunger afflicts areas with broken State institutions. That is what exacerbates conflict and heightens the risk of national food insecurity. Some vivid examples are the daily situations in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Somalia — especially Yemen, where it was not hunger that provoked an

armed conflict, but the other way around. We must learn from those situations if we hope to reduce the number of tragic humanitarian catastrophes on this planet.

We are greatly concerned about attempts to anchor the issue of conflict-induced hunger on the Security Council's agenda, as they seek to promote ideas and ungrounded links between the topics. We cannot agree that there is a nexus between food security and protection, which was proposed as a central track of humanitarian worker activity. We believe that to condemn States for refusal or late submission of data is to interfere in internal affairs. Cooperation should be voluntary and unconditional. The problem of ensuring food security amid an armed conflict is directly related to compliance with international humanitarian law and improving the efficiency of the humanitarian response. As for ensuring the resilience of food systems in the face of climate change, that issue falls under sustainable development and is not directly related to the activities of the Security Council.

We therefore do not deem it necessary to task the Secretary-General with making mandatory biannual reports to the Security Council about emerging crisis situations with regard to conflict-induced hunger. The Secretary-General has had a mandate to act since resolution 2417 (2018) was adopted. Nothing prevents him from reporting to the Council on specific countries engulfed in hunger.

Coming back to the issue at hand, let me stress that new opportunities and local production capabilities, as well as stable global commodity markets, more liberal trade and mitigating the effects of natural disasters, would reanimate economies devastated by conflicts. Moreover, one of the most important, and obvious, ways of eliminating the root causes of conflict is to lift sanctions and unilateral coercive measures. As such, we can only welcome the recent decision of the new United States Administration to reconsider sanctions against Ansar Allah. But for that, the hunger situation in Yemen would have reached a point of no return.

Russia agrees that we should promptly respond to the problem of hunger. However, we should do so with the mechanisms specifically mandated to address those issues, taking into account the complex nature of sustainable development challenges facing affected States.

Annex 17

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

At the outset, I would like to thank the United States presidency for convening this timely debate. I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Ms. Bucher and Mr. Beasley for their insightful briefings.

Since the Security Council last met to discuss this topic, only six months ago (see S/2020/930), food security in several conflict situations has gravely deteriorated. Famine looms large in Yemen, South Sudan, north-east Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burkina Faso. The number of people suffering from acute food insecurity in conflict situations increased by 20 per cent over the past two years. The humanitarian situation has been further compounded by the economic impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the adverse effects of climate change and the proliferation of desert locusts.

The vicious cycle involving armed conflicts and conflict-induced hunger is widely recognized. It is high time the Council renew efforts to break this vicious cycle and deliver on its commitment to maintain and build peace. In that regard, allow me to highlight the following.

First, respect for international humanitarian law is a must in all situations of armed conflict. Starvation must never be used as a method of warfare. We call on all parties to armed conflicts to comply with their obligations to respect and protect civilians and civilian objects, including objects necessary for food production and distribution. The civilian population must not be deprived of humanitarian assistance or objects critical to their survival.

Women, children and the most vulnerable are disproportionately affected by armed conflicts. Our response must take due consideration of their special needs.

We reiterate the call on all parties to armed conflicts to adhere to the Security Council's demand for an immediate cessation of hostilities in order to more effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We express our high regard for the tireless efforts of United Nations agencies, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme as well as donors in combating hunger in conflict situations. There is a strong imperative to ensure unhindered access for impartial humanitarian workers and guarantee their safety and security.

Secondly, international cooperation is crucial in enhancing Governments' capacity to protect and meet the basic needs of their civilians and prevent famine, while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of affected States. As was emphasized by the briefers and other members of the Council, there is an urgent need to further strengthen the global humanitarian response, in funding and in kind as well as in logistical preparedness, so that humanitarian agencies can receive the necessary support to continue their life-saving work. We must advance a comprehensive and long-term strategy that aims at supporting local communities to build resilient food systems, enhance adaptation and sustenance, and guarantee the availability and accessibility of food and other essential services. Local humanitarian organizations could be supported and engaged in order to alleviate the strain on the international humanitarian system.

Thirdly, the most effective way to end hunger is to resolve and end conflicts and build peace. The Security Council should continue with an integrated approach in addressing such root causes of conflicts as poverty, injustice, militarism and

disregard for international law. A whole-of-system approach is crucial for the United Nations to deliver its promise of sustainable peace and development. The instrumental role of regional organizations cannot be overstated.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the priority Viet Nam gives to the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We call on all countries and partners to show strong, renewed solidarity and humanity, so as to ensure accessible, safe, nutritious foods for all, especially the most vulnerable populations.

Annex 18**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, Adela Raz**

I thank the President and her team at the Permanent Mission of the United States for organizing today's high-level open debate on conflict and food security. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. David Beasley, and the Executive Director of Oxfam International, Ms. Gabriela Bucher, for their insightful and comprehensive briefings.

The intersections between conflict and food insecurity are significant, interlinked and complex. Food insecurity is one of the most concerning consequences of armed conflict. Across the globe, conflict is driving catastrophic levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, which can cause serious long-term consequences for those affected. Food insecurity may also perpetuate conflict as it causes vulnerable populations to compete for access to limited resources.

As in other conflict-affected countries, the already-difficult situation in Afghanistan was further exacerbated by the spread of the coronavirus disease, which was evidenced in the 2021 Global Humanitarian Overview, which reported a sharp increase in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance. Today, 18.4 million Afghan people are in need. Additionally, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification has reported that around 76 per cent of the population, or 30.5 million people, are at stress, crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity.

Our Government has responded to the situation by working with the World Bank and other international partners to provide vulnerable households with cash, food and hygiene bundles. We also waived electric bills and made additional efforts going so far as to spend close to 3 per cent of our gross domestic product solely on responding to the new necessities arising from the pandemic. This is an alarming fact and one that truly underscores both the extreme nature of our necessities and how easy it is for unforeseen crises such as public health emergencies and natural disasters to have devastating effects on the fragile development and food security gains we have worked so hard to achieve.

But even more devastating than the current pandemic is the relentless campaign of violence carried out by the Taliban and other terrorist groups. These groups' inhumane acts continue to leave many of our people in a desperate situation. Most Afghans still depend on agriculture as the main source of their livelihoods. Many face unreliable yields, increased droughts and floods due to climate change, and isolation, as well as a lack of access to markets. Meanwhile, our Government's resources are spread thin, and access to vulnerable populations is limited, owing to terrorist group activities. Overall, these factors are contributing to a possibly disastrous situation.

We have always been committed to peace as the most sustainable avenue for restoring food security in our communities and in addressing our desperate humanitarian situation. We have consistently called for humanitarian ceasefires to allow us to reach the most affected people — a call that was amplified by the Secretary-General and members of the international community. However, the other side has consistently rejected our offers, and the situation continues to grow more concerning.

When talking about humanitarian affairs and conflict, be it in relation to food security or any other topic, we always reach the same conclusion. We cannot have a sustainable and lasting solution if hostilities on the ground do not stop. As long as

one side of the conflict continues to deny the humanity of their brothers and sisters, there will always be food insecurity. As long as terrorists and non-State armed groups continue to violate their neighbours' access to food, which is a basic right, there will always be humanitarian emergencies. To further illustrate the foregoing, let us consider how the Taliban's disregard for people's access to basic services has even led to the re-emergence of polio in areas where they have influence. The Taliban's indifference to the safety of our people and lack of respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law cannot continue.

Let me also take this opportunity to express Afghanistan's deep appreciation to the United Nations for developing the 2021 Afghanistan humanitarian response plan. I would also like to express our gratitude to regional and international partners for their material support and firm commitments to continuing to stand by the Afghan people during these difficult times. In this regard, let me underline two points that I believe may allow us to create an environment to better face our challenges on food insecurity.

First, there is a need to better coordinate approaches and measures by all stakeholders across the peace-humanitarian-development nexus to address the root causes of conflict and help put an end to the ongoing conflict through the effective implementation of all institutional tools available, including Security Council resolutions and sanctions regimes. Secondly, we must also work to enhance our cooperation and efforts aimed at fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a means of strengthening our societal safety nets, and in so doing, safeguarding the food security of our population.

Finally, we hope that the arrival of Nowruz will bring with it a renewed sense of possibility for the achievement of our long-awaited peace. We hope to witness a cessation of hostilities that will allow our people to finally live in peace and prosperity and enjoy full access to nutritious food.

Annex 19

Statement by the Office of the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations

The African Union (AU) has continued to acknowledge the linkages between conflict, food insecurity and displacement. Highlighted at the 607th session of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), which was dedicated to agriculture, food security, peace and stability in Africa, the AU PSC emphasized this link by acknowledging that agricultural production and food security, as well as peace and stability, are closely interwoven. At its 607th meeting, the AU PSC underscored the need for synergies in the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

The 965th meeting of the AU PSC, which was dedicated to the protection of children in conflict situations in Africa, laid out the AU's policy on humanitarian access, particularly in armed conflict. The AU PSC noted that the Council deplored the ongoing grave violations on the continent, including the denial of humanitarian access that is crucial in armed conflict settings to alleviating the suffering of affected populations, including children. Accordingly, the AU PSC appealed to AU member States to facilitate access and the provision of humanitarian assistance to children affected by armed conflict.

The communiqué of that meeting further stressed

“the imperative need to make concrete commitments supported by a strong political will to actively and effectively address the political root causes of armed conflicts on the [c]ontinent, which include the denial of the fundamental rights and respect for principles and obligations under the AU Constitutive Act.”

The Security Council discussions focused on resolution 2417 (2018) provides the Council with the opportunity to achieve prohibition and accountability objectives. By engaging various humanitarian and other multilateral organizations, the discussion provides an opportunity to enable them to respond to the increasing threat of food insecurity. Resolution 2417 (2018) provides for four broad entry points in relation to food security and conflict: provision of humanitarian assistance; affirmation of State obligations with respect to conflict and hunger; investigation of allegations and the preservation of evidence, and ongoing monitoring and further action.

As previously stated, through the AU PSC, the AU has a clear position on humanitarian access and the protection of civilians. While the AU is founded on the principle of sovereignty, protection clauses and directives have endowed the AU Commission, through the AU PSC protocol, the AU Constitutive Act, and the good offices of the Chairperson, with the right to intervene in a member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in respect of grave circumstances, namely, war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

The effective implementation of resolution 2417 (2018) therefore calls for concerted efforts aimed at harmonizing — through a shared analysis and common understanding of threats — messaging among such multilateral actors as the United Nations and the AU. Accordingly, the AU emphasizes the need to employ a two-track approach to ensure the protection of civilians in cases of conflict: on the one hand, to rely on collective political leverage to call for unimpeded humanitarian access, and, on the other hand, to provide both technical and humanitarian support. Emphasis should be placed on the need for coordination between the United Nations, the AU and the regional economic communities and mechanisms, guided by the principle of subsidiarity and complementarity.

With regard to the dynamics of conflict and food security, cyclical conflict settings have historically presented complex challenges for the international community in ensuring humanitarian access and the overall provision of humanitarian food aid to vulnerable communities trapped in affected areas. There are instances where armed groups or warring parties prevent the provision of humanitarian relief by blocking access to humanitarian actors, using starvation as a method of warfare.

Food insecurity must be viewed as a multidimensional threat influenced not only by conflicts but also a number of other factors such as trade and economic interests, agricultural production, health care and environmental changes. Sudden shocks, such as the coronavirus disease pandemic, for example, resulted in lockdown measures and movement restrictions that in turn disrupted agricultural and food supply chains, increasing food prices and resulting in food shortages, and adversely affecting millions of poor households. Disruptions to food and agricultural systems triggered by the shortages of workers as a result of mobility restrictions compromised the provision of inputs in upstream farming activities and downstream trading, processing and transportation activities.

Similar threats are faced in conflict settings where traditional food-supply chains are disrupted owing to ongoing violence and the subsequent displacement of communities. There are instances where such threats are further exploited by warring parties, which use starvation as a method of warfare and impede humanitarian access. Furthermore, the destruction and targeting of civilian infrastructure can directly affect the delivery of aid and the proper functioning of food systems. In the case of South Sudan, for example, the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed by both the Government and rebel movements clearly provides for a commitment by the conflicting parties to allow safe passage and delivery of relief aid to civilian areas. However, the Agreement is barely adhered to: despite the presence of United Nations peacekeeping forces, a number of relief convoys have been subjected to attacks leading to the destruction of the consignment and the killing of humanitarian aid workers.

Member State preparedness through strengthened multi-hazard early-warning capacity can help strengthen preparedness for State response to multiple risks to food insecurity, particularly in conflict settings. Through a strengthened early-warning capacity, fragile States can be better shielded from falling into famine as a result of environmental stressors. Early-warning data can better prepare member States to establish emergency food-reserve funds and encourage local governments to incorporate safeguards against the hoarding of staple foods in their agricultural planning.

In that regard, farmers should be encouraged to cultivate climate-resilient crops. There remains a need for the Security Council to address and ensure the protection of farming communities and local markets from acts of terrorism in areas such as the Sahel, and incursions by armed groups in the Horn of Africa and parts of the Central Africa region. Disruptions in farming activity and the displacement of rural populations dependent on farming for their livelihoods have been linked with food insecurity and famines.

Trends of food insecurity have been observed in the Horn of Africa and East Africa regions, home to the largest number of internally displaced persons and refugees. Massive displacements are currently occurring in the Sahel region, northern Ethiopia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and southern Cameroon, owing to internal conflicts and acts of terrorism against civilians. In addition to the hundreds of thousands that have been internally displaced in Ethiopia's Tigray region as a result of the ongoing conflict, and the thousands that have fled across the border to the Sudan, a cross-border

dispute between the Sudan and Ethiopia is also a cause for concern, risking the potential displacement of farming communities living in the disputed areas. Stringent measures need to be implemented to prevent populations from further displacement and to buffer farming communities from armed groups. Such global security organizations as the Security Council need to focus on these countries, which are vulnerable to disruptions in food production and transportation activities.

In the West Africa region, threats posed by the increasing presence of extremist groups, prolonged dry seasons and rainfall variability have generated new uncertainties for pastoralists, who have historically relied on their traditional migratory patterns to sustain their livelihoods. Competition over grazing land, reduced access to water as well as the erosion of customary dispute-resolution mechanisms have contributed to the resurgence and increased tensions between farming and pastoral communities in central Mali and northern Nigeria, as well as in other States Members of the United Nations in the region, further escalating violence in the insurgency-affected areas.

Such extreme weather events as tropical cyclones and desert-locust invasions have exacerbated existing structural vulnerabilities faced in the Southern Africa region, triggering food insecurity and the displacement of communities. The insurgency in northern Mozambique coupled with the disastrous impacts of recent and previous cyclones is risking food insecurity for up to 1 million civilians, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Central African region also faces additional pressure on its natural resource management due to the disruption of traditional agricultural calendars.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that these challenges can be addressed in an efficient and sustainable manner only through concerted multilateral action. The AU stands ready to partner with bilateral and multilateral actors to respond to conflict situations on the continent, which often exacerbate food insecurity. Addressing climate change and environmental degradation should be part of our collective strategy in tackling conflict and climate-induced food insecurity. We commend the Permanent Mission of the United States of America to the United Nations as President of the Security Council for the month of March for convening this important and timely open debate on this very topical subject, and reaffirm the African Union's commitment to partnering with the Security Council to develop comprehensive strategies on this matter.

Annex 20**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Andorra to the United Nations, Elisenda Vives Balmaña**

At the outset, let me congratulate the United States of America, as President of the Security Council for the month of March, on organizing this high-level open debate on conflict and food security. I want to thank the briefers for their striking statements, so necessary to bring the world together to address this sober challenge.

Around the world, data and forecasts on food insecurity are largely concerning. Estimates indicate that the vulnerable population has nearly doubled this year, increasing to 265 million people, particularly due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Women, children and people with disabilities are disproportionately affected. Moreover, funding needs for food security in humanitarian appeals increased to \$9 billion in 2020, as compared to \$5 billion in 2015. The tragedy of the grave situation that millions of people are facing around the world requires the full attention of the international community for action.

The appeal for a global ceasefire by the Secretary-General was an urgent call in the context of the pandemic. Andorra was among the countries supporting it. My country wants to reiterate that call. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance and victim to food insecurity is increasing dramatically. They need urgent action. For those who suffer more, we should base our actions on the principle of reaching the furthest behind first.

We want to acknowledge the commitment of the Security Council to addressing food insecurity-induced conflict. Almost two years ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018). The resolution reaffirms the need to respect humanitarian principles and the obligation of parties to conflict to respect international humanitarian law and recognizes that starvation as a method of warfare can constitute a war crime, alongside the importance of ensuring access to humanitarian aid.

The reports in relation to the resolution have shown worsening conditions in areas where food insecurity and conflict are related. COVID-19 has exacerbated them, but the preconditions and the conflict context are at the origin of the food crisis. We call on the Security Council to continue and persevere in its cooperation efforts with all United Nations system agencies and entities to address it, developing early warning and emergency action mechanisms.

Furthermore, the recent attack on World Food Programme staff in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has again shaken our reality and reaffirms our commitment to ensuring the safety of the humanitarian personnel of United Nations missions on the ground. I take this opportunity to express my sincere condolences to the Government and people of Italy and of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the families of the victims of that atrocious attack.

What actions could the Security Council consider in addressing the growing food insecurity in conflicts? Andorra believes it essential to focus on the fight against the impunity of those who use famine as a weapon of war and obstruct the work of humanitarian personnel. Andorra was therefore among the first States to accept the amendment to article 8.2 of the Rome Statute, aimed at criminalizing the intentional use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare by depriving them of objects indispensable to their survival, including wilfully impeding relief supplies. It is an important step towards ensuring international justice for perpetrators of that war crime, and we call on other States to consider accepting that amendment to the Rome Statute.

The Food Systems Summit convened by the Secretary-General, to be held in September, aims to produce concrete measures towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to raise awareness of the need to reform the current food systems. It has our full support.

Andorra believes that it is important to promote a change in the dynamics of the current production and consumption trends. In particular, we would like to stress the importance of addressing the phenomenon of food loss and waste within the global discussion of food systems and improvement of the supply chain, as it affects their level of accessibility and stability in all regions.

A global transformation towards more equitable and sustainable food systems will contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 and creating enduring food security, including in the context of armed conflict, which can lay the foundation set the ground for durable peace. Andorra will therefore continue to be committed to working to end food insecurity and supports the mainstreamed inclusion of the topic on the agenda of the Security Council.

Annex 21**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov**

I would like to start by thanking the United States presidency of the Security Council for dedicating this high-level open debate to such a topical issue.

The gloomy statistics of recent years show an increase in the number of people suffering from acute hunger driven by, among other things, conflict and climate change. With the continuing spread of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the situation has been further aggravated. Notwithstanding the importance of innovations in the food and agriculture system, a sustainable solution to this problem requires the elimination of the root causes.

Unfortunately, conflict-driven threats and risks are not alien to Azerbaijan. For almost 30 years, Azerbaijan suffered from the occupation of one-fifth of its territories by neighbouring Armenia, which inflicted a devastating impact on the economy and the environment. The illegal activities carried out by Armenia in those territories included the illegal exploitation of natural, agricultural and water resources. The consequences of such illegal activities can be clearly evidenced in the destroyed forests, burned and degraded soil and polluted water resources. Along with the occupied territories, those illegal activities affected adjacent regions of Azerbaijan. The exploitation of the Sarsang water reservoir by Armenia as a tool of environmental terror led to the deliberate deprivation of Azerbaijani civilians of much-needed water resources and the serious environmental degradation of lands, including soil erosion, affecting biodiversity and productivity in residential areas along the former occupation line. As a result of the counter-offensive operation launched by Azerbaijan in response to Armenia's recent act of aggression starting from 27 September 2020, occupying forces of the Republic of Armenia were forced to withdraw. In total, 10,000 square kilometres of Azerbaijani lands were de-occupied, allowing the return of more than 700,000 internally displaced persons to their homes.

Following the signing of the trilateral statement by the leaders of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Armenia on 10 November 2020, which announced an end to all military activities, Azerbaijan has embarked on a large-scale plan for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and reintegration of all its conflict-affected territories, including those inhabited by its citizens of Armenian origin, where the Russian peacekeeping contingent is temporarily deployed.

The Government has already initiated practical steps to remove the harsh consequences of the military occupation of territories with a view to enabling the safe and dignified return of all displaced populations to their places of origin and restoring the peaceful co-existence of all its citizens affected by the conflict within the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Unfortunately, that process is challenged by the massive contamination of the recently liberated Azerbaijani territories with mines and other explosive devices deployed by Armenia. In blatant violation of international humanitarian law, with a view to inflicting as much damage as possible, as well as creating additional obstacles for the return of civilians, Armenia also deliberately planted mines on a massive scale during its forced withdrawal from the Azerbaijani territories and has been refusing to release information regarding the minefields. That has already resulted in major casualties among the Azerbaijani military and civilians, negatively affects the realization of the inalienable right of the hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani internally displaced persons to return to their homes in safety and

dignity, and seriously impedes the realization of the wide-ranging rehabilitation and reconstruction plans launched by the Government of Azerbaijan.

In cooperation with international partners, Azerbaijan will first of all conduct damage assessment and proper planning of rehabilitation and reconstruction works in the conflict-affected territories. Rehabilitation activities will, among other things, include setting up “smart” residential areas, restoration of the agricultural sector and food security, restoration of the damaged water infrastructure and polluted and depleted water resources, ensuring proper technical maintenance of reservoirs, the revival of tourism and the creation of employment opportunities for the returning population.

In eliminating the severe consequences of the conflict for the economic and social infrastructure, Azerbaijan counts on the support of the international community, including the United Nations and its relevant agencies. We expect the activities of international organizations in all conflict-affected territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including those where the Russian peacekeeping contingent is temporarily deployed, to be carried out in full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders and to be agreed and coordinated through with the Government of Azerbaijan.

Annex 22**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations**

[Original: French]

Belgium aligns itself with the statement submitted on behalf of the European Union (annex 33).

First of all, we would like to express our sincere condolences following the attack on a World Food Programme (WFP) convoy last month in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which the Italian Ambassador, his colleague and a WFP employee were brutally killed. The circumstances of that tragedy must be fully investigated so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice as soon as possible.

Belgium would like to commend the work and constant dedication on the ground by Oxfam International, the World Food Programme and the entire United Nations system and their partners.

This briefing reminds us once again of the tragedies taking place in many countries — the suffering too often ignored, the risks of famine, the increased level of needs and the lack of funding for humanitarian actors. Continuing our collective solidarity efforts and supporting political reforms therefore remain essential.

Once again, we are witnessing conflicts that intensify economic decline and exacerbate hunger, as conflicts are the cause of 6 of the 10 worst food crises in the world and of almost 60 per cent of humanitarian needs. In addition, climate shocks, such as floods and droughts, force displacement and push millions of people into extreme poverty. Those people are not only experiencing all these shocks at once — conflict, violence, climate events, displacement, the economic crisis and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) — but they now also face the threat of extreme food insecurity and sometimes even starvation.

In the week of 8 March, International Women's Day, it is particularly important to highlight the gender disparities that currently also exist in the context of global hunger. Women are disproportionately affected by food insecurity due to socioeconomic inequalities, deep-rooted gender norms, war, conflict and a lack of equal rights and representation. A world without hunger can be achieved only if everyone has equal opportunities, equal access to resources and equal capacity to shape their future.

At the last Security Council briefing on this topic (see S/2020/929), particular emphasis was placed on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Yemen and north-eastern Nigeria. The situation in those countries is not improving. On the contrary, the lack of humanitarian access, the devastating socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, worsening political situations and additional climatic stresses could lead to a further deterioration of food insecurity. In Yemen, the highest levels of acute malnutrition are among children under five, while the humanitarian response remains severely underfunded. Without immediate support, many Yemenis are at risk of death from widespread hunger.

As WFP points out, Syria also urgently needs our support, as the number of people who cannot survive without food aid has doubled in the past year. A record 12.4 million Syrians, nearly 60 per cent of the population, are now food insecure. Renewing the cross-border mechanism for Syria is key to trying to alleviate such needs.

We hear the call for more preventive action and the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018). As outlined in that landmark resolution, the Security Council should take action to break the vicious cycle of conflict and food insecurity, condemn the use of starvation as a method of warfare and help ensure that food aid reaches those in need.

That requires strengthened means as well as full coherence. Belgium agrees that the Security Council and Member States should take more preventive measures to avoid conflicts from causing or further aggravating hunger.

First, all parties to armed conflicts should respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the prohibition of the threat of starvation of the population as a method of warfare, and allow and facilitate the unimpeded passage of humanitarian aid. In that regard, we recall that in 2019, the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court voted unanimously to extend the war crime of starvation to non-international armed conflicts.

Secondly, States must respect and uphold international humanitarian law, encouraging Member States to ensure accountability through national investigations. If national jurisdictions fail to act, the Security Council has the tools to trigger a range of international investigation and accountability mechanisms.

Thirdly, humanitarian access must be guaranteed to ensure security, the protection of populations affected by crises and access to assistance. In that regard, humanitarian actors must be able to work in accordance with humanitarian principles, while maintaining the necessary flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. The Security Council should continue to sanction individuals or entities that impede humanitarian access.

Fourthly, parties to armed conflict should endorse the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire to ensure an adequate response to the pandemic, as supported by resolution 2532 (2020). We also call on them to support the Security Council's recent call for equitable access to vaccines and a humanitarian pause to facilitate such access, as outlined in resolution 2565 (2021).

In conclusion, we must redouble our efforts to address the root causes of and put an end to conflicts, prevent the outbreak of new conflicts and uphold international humanitarian law. More attention and financial support are fundamental to ensuring that humanitarian operations can meet the needs. In addition, particularly in these contexts of hunger and conflict, we must step up our efforts to strengthen the work on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in fragile contexts.

In that spirit, Belgium is grateful for the cooperation with, among others, Oxfam on projects aimed at building youth resilience. Those experiences demonstrate the need for more adaptable, localized, flexible and innovative programmes in fragile contexts.

We thank the Secretary-General for having risen to the task entrusted to him by resolution 2417 (2018), in particular by alerting the Security Council when the risk of famine and widespread food insecurity in the context of armed conflict occurs. We also support the organization of the Food Systems Summit, which will be held this year and which will be an important step towards the achievement of each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. You have sounded the alarm; we cannot ignore it.

Annex 23

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations

Brazil thanks the United States for organizing this open debate about a crucial issue for the effective protection of civilians. The United Nations *Global Humanitarian Overview 2021* forecasts unprecedented levels of food insecurity this year. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) worsened an already dire situation — the World Food Programme has estimated an increase of more than 80 per cent of people facing acute food insecurity since the onset of the pandemic.

There is no doubt that hunger and armed conflict overlap. The majority of people at risk of food insecurity are in conflict-affected situations. Nevertheless, it would be oversimplistic to draw a unilateral causal link between food crises and armed conflict. The outbreak of conflict derives from a multitude of structural drivers, which may vary in each individual situation. Similarly, food insecurity results from several factors, including protectionism policies. What is clear is that hunger and conflict reinforce each other in a vicious cycle, which highlights the moral imperative to tackle both problems with the urgency and seriousness that they deserve.

Most issues on the Security Council's agenda involve societies that have to varying degrees suffered conflict in the context of pre-existing situations of poverty, inequality and hunger, which have then been worsened by war and instability. Only strategies based on the interdependence among peace, security and development in all its dimensions will be able to break this vicious cycle. In this regard, there are three issues that deserve our immediate attention.

First, ceasing hostilities is a major step to effectively protect civilians from hunger and minimize their suffering. Brazil congratulates the Security Council's adoption of resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021) and reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond the efforts to halt hostilities, it is also imperative to prevent conflict and to adhere to the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes.

Secondly, there is a need to urgently tackle other factors besides conflict that lead to food insecurity. It is key that we keep global supply chains functioning, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have witnessed, since the onset of the pandemic, trade-restrictive measures applied to agricultural products. For our part, since last year Brazil has been taking all necessary measures to keep our trade corridors open, especially for food products. But this is not enough.

We have also been advocating that this is no time for protectionism. Nowadays, trade barriers abound in international agricultural trade on both export and import sides. This is aggravated by massive agricultural subsidies, which jeopardize the environment and block the development of the agricultural sector in developing countries. Brazil welcomes the Security Council's interest in addressing the challenges of food insecurity in conflict-affected countries and invites its members to lead by example, by working towards the elimination of unjustified import trade barriers to agricultural products, as well as by capping and reducing all forms of trade-distorting subsidies. Countries should also refrain from imposing export restrictions or extraordinary taxes on food and agricultural products purchased for non-commercial purposes by the World Food Programme and other humanitarian agencies.

Thirdly, while ceasing hostilities and correcting agricultural trade distortions may tackle structural factors of conflict and hunger, some situations demand additional emergency action. In this regard, the Security Council, while recognizing

the primary responsibility of States to protect the populations throughout their territories, has a key role to play in ensuring safe and unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance for countries in conflict situations, particularly where there is an increased risk of famine. It may also contribute to guaranteeing that the parties to armed conflicts comply with international humanitarian law, including the prohibition of deliberate starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

A few days ago, leaders across the world gathered at a pledging event for Yemen, a country where the vicious cycle of conflict and hunger has yielded its most devastating consequences. It is no surprise that the world's worst food crisis has resulted from a dreadful combination of armed conflict, economic shocks, rising food prices and obstruction to humanitarian access. Preventing massive famine and alleviating civilian suffering is essential to achieving a lasting solution to the conflict. During the high-level pledging event, Brazil pledged a \$50,000 contribution, through the World Food Programme, to help fight COVID-19 in Yemen. We hope that this small contribution, made in times of severe constraints, may help generate wider support for the cause of alleviating the distress of the Yemeni people.

Complex problems demand multifaceted responses. Strategies aimed purely at security will not, by themselves, be able to adequately deal with the overwhelming majority of the situations on the Security Council's agenda, including its food security dimension. Hence, increased cooperation with the Economic and Social Council is clearly needed, as is greater interaction between this body and the Peacebuilding Commission. As a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2022-2023 term, Brazil will strive to strengthen this cooperation, thereby advancing an integrated approach to peace, security and development.

Annex 24**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Cambodia to the United Nations, Sovann Ke**

I wish to begin by congratulating Her Excellency Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield on her appointment as Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations. I would also like to express my thanks to the Mission of the United States, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of March, for organizing this high-level open debate on conflict and food security.

Conflict directly influences food security. As such, conflict-stricken areas often do not have the ability to produce and supply food for the people. According to the World Food Programme, the ongoing conflicts in different parts of the world combined with the impacts of climate change and the coronavirus disease pandemic threatened to push around 270 million people to the brink of starvation in more than 50 countries by 2020.

Owing to the nature of these issues, the effective implementation of relevant mandates of the Security Council and collaboration among Member States are necessary to put an end to the ongoing conflicts in different regions across the world.

The concerned parties to conflict must allow the United Nations focal point and humanitarian assistance full access to the conflict zones to ensure that all civilians can receive unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance. More importantly, all parties to the conflicts must abide by the principles of human rights and international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Convention and resolution 2417 (2018), which explicitly addresses the link between conflict and hunger.

In Cambodia's history, our people went through food shortages and food insecurity over three decades during the civil war, which immensely impacted the health of our population, especially women and children. In this regard, Cambodia calls for an end to all ongoing conflicts through dialogue and peaceful resolutions with all involved parties to the conflicts.

Through our win-win policy initiated in 1998 by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Cambodia has become a peaceful nation. Cambodia has enjoyed an average economic growth of 7 per cent per annum over the past two decades. The country has produced a surplus of more than 1 million tons of rice annually for export. From this, we can further see that peace and stability are prerequisites for food security as farmers can produce a stable food supply for the population.

Cambodia supports the Security Council's efforts, among other measures, to address conflict-driven food insecurity through a specific programme of action designed to assist countries in conflict. In this connection, Member States, relevant United Nations agencies and countries in conflict must work closely to mobilize resources to implement this programme of action.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express that Cambodia looks forward to the Food Systems Summit to be convened by the Secretary-General towards the end of 2021. We believe that its outcomes will also address the issues of conflict and food security.

Annex 25**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations**

[Original: English and French]

As the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its secondary impacts have spiked humanitarian and protection needs globally, the effects are particularly acute in situations of armed conflict. Climate change, hunger and food insecurity are further heightening the vulnerability of conflict-affected populations and, along with conflict, fuelling historic levels of forced displacement.

Three years on, resolution 2417 (2018) remains as relevant as ever. With hunger and starvation on the rise and some parties to conflict disregarding their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, the international community must shift from awareness to action and accelerate the implementation of this resolution.

Canada condemns the use of starvation as a method of warfare and is gravely concerned about growing food insecurity and the threat of famine for millions of people in situations of armed conflict today.

For example, in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, conflict and access impediments have exacerbated pre-existing acute malnutrition and food insecurity. Canada welcomes recent efforts by the Government of Ethiopia to improve access in the region. With life-saving assistance still out of reach for millions of people, humanitarian and medical personnel must have rapid and unimpeded access to all civilians without further delay. Civilians, including refugees and internally displaced persons, continue to be at grave risk and parties to the conflict must ensure their protection.

Food insecurity and malnutrition have reached untenable levels in Yemen, with urgent action needed to avert widespread famine and stem the rise in hunger. The protection of humanitarian and medical personnel must be upheld so they can provide relief to civilians without threats to their safety and security.

We will continue to call on parties to conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and ensure the protection of civilians and civilian objects. Human rights and humanitarian principles must be upheld.

Canada is also deeply concerned by the broader impacts of COVID-19 on food security, including disruptions to supply chains and the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance. Global levels of acute and severe food insecurity are alarming, and an increasing number of people require emergency food and nutrition assistance. For example, in Haiti, about 40 per cent of the population is food insecure and requires humanitarian assistance. The situation could further deteriorate as the risk of fiscal and debt crises are high for many developing countries, including least developed, low-income and conflict-affected countries. These same countries are already notably vulnerable to food insecurity.

The magnitude of needs cannot be ignored. In 2020, Canada increased funding to the World Food Programme (WFP) by 27 per cent for a total of CA\$286 million to help support WFP's humanitarian food assistance and logistics efforts in response to COVID-19. In 2021, Canada will continue to support WFP, including in conflict-affected areas, as it integrates its COVID-19 response into existing programming at the country-level.

Looking forward, civilians must be at the centre of our collective response and their rights and dignity upheld. A comprehensive and integrated approach to the protection of civilians is needed, which appropriately accounts for the gendered and intersectional needs and priorities of those facing violence and increased vulnerabilities.

Anticipatory action could prove to have an important role to play in protecting civilians from the adverse effects of food insecurity and climate change. Canada is supportive of efforts to pilot anticipatory responses to humanitarian crises, for instance through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). We look forward to the results of the CERF impact evaluations on their anticipatory action pilots.

Scaled-up, joint humanitarian diplomacy is needed to rapidly respond to looming threats of starvation and famine, preserve humanitarian space and foster greater respect for international law. This requires strengthened dialogue and collaboration at the country-level among States, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, humanitarian partners and civil society at all levels, as well as with affected populations, including women and girls, in accordance with humanitarian principles.

Ultimately, political solutions are needed to end conflict, restore peace and ensure respect for human rights.

Canada will continue to play a leading role in responding to hunger and food insecurity, and in prioritizing the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Annex 26**Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations**

[Original: English and Spanish]

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in today's open debate and to allow us to refer to food security in conflict settings in a multidimensional perspective based on resolution 2417 (2018).

We are concerned about the linkages between food security and conflict functioning as a trigger or multiplier. In this regard, we would like to refer to the priority approach we give to protecting the most vulnerable populations and implementing comprehensive responses in this regard, involving the international community and regional organizations.

In our view, there are three key elements warranting consideration to this end: a resilient supply chain, humanitarian access and respect for international humanitarian law. In this context, international cooperation and assistance are crucial, and Chile is therefore committed to participating in the Secretary-General's Food Systems Summit process. We hope that it will explore initiatives to strengthen the protection of food security in different contexts and all regions of the world.

It has been almost a year since the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic struck us all, highlighting how uncertain our lives can be and the crucial meaning of resilient societies and robust national and global institutions. However, the figures we heard today are a sobering encounter with reality; they make it clear just how wide the gaps are in places affected by violence and hunger as well as the pandemic.

Therefore, let us focus further on the current situation in our own region, with the understanding that this open debate is the appropriate context for echoing the concern expressed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General La Lime during the recent presentation of the report on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (S/2021/133), on which the Council was briefed on 22 February (see S/2021/174). Not only was the Council informed about Haiti's current political and socioeconomic crisis; it was also once again alerted as to the depth of the food crisis on the island, where about half of the total Haitian population is in acute need of humanitarian assistance in 2021, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

In the case of Haiti, we must understand that the humanitarian situation has critically deteriorated, with the number of people in need of assistance rising from 2.6 million people in 2019 to 4.4 million today. More than ever, a strong, cohesive and resilient society, along with political and socioeconomic stability, are essential to promoting the principle of national appropriation, which Chile has strongly supported over the past few decades and is vital for focusing on the acute food needs of the population.

Haiti is recognized as a country vulnerable to, in addition to the other drivers of instability, natural disasters, which impact the health infrastructure and add further obstacles to achieving food security in the country. It is therefore of the utmost relevance to provide international assistance to Haiti moving forward to build back better, aiming not only to address peace and security but to achieve economic development, strengthen democratic institutions and uphold the rule of law. The alarming number of 4.4 million people in acute food insecurity, together with the disproportionate impact of the whole situation on women and girls, means it is urgent for the international community to adopt a gender-sensitive programming approach, including child protection and the involvement of civil society and youth in decision-making.

We believe that a comprehensive solution to food security-risk situations is essential not only in Haiti but in all the situations raised during this open debate, through the creation of a sustainable institutional framework over time, working not only on preparedness but also response to such emergencies. In this regard, Chile firmly believes that the role and inclusion in this framework of civil society, youth and women provides not only for cooperation between the parties concerned, but also for building capacity and supportive networks at the local, regional and international levels.

Annex 27**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, Pedro Luis Pedrosa Cuesta**

[Original: Spanish]

At the 1996 World Food Summit, President Fidel Castro Ruz warned that

“Hunger, the inseparable companion of the poor, is the daughter of unequal distribution of resources and the injustices of this world. The rich never experience hunger. Millions of people in the world have perished in the fight against hunger and injustice.”

Twenty-five years on and the figures are still shocking: almost 690 million human beings suffer from hunger. In 2019 alone, around 750 million people, or almost one out of every 10 people in the world, faced serious levels of food insecurity. Should this trend continue, the number of hungry people will surpass 840 million by 2030. In contrast, it is an outrage that billions of dollars are squandered on military spending instead of being devoted to protecting life.

The persistence of an unjust and unsustainable international order, burdened by decades of unbridled neoliberalism, is at the foundation of the exponential growth in poverty, exclusion, hunger and food insecurity. The proliferation of protectionist policies and speculative practices of big capital driving up food prices, the impact of immense external debt, already repaid several times over, exhausting the resources available to developing countries; unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and their effects through climate change and soil and ecosystem degradation — all these also severely hold back aspirations to achieve food security.

In addition, there is the systemic crisis triggered by the devastating coronavirus-disease pandemic, which has worsened living conditions for millions of human beings on the planet.

This complex scenario further dampens hopes for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reducing the aims of ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture to nothing more than fantasy for most peoples of the world.

It is therefore urgent to undertake profound transformation and instil a just, democratic and equitable international order so we may eradicate the root causes of hunger and inequalities and promote sustainable development for all people, thereby eliminating potential triggers for conflict that impact international peace and security.

For Cuba, food security is a priority enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic. In July 2020, Cuba adopted its National Plan for Food Sovereignty and Nutrition Education, developed in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). This document envisions four strategic objectives aimed at reducing dependence on importation of food and basic goods, strengthening local food systems, ensuring food quality and safety and mobilizing educational, cultural and communications systems to strengthen food and nutrition education.

Ensuring the food security of our people has been a challenge due to the impacts of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States, more ferocious than ever these past four years, including during the pandemic, together with a policy of unprecedented hostility. It has had a particularly significant impact on vulnerable sectors like agriculture and food. To give just one example,

between April 2019 and March 2020, damages totalling \$428,894,637 could have been avoided had Cuban businesses been able to access the United States market without unjust and illegitimate restrictions.

Cuba does not have access to financing through United States banks, or to the international credit system, thanks to the so-called “country risk” due to the implementation of embargo regulations. And neither can we make payments in United States dollars to third parties, all of which heightens the expense and difficulty of normal access to international markets to obtain food and essential basic commodities.

At the same time, the brutal persecution unleashed by the Government of Donald Trump against Cuba’s fuel supply led to interruptions in the productive cycles of multiple components of the agrifood sector as well as in various crops.

The embargo is undoubtedly the main obstacle to economic and social development in my country and to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This unjust and criminal policy is a serious, flagrant and systemic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people, including the right to food.

On 31 March 2020, then-United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Hilal Elver stated in a communiqué that “the continued imposition of crippling economic sanctions [...] severely undermines the fundamental rights of ordinary citizens to sufficient and adequate food”. She added that the immediate lifting of such unilateral sanctions was an urgent humanitarian matter.

The Security Council must stick to its mandate and stop interfering in matters outside its jurisdiction, in particular those concerning the General Assembly, as the most representative and democratic body of the United Nations, whose role includes leading, together with specialized agencies of the United Nations system, such as FAO, international efforts to meet the targets established under SDG 2.

In the face of the world’s heightened major challenges, including poverty, food insecurity and hunger, which afflict millions of human beings, it is urgent to strengthen international cooperation, solidarity and multilateralism to guarantee the full and universal realization of the right to food. Cuba is firmly committed to these purposes.

Annex 28

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations

I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, namely, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

As Nordic countries, we strongly welcome this open debate on the impact of conflict on food security and the continued and increasing relevance of resolution 2417 (2018). We would like to thank the United States, as Security Council President, for convening this meeting.

When unanimously adopted in May 2018, following an initiative by Sweden and the Netherlands, resolution 2417 (2018) was a landmark. It was the first time that the Security Council had explicitly addressed the link between conflict and hunger and recognized the need to break the vicious cycle of conflict and food insecurity. In the resolution, the Council emphasizes the obligation of Member States to help ensure that food assistance reaches those in need and condemns the use of starvation as a method of warfare. The world will never be able to eliminate hunger unless there is peace, and, conversely, food insecurity is a key driver of conflicts, so we would like to highlight again the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire.

Our debate today is timely. Increasing food insecurity and famine require urgent action at scale. The hope of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2, on ending hunger, by 2030 is slipping through our fingers. Hundreds of million people face acute food insecurity across the world. We are deeply concerned that 34 million people are now assessed to be at the highest risk of, or already in, famine or famine-like conditions, which require immediate life-saving action. South Sudan, Yemen and Burkina Faso already showed famine-like conditions in 2020. In 2021, food crises are also escalating in Tigray/Ethiopia, north-east Nigeria, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Syria, Mozambique and Afghanistan.

Famines do not occur naturally in 2021; they are human-made. Conflict is the single-most important driver of hunger, and nearly all countries with risk of famine or famine-like conditions — in Integrated Phase Classification 4 or 5 — are affected by protracted conflict. In most of these conflict-affected countries, constraints to humanitarian access are aggravating the problem. This is unacceptable.

As long as armed conflicts continue to drive food insecurity, States Members of the United Nations have an obligation to provide flexible and rapidly disbursable humanitarian funding to support the prevention of famine and hunger through timely, independent, effective and efficient humanitarian action.

We would like to draw attention to three areas we believe are crucial for bringing change and positive development to the millions of food-insecure people living in areas of conflict and fragility: humanitarian access and the protection of civilians, the implementation and roll-out of the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus in fragile crisis settings and the strengthening of systems for early warning and anticipatory action, including in areas of conflict.

First, in line with resolution 2417 (2018), the Nordic countries urge all parties to armed conflicts to fully comply with international humanitarian law. In our view, it is fundamental to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and work towards accountability for violations. Humanitarian access is widely hampered by violence, insecurity, corruption and bureaucratic constraints. Humanitarian and medical personnel must be protected, and humanitarian access to those in need must be ensured. When violations do occur, those responsible must be held accountable.

Secondly, when we discuss the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, there is a need to shift focus more towards the actual implementation and roll-out of the nexus approach — of course, with full respect for humanitarian principles and the unique mandate of humanitarian actors. While doing what we can to ensure early action and to strengthen resilience, we also need to focus more on peacebuilding and conflict prevention within a coherent framework. In areas where food insecurity and conflict reinforce each other, all actors must work together. Humanitarian action — including longer-term humanitarian interventions — cannot stand alone.

Thirdly, there is a need for a shift towards a more forward-looking humanitarian system in relation to food insecurity, including in areas of conflict and high levels of fragility. Strengthening anticipatory humanitarian action will help save lives and mitigate the impact of crises. For this to happen, we all need to work on stronger coordination and better sharing of data, analysis and information. Developing comprehensive early-warning systems in fragile contexts is not an easy task, but it will need humanitarian and development actors to join efforts. The Nordic countries support the linking of early-warning systems with anticipatory action. We welcome initiatives such as the collaboration between the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on early-warning analysis of acute food insecurity hotspots.

Although conflicts, together with climate change, are the main drivers of hunger, the added dimension of the socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease is aggravating food insecurity. There is a need for a more integrated approach to climate adaptation and mitigation, protecting the environment and addressing poverty, fragility and food and nutrition insecurity, as well as for better coherence among our humanitarian, development-policy and climate-adaptation instruments in the localities and countries where this is relevant. Environmental impacts of armed conflicts can also cause or aggravate food insecurity. The ongoing work of the International Law Commission on the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts is compiling and clarifying the relevant norms of international law. The recently updated International Committee of the Red Cross Guidelines on the Protection of the Natural Environment in Armed Conflict can help in the adoption of concrete measures aimed at better protection of the environment in armed conflicts.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to two food crises where the situation is deteriorating quickly and where action is urgently needed. Conflict-induced starvation is currently rising in both Ethiopia and in Yemen, underlining the need for compliance with resolution 2417 (2018).

The Nordic countries are very concerned about the humanitarian crisis in Tigray, in Ethiopia, which is driving increased food insecurity and displacement and creating severe protection concerns, including sexual and gender-based violence. Indeed, 4.5 million out of 6 million people within the region are acutely food-insecure, and humanitarian access is severely restricted. The Nordic countries welcome the announcement by the Ethiopian Government on unhindered humanitarian access and call for immediate, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need throughout Tigray. The situation in Tigray warrants preventive action by the Security Council to address the risk of conflict-induced food security, in line with resolution 2417 (2018).

In Yemen the humanitarian situation is dire — it has, in fact, never been worse; 50,000 people are already living in famine-like conditions, with 5 million just one step away. Action and more funding for the United Nations-led humanitarian response are urgently needed to avert large-scale famine, as was done in 2018. Since the beginning of the humanitarian crisis, the Nordic countries have contributed significant funding for humanitarian operations, including by pledging a total of \$77

million for 2021 at the recent high-level pledging conference. While continued and increased support to humanitarian operations is needed to save lives, it is no long-term solution. The humanitarian situation in Yemen clearly underlines the need for a political solution to the conflict, and we fully support the efforts of Special Envoy Griffiths in that regard.

We thank the Security Council's commitment to address conflict-induced food insecurity, and we will closely follow how it will play its part in this important area.

Annex 29**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, Cristian Espinosa Cañizares**

[Original: Spanish]

I wish to highlight the work done by the United States delegation during its presidency of the Security Council in the first half of March. I also congratulate you for having organized this open debate, which makes it possible to follow up on the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018), adopted on 24 May 2018, which requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council when the risk emerges of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in contexts of armed conflict.

Ecuador followed with interest and concern the report presented by the Secretary-General in September 2020 on threats to food security in several countries, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen and South Sudan.

For that reason, Ecuador supports international initiatives, including in particular those promoted by the United Nations and the Security Council itself, aimed at overcoming the cycle of conflict-induced food insecurity, which poses the threat of famine and acute malnutrition. Once again, I must stress that the best way to improve access to the civilian population in need of vital assistance is by promoting the implementation of a ceasefire at the local and global levels.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has exacerbated food crises. Food insecurity leads to increased displacement and causes conditions on the ground to deteriorate, exacerbating obstacles to peace. Two fundamental tools in both the fight against the pandemic and in efforts to eradicate hunger are safe drinking water and sanitation. In the Security Council debate held on 23 February (see S/2021/198), Ecuador recalled that the loss of biodiversity, desertification and drought also exacerbate food insecurity.

All those factors are interrelated and require a coordinated international response. For that reason, at the Security Council meeting held on 6 January, on fragile contexts (see S/2021/24), we reiterated that peace and development are mutually reinforcing.

For that reason, we are also extremely concerned about the food situation in Haiti, as reflected in the humanitarian assistance plan presented yesterday, 10 March, by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as well as in the report of the Secretary-General dated 11 February 2021 (S/2021/133), which indicates that some 4 million people were affected by acute food insecurity between August 2020 and February 2021.

All of that contrasts with the unjustifiable loss and waste of more than 1 billion tons of food in the world each year. That is why we also look forward to the 2021 Food Systems Summit convened by the Secretary-General.

Ecuador reaffirms the right of everyone to have access to healthy, sufficient and nutritious food, in keeping with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger. We recognize that a significant number of the world's poor people live in rural areas and that rural communities play a central role in development and peacebuilding.

Finally, Ecuador condemns and rejects the practice of starving civilians as a method of warfare. We reiterate the importance of protecting civilians in armed conflict, in the same terms as set forth in presidential statement S/PRST/2020/6, of 29 April 2020.

Annex 30**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations**

Allow me at the outset to express our appreciation for the initiative of the United States, as the President of the Security Council for the month of March 2021, for having convened this high-level open debate on conflict and food security.

Egypt is fully cognizant of the severe impacts that hunger and the failure to achieve food security have on human livelihoods, as well as in contributing to an increase in the risk of conflicts, especially in countries that suffer from economic vulnerability; hence, we stress the strong and deep linkage between food security and conflict.

We would like to emphasize that famine does not always reflect a shortage of the food available to those who are vulnerable to these phenomena. Rather, in many cases, it is the result of a lack of justice in the distribution of food resources between regions and remote areas, a situation that is further exacerbated by conflicts, especially given their negative impact on local and regional value and supply chains. Moreover, conflicts have a significant impact on the purchasing power of citizens in conflict-affected areas.

Failure to achieve food security and end hunger will threaten the security and stability of countries and further fuel ongoing conflicts. The challenges of achieving food security are further deepened by other factors such as the ongoing impacts of climate change, which exacerbate the risks related to energy production, food security, the availability of water, economic development and social inequality. Water scarcity in several regions in the world, especially in Africa, has severe repercussions on agricultural activities and efforts to achieve food security.

In the light of the above, we would like to highlight the following points.

It is vital to address the challenges facing countries affected by and emerging from conflict. Special attention must be paid to food security and to providing health care to the civilian population based on the principles of international humanitarian law and in accordance with national sovereignty. It is also important to ensure the delivery of food aid to the civilian population in conflict areas and to protect them from the risk of famine, including, in that regard, the provision of food to forcibly displaced persons, while also taking into account the negative repercussions of the coronavirus disease pandemic on food supplies. We would also stress in that regard the responsibility of the Security Council to protect civilians at risk from armed conflict, including the risk of famine.

It is vital for the United Nations system, including the Security Council, to develop a proactive approach that enhances early-warning capabilities in order to monitor the regions most vulnerable to famine as a result of armed conflict. In that connection, we would like to highlight the importance of resolution 2417 (2018), which requested the Secretary-General to report swiftly to the Council when the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in armed conflict contexts occurs.

We look forward to the convening of the World Food Systems Summit, scheduled to take place in New York in September 2021. The summit includes Action Track 5, entitled “Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress”, which focuses on the sustainability of food systems and on the ability of poor families around the world to obtain adequate, healthy and nutritious food. We hope that the Food Systems Summit will support developing countries in enhancing their food security in a sustainable manner and invite partners and international organizations to fulfil their responsibilities in that regard.

In conclusion, we would like to stress the urgency of addressing the challenges of food security and its linkage to conflicts using a comprehensive approach that aims at its core to achieve the sustainable development of developing countries while ensuring their stability and prosperity.

Annex 31**Statement by the Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

El Salvador thanks the presidency of the United States for having included this open debate in its programme of work for the month of March 2021. Promoting dialogue on this issue makes it easier to find effective means to break the cycle of food insecurity, including that caused by political and economic instability and armed conflicts in various regions of the world.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2, aimed at achieving zero hunger. Despite the socioeconomic challenges it faces as a result of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the Government of El Salvador reiterates its commitment to continuing to develop plans and programmes that directly benefit the Salvadoran population and ensure their food security. With that in mind, since May 2020 it has been carrying out a plan to deliver food parcels to approximately 70,000 needy families throughout the country every day.

At this stage of great global challenges, El Salvador will continue to deploy the full potential of its institutions and to do everything in its power to ensure that the most vulnerable segments of its population have availability of and access to food.

According to the report entitled *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the world in 2020*, some 690 million people suffer from hunger worldwide — an increase of 10 million people in one year. That is cause for concern and alarm about the path that we have taken to achieve our zero-hunger goals by 2030, as well as a call to action.

The report recognizes that food insecurity can be caused by various factors, including economic crises and climate change as well as conflict and political instability. In that regard, it reiterates the importance of maintaining in force and strictly complying with resolution 2417 (2018), and supports the efforts of this body to provide effective responses to humanitarian needs in armed conflicts, particularly the threat of famine, and condemns the starving of the civilian population as a method of war.

It is concerning that the reports of peacekeeping missions are indicating an increasing number of potential threats to food security, such as obstructing access to or the distribution of humanitarian aid, threats against their personnel and non-compliance with the agreements between the United Nations and host countries. These actions jeopardize access to food and the other needs of civilians in conflict situations. Faced with that situation, the Security Council must act and demand accountability from those who oppose this important work, in keeping with international humanitarian law.

We call on all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and underline the importance of humanitarian personnel having safe and unhindered access to the civilian population.

Given that concern, we deem important the establishment of a United Nations coordination centre or the post of a special envoy on food security issues and for the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018). In addition, the quest for financing activities that help mitigate climate-change-induced food insecurity, conflicts and pandemics could be included in its work, particularly in countries and regions that are facing armed conflicts or political instability.

Another activity that that official could carry out is the elaboration of humanitarian aid agreements based on the principles of international cooperation recognized by the United Nations, including various forms of food assistance that safeguard and enhance access to food for those most in need in conflict situations. An independent mechanism would help to build trust among those involved while at the same time contributing to improving transparency and accountability.

It must be recalled that multilateralism is the best way to find answers to the major global problems. That is why we see the Food Systems Summit, set to take place this year, as an opportunity to debate these aspects, and, more importantly, find answers to the larger issues of challenges to food safety. El Salvador sees the summit as an opportunity to prioritize attention to groups in vulnerable situations, including civilian populations living in conflict situations. It believes it important to focus attention on food security and the plans of action emanating from the Security Council and other bodies. They must take into account the specific needs of children, youth, women and other vulnerable sectors of society.

Finally, El Salvador reiterates its interest in finding creative and innovative responses to food and nutritional needs, through, among other options, the coordination of humanitarian assistance and ensuring that it is timely, effective and efficient, based on independence and the principles of international law.

Annex 32**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations, Taye Atskeselassie Amde**

We commend the United States for dedicating today's open debate to this worthy topic. I am pleased to address the members of the Security Council and other participants on the situation in Ethiopia, with a focus on recent developments pertaining to humanitarian challenges.

My country, Ethiopia, has struggled with food insecurity as one of the core challenges to its national and human security. The vicious cycle involving climate change and extreme weather conditions, underdeveloped adaptation and resilience, competition over resources, conflict and food insecurity has long been an existential challenge.

Over the years, we have made progress in addressing food insecurity through effective national policies, the efficient administration of available resources and effective international cooperation. Nonetheless, Ethiopia remains vulnerable to the risk of food insecurity emanating from natural and anthropogenic disasters, including conflict.

Allow me to share some facts on the situation in Ethiopia so that the members of the Council can have a well-rounded and accurate picture of the situation.

On 4 November, the Tigray People's Liberation Front attacked the national army. The treasonous crime against those unsuspecting men and women in uniform goes beyond what any other country has faced in recent history. The Government of Ethiopia had to take the necessary measures to preserve the unity and sovereign integrity of the State of Ethiopia.

The unabashed destructive acts of the criminal group cost Ethiopians a great deal, devastating their infrastructure and disrupting their normal private and public lives. That resulted in a food shortage in Tigray and adjacent regions, as well as the displacement of citizens, thus compounding the pre-existing food security challenges in the Tigray region, where 1.7 million people were participating in a safety net programme.

Furthermore, developments in the Tigray region have increased the humanitarian burden on a system already strained by the conflicts instigated by Tigray People's Liberation Front and its affiliates in other parts of Ethiopia.

In accordance with our disaster management policy, we utilize our national resources, first and foremost, to address humanitarian needs. Nevertheless, we also work closely with local and international partners to fill the gaps created by resource constraints.

Accordingly, on 29 November, we signed an agreement with the United Nations for enhanced coordination on humanitarian access. That agreement allows unimpeded, sustained and secure access to the humanitarian community. Due to the progress in the security situation in the Tigray region, we opened a "notification only" procedure for humanitarian actors starting 3 March.

We also have an effective coordination mechanism between the Government authorities and humanitarian actors, as evidenced by the testimony provided by Mr. David Beasley, World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director and Mr. Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who visited the region.

I would also like to take this opportunity to relay the gratitude of my Government for the response of the international community, including the WFP

and other United Nations agencies and Governments who stood with the Government and the people of Ethiopia in this time of need. I also wish to echo the appeal made by our humanitarian partners for more resources in order to scale up our progress thus far.

Alleged human rights violations have also been a focus of the international community. The Government authorities and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission will continue to investigate and report on the status of human rights. In that respect, we stand ready to receive assistance and to explore the possibility of collaborating in joint investigations. We unequivocally reaffirm our full commitment to respect and protect human rights and to bring all who violate such rights to justice.

The Government is also committed to ensuring transparency and access to information. Accordingly, we facilitated access to both local and international media to report from the ground and, as a result, numerous international media organizations are present in the Tigray region. We hope that the responsible and diligent work of the media will counter the flurry of disinformation that has been dominating the platform.

Let me conclude by reaffirming our commitment to sparing no effort in fulfilling our solemn responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of our people. Rest assured that we are ready and willing to engage with the international community in a constructive manner. In that regard, we reiterate the need to place a global focus on increasing support for ongoing relief and reconstruction efforts in order to restore lasting peace and normalcy.

Annex 33**Statement by the Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I welcome this open debate on the impact of conflict on food security, which is of the utmost relevance at this moment.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is projecting a sharp rise in food insecurity in 2021 as result of the combined effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, extreme weather events, climate change, water scarcity and, indeed, conflicts.

The *2020 Global Report on Food Crises* shows that conflict was to blame for six out of the ten worst food crises in the world and for nearly 60 per cent of humanitarian needs. This means that, in the absence of conflict, the number of people affected by food crises could be reduced by more than half, and the humanitarian funding gap dramatically reduced. The link between conflict and hunger was also the reason for the initiative of two EU member States, the Netherlands and Sweden, which led to the unanimous adoption of resolution 2417 (2018). This landmark resolution was the first to address the link between conflict and hunger, recognize the need to break the vicious cycle of conflict and food insecurity, emphasize the obligation of Member States to help ensure that food assistance reaches those in need and condemn the use of starvation as a method of warfare.

To combat hunger and malnutrition, we therefore need to focus on conflict-ridden regions and step up efforts to address the root causes of conflict and mitigate their effects on populations, including food insecurity — all without abandoning the longer-term goal of developing more sustainable, resilient, equitable and inclusive food systems, with empowered women, girls, youth and families, and taking into account the specific needs of those in vulnerable situations, thus ensuring that no one is left behind.

Given the magnitude and complexity of the challenge, as well as the limited resources, international coordination is essential. The EU and its member States already actively participate in multiple processes and initiatives in this area and are strong supporters of collective responses, in close cooperation with the WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Committee on World Food Security and others.

For the purpose of this debate, we would like to address three main points — ensuring safe access to humanitarian assistance, securing sustainable funding and reaching innovative long-term solutions based on early-warning systems, and highlighting specific situations where food insecurity must urgently be addressed so as to avoid a worsening of tensions and conflicts.

First, unimpeded, sustained, rapid and safe access to affected populations is a critical enabler to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of assistance as a means to address food insecurity. This is especially important in conflict areas.

The EU is concerned about ongoing blatant violations of international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, the shrinking of the humanitarian

space and continued attacks on humanitarian and medical workers. Actions taken by various players, including Governments, continue to deny or restrict — directly or indirectly — humanitarian access, and remain a major obstacle to an effective response.

The EU calls on all parties to armed conflicts, State and non-State alike, to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the prohibition of the use of starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare, and to allow and facilitate the free passage of humanitarian relief. We recall, in that respect, that in 2019, the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court voted unanimously to extend the war crime of starvation to non-international armed conflict.

The international community needs to take a more outspoken stance in calling on all parties to conflicts to respect international humanitarian law, condemn access restrictions and find political and practical solutions to remove access constraints. The Security Council plays a critical role in steering this forward and ensuring accountability.

This also means addressing continued attacks on humanitarian and medical workers. The EU — together with France, Germany, Mexico, Norway, the Niger and Switzerland — will organize a discussion series in the coming months on the protection of humanitarian and medical workers in armed conflict, with the aim of finding solutions and contributing to the development of key elements of the “Call for Action to strengthen respect for international humanitarian law and principled humanitarian action”. On the fifth anniversary of resolution 2286 (2016), we also recognize the efforts of co-penholders Egypt, Japan, New Zealand, Uruguay and Spain, in that regard.

Secondly, if we are to ensure timely and adequate responses to food insecurity, the funding gap needs to be addressed.

The international community should explore all ways to increase funding, especially for the most acute crises, and must strive to make it more sustainable and predictable. That would help to ensure that resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible. Efficiency also requires a switch to prevention when possible, in addition to well-coordinated interventions and joint approaches based on high-quality analysis.

As crises are volatile, we need to monitor them in an ongoing way, in close cooperation with local civil society actors, so that we can understand how needs evolve and be able to intervene at the right moment where it is most needed, and in the most appropriate manner.

Moreover, as conflict and hunger are unlikely to disappear any time soon, we have to intensify efforts to work across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in fragile contexts. We must develop tools and mechanisms that will help us provide more efficient interventions to strengthen food security and build resilience. That may include monitoring tools that provide information on inaccessible areas by making use of technologies such as satellite imaging and developing anticipatory action mechanisms. To do that, we need to build on structures such as the Global Network against Food Crises to generate evidence-based information and analyses and leverage strategic investments to prepare, prevent and respond to food crises.

Thirdly, let me briefly highlight certain crises that, in our view, require close monitoring and immediate action, in accordance with resolution 2417 (2018). Conflict-induced food insecurity and the risk of famine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, north-eastern Nigeria and South Sudan was examined most recently in September (see S/2020/930).

Furthermore, the WFP and FAO, under the auspices of the Global Network Against Food Crises, in October issued its “Early warning analysis of acute food insecurity hotspots”, which identifies four areas at risk of famine: Burkina Faso, north-eastern Nigeria, Yemen and South Sudan.

The situation in those countries is not improving. On the contrary, the lack of humanitarian access, the worsening political situation and climatic stresses may lead to a further deterioration of food security. The international community must prioritize this issue.

Other quickly deteriorating food crises also urgently need our attention.

In the Central African Republic, acute food insecurity is projected to affect an additional 400,000 people in 2021. The escalation in violence following the recent elections has reduced access for humanitarian actors, exacerbated food insecurity and caused more than 200,000 new displacements. Coordination among humanitarian actors, especially on advocacy with all parties to the conflict, is paramount.

In Ethiopia, the EU is extremely concerned about the risk of famine in the country’s Tigray region. According to reports, 80 per cent of the population, as well as 100,000 Eritrean refugees, have been cut off from humanitarian assistance for more than 100 days now. More than 4.5 million people face pre-famine conditions and the situation is deteriorating rapidly. Humanitarian agencies have been denied access to people in need, and there are reports of starvation being used as a weapon of war.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo now has 20 million acutely food insecure people — the highest number ever recorded in a single country. Rampant conflict and insecurity, aggravated by COVID-19 and its broader consequences, are the main drivers, while natural disasters and recurrent epidemics take another toll on the population. Tragically, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is also one of the most underfunded crises in the world.

After 40 years of war, Afghanistan remains one of the most dangerous places for civilians. It is the world’s third largest food crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated the situation. The latest analysis estimates that 17 million Afghans — more than 45 per cent of the population — are acutely food insecure and in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Meanwhile, the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan remains greatly underfunded, with less than half of the needs covered.

In conclusion, while the specific crises I just mentioned require our attention, it does not mean that we have to concentrate the available resources in a small number of locations. Without an increase in humanitarian funding and with many crises severely underfunded and millions of people in very fragile situations, combating hunger in only a few places could create new famines elsewhere.

Instead, we need to redouble our efforts to address the root causes and put an end to conflicts. We must prevent new conflicts from erupting and uphold international humanitarian law. We also need to explore all avenues to increase humanitarian funding, improve international coordination and efficiency, and continue to monitor the worst crises, with the key support of the Global Network Against Food Crises, launched by the EU, FAO and the WFP during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

The Secretary-General’s 2021 Food Systems Summit will be a major opportunity and is a testimony of inclusive multilateralism. We are fully committed to achieving an ambitious Summit outcome.

The COVID-19 crisis demonstrates just how crucial multilateral action and institutions are to our collective health, prosperity and security. We count on the Security Council to play its part.

Annex 34

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations

Fiji congratulates the United States of America for its presidency of the Security Council for the month of March.

Fiji welcomes and is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this important high-level debate on conflict and food security. As a non-Council member, Fiji supports and welcomes a more open and inclusive Security Council. Open debates are a helpful way for canvassing broader inputs on the peace and security challenges that are growing across the world. I thank the President for her commitment to a more open Security Council. It is only through the broadest possible discussions that we will find solutions to these increasingly complex peace and security challenges.

Resolution 2417 (2018), on conflict-induced food insecurity and famine, has been one of the most pressing challenges before the Security Council. Food insecurity has become immeasurably more protracted and complicated since the advent of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has warranted the Council's most careful scrutiny.

The Secretary-General has warned that there is a risk of famine and widespread food insecurity in four countries and that the food-security situation has deteriorated in other conflict-affected countries around the world. This looming catastrophe will affect more than 200 million people worldwide. The numbers and the intensity of these challenges have grown, owing both to climate change and extreme weather, on the one hand, and COVID-19-pandemic-induced supply-chain failures and disruptions and declining international humanitarian support, on the other. They have compounded food insecurity in conflict settings and indeed more broadly as well. The Secretary-General also stated that what is needed to turn this around is the will and sustained commitment of leaders and States Members of the United Nations.

Food insecurity is a driver of conflict in an increasingly vicious way. Conflicts fuel food insecurity, and food insecurity is a major contributing cause of conflicts. The control, manipulation of supply and weaponization of food by parties to conflicts calls for urgent attention. Today, in some of the most violent conflict areas around the world, we will find the highest levels of hunger, malnutrition and stunting. The effects of climate change and the disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated already-dangerous levels of food insecurity across these and other vulnerable countries.

Fiji would like to highlight the following points.

There should be a clear and stronger commitment by the United Nations system to supporting and protecting humanitarian staff, ensuring that the levels of support needed are calibrated with threat levels and challenges, and that the required resources are predictable.

Humanitarian assistance should be operationalized in a way that enhances the security of local food producers, suppliers and markets and not undermine or weaken them. The development and humanitarian interventions need to be better aligned.

The Security Council should explore opportunities for engagement through the Peacebuilding Commission to encourage and support interventions that help to build peace and cohesion across the food supply — in terms of marketing and distribution — and across the food system generally in conflict and fragile settings.

Governments are responsible for the protection of all their populations regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or affiliation. Governments and

competent authorities must ensure that food supply and humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations are prioritized and accessible. Restricting humanitarian access under various pretexts needs to be more systematically called out. The Security Council should focus on the relevant agencies and missions capable of assessing, documenting and reporting on these aspects.

The Council should enforce accountability for violations of international humanitarian law in relation to access to humanitarian aid when such violations result in widespread fatalities. Weaponizing the food supply and access to humanitarian aid should not be allowed to continue with impunity, and the Security Council should prioritize implementing accountability measures.

Climate change is fuelling growing food insecurity. The majority of United Nations peace operations are already in highly climate-stressed countries. Climate change is a multidimensional threat-multiplier. The Security Council has an obligation to improve the quality of analysis of how short- and medium-term and catastrophic climate changes affect food security and the most vulnerable populations.

I thank the President for convening today's crucial open debate. Some 200 million people across fragile and conflict settings, mainly women and children, are extremely vulnerable to hunger and extreme malnutrition today. Delays in vastly improving the quality and depth of a United Nations response will only worsen an already unacceptable situation. Fiji stands ready to play its small part in supporting United Nations peace operations to protect civilians and humanitarian assistance.

Annex 35

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations

I wish to begin by extending my heartfelt gratitude to the United States presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's high-level open debate on conflict and food security.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations (annex 33). Let me add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Conflict-induced food insecurity represents one of the most acute challenges for international peace and security. According to the World Food Programme's *2020 Global Report on Food Crises*, conflict and insecurity remain the main drivers of food crises around the world. Yet unmitigated climate change, and the devastating humanitarian, social and economic impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, pose a further threat to the state of global food security.

No country can meet these rapidly evolving challenges alone. Only with a renewed commitment to inclusive and coordinated international action is it possible to ensure food security and nutrition for those living in conflict-affected and the most fragile situations. We believe that the Security Council must play a central role in this process. The landmark resolution 2417 (2018), which addressed the link between conflict and hunger for the first time, represents an important step towards preventing food insecurity and addressing the humanitarian needs of millions of civilians trapped in conflict-affected areas today. At the same time, we consider the Secretary-General's upcoming Food Systems Summit to be a vital opportunity for spearheading global action against the emerging threats to global food security.

Key steps for addressing the conflict-related food security crises entail, inter alia, reinforcing respect for obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in conflict situations. We also deplore other blatant violations of international humanitarian law and disrespect for humanitarian principles. In this context, we call on all parties to conflict that have not yet done so to strengthen their commitment to the universal application of international humanitarian law, including, in this specific context, through endorsing and implementing global international humanitarian law instruments on the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel in armed conflict.

Secondly, the Security Council must lead international action to ensure unhindered delivery of humanitarian relief to those who endure prolonged lack of access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food, clean water and adequate health care. To this end, addressing and preventing appalling attacks on humanitarian and medical workers must stand as a top priority. International humanitarian agencies must be granted full and unimpeded access so that they can deliver humanitarian relief in a timely manner in complex emergencies where food insecurity is rampant. In this context, we express a hope that the adoption and subsequent unwavering implementation of the resolution 2565 (2021), calling for strengthened international cooperation to facilitate equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, will substantially improve the global humanitarian environment.

At the national level, maintaining food security remains one of the key priorities of the Government of Georgia. We are following our strategy for agricultural development, which lays out mechanisms for addressing food security

in emergency and crisis situations, including implementing an early-warning system for food security, especially for the most vulnerable regions and segments of the population. The global pandemic has tested our ability to maintain self-sufficiency in the country's supply chains. In the early phases of the COVID-19 emergency, the Government of Georgia has taken rapid steps to support farmers, food producers and other actors in the country's food-supply chain in continuing to provide citizens with affordable, high-quality food without disruptions.

Drawing lessons from the potential impacts of the pandemic on global food security, we have to direct coordinated efforts to the most fragile situations, including in conflict-affected and post-conflict areas, where the risks of fierce competition over scarce resources can only compound existing humanitarian emergencies. Unfortunately, Russia's occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali prevents the Government of Georgia from addressing food security needs of civilians living on the other side of the occupation line who must bear on a daily basis the heavy burden of grave human rights abuses.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our appreciation for the Security Council's increased attention to the risks of conflict-induced food insecurity and express Georgia's readiness to contribute to the multilateral efforts aimed at addressing global food-security challenges.

Annex 36

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations

My delegation wishes to thank Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and her delegation, as the current President of the Security Council, for convening today's timely virtual open debate on conflict and food security. We wish Ms. Thomas-Greenfield the best in her endeavours.

As the Executive Director of the World Food Programme has said, the world is on the verge of one of the greatest humanitarian crises as a result of hunger, which, if we do not act immediately and decisively, will have devastating long-term consequences. The entire world is struggling with the various socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic, which includes the likelihood that a quarter of a billion people will be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030. Guatemala urgently calls for keeping the hunger crisis as a top priority on the international agenda. It is necessary to protect the most vulnerable and act immediately to save lives, especially in emergency situations, disasters and crises, implementing humanitarian actions focused on building more resilient communities, while protecting those whose lives are dedicated to saving others.

In resolution 2417 (2018), the Security Council stressed that “using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare may constitute a war crime”. Guatemala strongly condemns both the use of famine to hurt civilians as a method of war and the illegal denial of humanitarian access. We reiterate our call to defend international obligations arising from international human rights law and international humanitarian law, since the protection-of-civilians component is intrinsically linked to them.

The President of Guatemala, Mr. Alejandro Giammattei Falla, has stated that it is an act of responsibility to join all actions that are undertaken to guarantee the fulfilment of the entire population's right to food. The highest priority must be protecting life and health and ensuring respect for all human beings. Accordingly, we have joined the efforts made within the framework of the Food Systems Summit convened by the Secretary-General. It is of utmost importance to join international efforts that are aligned with our national priorities in relation to the fight against malnutrition and hunger. This approach will allow incremental opportunities for real economic and social development in favour of the full achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In line with this priority, Guatemala has already completed its first national dialogue on our top action priority, namely, ensuring access for all to safe food, with a view to identifying good practices, challenges and solutions.

We must have the determination to rise to this challenge and fulfil the promise made 75 years ago to avoid the scourge of war and promote peace among peoples and nations. To properly address food and nutritional security problems, we must foster true political will and deliver assistance in a coherent manner and without discrimination as a way to avoid the scourge of war and to promote peace among peoples and nations.

Annex 37

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Guyana, Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett

I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for convening today's important high-level open debate on conflict and food security. We also wish to thank the briefers for their sobering briefings, which depict a very worrying future if urgent action is not taken.

Additional evidence and several important data updates, including a revision of the entire prevalence of undernourishment series for China from 2000, show that almost 690 million people in the world — 8.9 per cent of the world population — are estimated to have been undernourished in 2019. Revision in the light of the new data, which results in a parallel downward shift of the entire global prevalence of undernourishment series, confirms the conclusion of past editions of this report, namely, that the number of people affected by hunger in the world continues to increase slowly. This trend started in 2014 and has extended through 2019. There are nearly 60 million more undernourished people now than there were in 2014, when the prevalence was 8.6 per cent, which is an increase of 10 million people between 2018 and 2019.

Despite the progress achieved in recent years, the previous steady decline in food insecurity has ended; food insecurity is now on the rise. In fact, the 2020 report *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* noted that, in 2019, more than 690 million people suffered from hunger, which is 60 million more than in 2014. When we look at acute food insecurity, the *2020 Global Report on Food Crises* indicates that, in 2019, almost 135 million people, in 55 countries or territories, or 16 per cent of the total population analysed, were classified as living in acute food insecurity, which marks the highest number of acute food insecurity in four years. Unfortunately, these figures are expected to trend upwards with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, with the *Global Report* projecting that the number will double to 270 million people living in acute food insecurity.

While weather extremes and economic shocks lead to the phenomenon, conflict remains the main driver of food insecurity. In fact, the nexus between food insecurity and conflict is well documented. Conflicts damage farming resources and infrastructure, thereby limiting the ability to produce and distribute food and causing loss of assets and incomes. Moreover, limiting access to food is constantly used as a weapon of war. This remains the case, notwithstanding resolution 2417 (2018), which evinces the link between armed conflict and violence and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine. The resolution also calls on all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law with regard to respecting and protecting civilians and taking constant care to spare civilian objects, including objects necessary for food production and distribution.

In order to eradicate food insecurity, the underlying causes of conflict must be addressed. In the interim, the Security Council should reinforce early-warning systems established by resolution 2417 (2018), which requires the Council to be briefed when the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in armed conflict contexts occurs and to take the appropriate action to ensure peace and food security, as well as physical security. To that end, we urge the Secretariat and all Member States to closely monitor such situations and report those matters to the Security Council without delay.

We call on all parties to armed conflicts to fully comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law, as applicable, and international humanitarian law, in particular their obligations under the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

Noting that 183 million people were at risk of slipping into acute food insecurity, CARICOM remains concerned about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on food security, especially its effect on the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children, refugees, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Accordingly, CARICOM urges that there be exceptions to trade/travel restrictions, border closures and quarantine orders, which may preclude persons suffering from food insecurity from accessing humanitarian aid. Furthermore, unimpeded access to the means of production must be maintained and agricultural workers at varying levels must be protected. In a similar vein, regard must be had to the impact of economic sanctions on countries living in food insecurity, which may serve only to compound the already dire circumstances that prevail in those countries.

Ending hunger and achieving food security, as set out by Sustainable Development Goal 2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is achievable once there is the political will and collective action by all Member States to leave no one behind. Ending conflicts is critical in that equation.

Annex 38**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of Indonesia to the United Nations, Mohammad Kurniadi Koba**

At the outset, I would like to thank the United States for organizing this open meeting on conflict and food security.

Indonesia firmly believes that hunger and famine should never be used as a method of warfare. Yet food security remains a major issue facing civilians in numerous conflict-affected areas. Against that backdrop, allow me to highlight three pertinent points.

First, we need to avoid a conflict-induced humanitarian catastrophe. During Indonesia's latest tenure in the Security Council, we consistently pointed out that food security is an inseparable part of the protection of civilians. We underlined the importance of preventative measures to ensure that such a catastrophe never happens.

To that end, my delegation welcomes reporting by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as an early warning system to ensure that the international community can respond and prevent possible humanitarian catastrophes promptly. Nevertheless, the presence of an early warning system should not distract us from addressing the root causes of conflict. In the end, the only answer to preventing any conflict-induced humanitarian catastrophe is peace.

Secondly, we remain concerned about recurring hindrances to the freedom of movement of United Nations peacekeepers in numerous areas of operation, especially in delivering humanitarian assistance. The role of peacekeepers in ensuring the safe and orderly delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially food, to conflict zones is critical. That is particularly so given the geographical challenges that United Nations missions face in areas of operation, such as South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indonesia calls on all parties to ensure the safety, security and health of peacekeepers, as well as humanitarian and aid workers, in performing their duty.

Thirdly, it is important to strengthen international cooperation. Indonesia is always at the forefront of advancing multilateralism. We call on the international community to enhance cooperation in funding and delivering humanitarian assistance, especially through the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme. Indonesia also highlights the crucial role of regional organizations in supporting that endeavour. At the same time, international efforts to ensure food security in conflict-affected areas need to work hand in hand with efforts to enhance the capacity of countries to protect their populations, including their food security.

In conclusion, it is clear that ending hunger and famine in conflict areas requires all countries to work together. Indonesia remains committed to working together with other States Members of the United Nations in enhancing our collective effort in that virtuous endeavour.

Annex 39

Statement by the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross

I thank you, Madam President, and the United States for convening this important debate today to discuss the risks, vulnerabilities and responses to conflict-driven food insecurity.

Famine is preventable, and, for the millions of people for whom every day is a question of survival, we must do more to prevent the level of food insecurity. Hunger, food insecurity and the risk of famine are often consequences of deeper problems. In many places where we in the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) work, we see that the drivers of food insecurity can at times stem from armed conflict or be independent in themselves. Those drivers can range from environmental degradation and climate change to food systems disruptions and the damage or destruction of key infrastructure, foodstuffs, crops and livestock, as well as uncertain humanitarian access.

Warning signs, such as broken health systems, damaged or non-existent infrastructure and economic shocks, are often present for months, if not years. Today, the coronavirus disease pandemic has added enormous and acute pressure to those stressors. It is important to address the humanitarian consequences of hunger, but we must also treat and prevent its causes. To that end, the ICRC would like to provide three key recommendations.

First, we should work with all parties to armed conflict for better respect of international humanitarian law. International humanitarian law provides rules that, if respected, can help mitigate hunger and food insecurity and prevent famine in armed conflict. Rules on the conduct of hostilities protect civilians and civilian objects, which include infrastructure, land and other objects that are vital for preventing scarcity of resources and ensuring that the civilian population has sufficient access to food.

It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or otherwise render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, including foodstuffs, agricultural areas, crops and livestock, as well as drinking water installations and supplies. Furthermore, starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited.

Secondly, we must act early to prevent famine and food insecurity, including to safeguard child and maternal health. While rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access is key during an acute food crisis, humanitarian and development actors must work together before emergencies to address the restrictions and challenges that disrupt food systems in conflict-affected areas, which ultimately prevent populations from remaining food secure.

The importance of ensuring the proper functioning of food systems and local markets is an important element reflected in resolution 2417 (2018) that must not be overlooked. That requires better acknowledgement of how different components of food systems are made fragile by conflict and how various actors can play either a mitigating or exacerbating role at the local, national and transnational level. Women, for example, play a mitigating role. They are responsible for half the world's food production, and in conflict-affected countries that percentage is often much higher.

Finally, we are increasingly seeing that combined armed conflict and climate risks exacerbate food insecurity and have dramatic humanitarian consequences. Food insecurity and malnutrition are significantly worse in countries with agricultural systems that are highly weather-dependent and where livelihoods are

largely agricultural. The impact of armed conflict lowers people's resilience and the ability of institutions to mitigate those combined shocks.

To respond to that, greater multi-year investment in adaptation efforts for conflict-affected States will help to ensure that populations receive the support necessary to strengthen their resilience to a changing climate, including the impact on their food security.

Those three recommendations taken together can address some of the main causes of food insecurity and, in turn, help to prevent famine.

Annex 40

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, Majid Takht Ravanchi

According to *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020* report, currently, almost 690 million people, representing 8.9 per cent of the world population, “are hungry”. It is “up by 10 million people in one year and by nearly 60 million in five years”. The number of people affected by “severe food insecurity” shows a similar upward trend. Likewise, “the COVID-19 pandemic may add between 83 and 132 million people to the total number of undernourished in the world”.

Those alarming facts indicate that we are back to 2015 hunger levels and are far from achieving zero hunger by 2030. That trend also underlines the necessity and urgency of addressing food insecurity.

To that end, the general rule must be to ensure the realization of the right to food for everyone, everywhere and at all times, in peace and war alike. As the 1974 Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition states, “to be free from hunger and malnutrition” is an “inalienable right”. The full realization of that right requires a comprehensive approach and decisive action at the national and international levels, particularly by focusing on addressing all underlying causes of food insecurity, as well as coherent international cooperation and assistance. Accordingly, States, which have the primary responsibility for their own socioeconomic development, must take all necessary measures to “respect, protect and fulfil the right to food” at the national level. To succeed, efforts to ensure national food security must be supported by an enabling international environment.

The essential role of international cooperation is recognized in numerous international instruments, including in Articles 1, paragraph 3, 55 and 56 of the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the relevant bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, must redouble their efforts to that end.

Equally, conflict-driven acute food insecurity should be considered by the Security Council by urging all parties to conflicts to ensure strict compliance with international humanitarian law, which, inter alia, protects the access of civilians to food during armed conflicts and occupation and prohibits the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. It is to be emphasized that, when applying sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council should not, under any circumstances, impose sanctions, directly or indirectly, on humanitarian trade, particularly food and medicine.

In that context, nothing is more urgent than the immediate removal of the inhumane blockade imposed against the people of Yemen, causing the world’s worst humanitarian crisis in contemporary history. Likewise, the unlawful blockade of Gaza, which is seriously hampering the right to food of the oppressed Palestinian people, must be removed forthwith.

One of the main factors hampering the full realization of the right to food, in peace times and conflict situations, is the application of sanctions. As a tool for the collective punishment of an entire nation, sanctions violate all human rights of targeted nations, including their right to food, causing food insecurity.

By any measures, unilateral coercive measures, including sanctions, are inhumane, immoral and unlawful and, due to their broad, devastating and long-term implications, are as brutal as terrorism and as criminal as such core international crimes as war crimes and crimes against humanity. During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, sanctions are insult to injury for the targeted nations.

In that context, the United States sanctions on Iran have seriously restricted our access to humanitarian goods, including food, medicine and medical equipment, and inhibited our ability to fight COVID-19 more effectively. Indeed, in these trying times, nothing is more humanistic than confronting policies such as weaponizing humanitarian items, particularly medicine and food.

As the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States declares, “No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State”. Accordingly, all States must refrain from taking measures, which, *inter alia*, undermine the enjoyment of the right to food in other countries.

In 2002, in the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later, the world leaders reiterated that “food should not be used as an instrument for political and economic pressure” and reaffirmed the “necessity of refraining from unilateral measures ... that endanger food security” (*A/57/499, annex*). The immediate removal of sanctions must therefore be considered as a main element in efforts to address food insecurity.

No less important is the promotion of international cooperation and assistance to address food insecurity. In article 11, paragraph 2, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, States have recognized “the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger” and have undertaken to “take, individually and through international cooperation,” the measures needed for the full realization of, *inter alia*, the right to food.

Last but not least, as stated in the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, “society today already possesses sufficient resources, organizational ability and technology and hence the competence” (*E/CONF.65/20, chap. I, para.1*) to eradicate hunger. Accordingly, the full realization of the “inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition” and ensuring the key elements of food security, namely, the availability, accessibility, adequacy and sustainability, hinges upon the full and effective compliance of all States with their respective obligations, particularly strict observance of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Annex 41

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations

Italy aligns itself with the statement submitted on behalf of the European Union (annex 33) and wishes to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

Since 2018, when the Security Council recognized for the first time the link between armed conflict and hunger through resolution 2417 (2018), the number of people at risk of food insecurity has dramatically increased. As indicated in the relevant United Nations reports, the number of children suffering from severe malnutrition continues to rise exponentially due to conflicts.

That worsening situation is bound to produce multifaceted and long-lasting effects. Food-insecure children are exposed to long-term health problems and more prone to early school leaving. Food insecurity also makes girls more vulnerable to early forced marriages and sexual exploitation.

In some cases, the link between conflict and famine reaches an unacceptable climax, when parties to the conflict use the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. That clearly goes against international humanitarian law and should be investigated and prosecuted as a war crime by the International Criminal Court.

Conflict-induced hunger also stems from the denial of safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access, which prevents humanitarian actors from reaching all vulnerable communities and further contributes to the growing number of internally displaced people and refugees, especially in the light of the ravaging consequences of the pandemic and its spillover effects on humanitarian assistance. It is therefore of paramount importance to renew our international commitment to respecting international humanitarian law by ensuring not only the protection of civilians but also humanitarian access to the affected populations.

Another absolute necessity is to ensure the full protection of all humanitarian actors in the field. The tragic death of Italy's Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Luca Attanasio, his military protection officer, Carabinieri Vittorio Iacovacci, and the driver of the World Food Programme (WFP) convoy, Mustapha Milambo, was a shocking reminder of the importance of ensuring the safety and security of all humanitarian operators, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions and international humanitarian law.

Food crises call for urgent and effective responses, especially in situations of famine exacerbated by conflict. This is why Italy has progressively increased its financial contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund in support of timely and effective humanitarian interventions. At the same time, we have increased our humanitarian contribution in the field of food security, allocating more than \$50 million in 2020, particularly in Central Sahel and the greater Horn of Africa.

Food security and nutrition have always been a prominent feature of Italy's foreign policy and continue to be central to our overall approach to sustainable development, in accordance with the peace-humanitarian-development nexus. This is reflected also in our long-standing support to the Rome-based agencies — the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development — and in our chairmanship of the Group of Friends of Food Security and Nutrition in New York. More recently, Italy has promoted, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the constitution of a multi-stakeholder platform — denominated “the Food Coalition” — for unified global action in response to the impact of the coronavirus disease on food systems.

Promoting a coordinated, collective action that can help local food systems to survive a prolonged cycle of crisis will be at the centre of the Food Systems Summit, which provides a timely opportunity to make important advancements towards the realization of sustainable food systems. One of the five action tracks of the summit is devoted to building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress and to ensuring the functionality of food systems in areas prone to conflict, natural disasters or future pandemics — two objectives that are particularly relevant to today's debate. Italy is actively contributing to the preparation of the summit and will be pleased to host the pre-summit in Rome.

Last but not least, Italy is engaged in keeping food security and nutrition centrally positioned in the agenda of its Group of 20 presidency — especially through the works streams leading to the meetings of the Development and Agriculture Ministers — with the aim of promoting a transformational and systemic approach that can deliver for all, especially the most vulnerable and in the most vulnerable contexts.

Annex 42

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro

I would like to begin by thanking the United States for convening this important meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and others for their briefings.

As a staunch supporter of the concept of human security, Japan attaches great importance to access to quality nutrition across the world. Japan echoes the urgent need to respond to the deteriorating global food security situation resulting from the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus disease, which has resulted in the highest number of undernourished people. Rapid and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance is needed.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of resolution 2286 (2016), on health care in armed conflict, to which Japan contributed as a co-penholder in 2016. Despite the adoption of this resolution and the subsequent resolution 2417 (2018) on conflict and hunger, it is regrettable that we continue to witness increased attacks against medical and humanitarian personnel and their facilities in conflict zones. Safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to civilians under conflict continues to be a matter of high priority. The Security Council must use its influence to the fullest extent to facilitate the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and to ensure that the key provisions of international humanitarian law are respected.

Japan wishes to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the World Food Programme (WFP) for its dedicated efforts to end global hunger, as the Nobel Committee did last year in awarding its Peace Prize to the organization. The news was warmly welcomed by Japan, a major donor to the WFP, which contributed \$196 million last year. At the beginning of this year, we decided to make an additional contribution of over \$158 million to the WFP.

Japan has been a consistent partner of the WFP to improve food security around the world, particularly to support the most vulnerable people affected by conflict. In Yemen, Japan decided to provide \$25 million to the WFP this year to respond to the acute food crisis, ensuring nutritional support to over 2.8 million people. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the protracted conflict and violence have caused serious food insecurity, Japan decided to contribute over \$8.3 million to the WFP this year to provide 66,000 people with emergency food assistance and 31,000 children with school meals for 10 months. We also decided to contribute \$20.5 million to refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities in the Sahel region, where more than 668,000 people will have access to food and nutrition this year through the WFP.

Japan is determined to continue making every effort to address food insecurity, particularly in situations of armed conflict. We fully support the Secretary-General's initiative of the Food Systems Summit, which will take place during the General Assembly high-level week in September. Japan will also host the Tokyo nutrition for growth summit 2021 in December to accelerate global efforts to fight against malnutrition. We look forward to working closely with the United Nations in this endeavour.

Annex 43**Statement by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, Ayman Safadi**

[Original: Arabic]

May the peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

Food security has become a global concern and is one of the most significant challenges facing all of us, particularly in the Middle East, where conflicts have exacerbated suffering and restricted access to food, medicine and basic necessities. The conflicts are also a major obstacle to the work of the international agencies that are leading aid efforts and their ability to reach the neediest groups.

About 690 million people around the world are short of food. Every year, nearly 9 million people die of malnutrition.

In Yemen, the scene of the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today, more than 16 million people are suffering from hunger, including 5 million who are one step away from famine. Malnutrition rates have reached record levels, with nearly 400,000 children under the age of five suffering from acute malnutrition in the country. In Syria, 12.4 million people do not regularly receive enough food, with 4.5 million entering that category in the last year.

It is therefore more urgent now than ever before to strengthen international cooperation and coordination to prevent a global crisis of food shortages and malnutrition. Food security and conflict are interlinked, and dealing with them requires comprehensive solutions based on a solid international approach and effective international coordination.

The response to food security, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected areas, must address the interconnected causes and factors that impede development; to do so, it must, for example, strengthen social cohesion, develop the private sector and create jobs, and reduce the risks and consequences of conflicts. Addressing all these factors can improve food security.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has significantly increased food insecurity in the poorest and most vulnerable countries. A number of serious challenges to food security, however, predate the pandemic, in particular climate change, a shortage of drinking water around the world, global economic crises, regional unrest and a global asylum crisis. All these challenges have cast a shadow over food supplies for refugees and host communities alike.

Jordan, which hosts the second highest number of refugees per capita globally, remains committed to protecting refugees and providing them with the food, medicine and basic necessities that they need for a decent existence. As part of its pandemic response plan, Jordan recently became the first country in the world to vaccinate refugees free of charge.

The food and agriculture sector in Jordan provides a livelihood for about a quarter of the population and is one of the largest sources of jobs for refugees and women in Jordanian society. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the sector has proved to be a strong link in the global supply chain, with the potential for major expansion through more investment and greater reliance on technology, alternative energy and regional projects. Jordan is ready to marshal all its capabilities, particularly in relation to food and the pharmaceutical industries, to become a regional supply and storage centre.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Jordan supports your worthy endeavours. To quote from the address given by His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein as part of the Davos Agenda at the World Economic Forum in January:

“This pandemic has made us all equal, and let that be one of the positive lessons we take from this difficult time as we look ahead. Let our empathy drive our progress and recovery, as we build bridges to allow the better exchange of not only vital supplies and expertise but also the exchange of hope and positive ideas. I hope that we let our humanity lead the way.”

Annex 44

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, Magzhan Ilyassov, on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries

We thank the United States presidency for focusing attention on resolution 2417 (2018) as the pathway for the convening of the Food Systems Summit during the high-level week in September 2021. It is hence my honour to speak on behalf of the 32 landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) of the world and present a pathway by which agriculture and food systems can be made the backbone of our economies and sustainable development.

However, first, we need to acknowledge the many complex challenges that LLDCs encounter. These arise from their geographic remoteness, the lack of direct access to the sea and the high transport and trade tariffs connected to traversing through transit countries. This accounts for why one third of the population of LLDCs lives in extreme poverty, with moderate to severe food insecurity still persisting. The *2020 Global Report on Food Crises* indicates that 16 LLDCs were among the 50 countries with severe food crises.

Secondly, it is necessary to understand that this fragile situation stems from the costs of imported food items, as well as domestic food prices, which are three times higher in LLDCs than the coastal regions.

Thirdly, the brunt of this burden is often borne by vulnerable populations who are threatened by climate change, with its devastating impact on some 54 per cent of the terrain of LLDCs, which is comprised of arid and semi-arid areas or dry lands and not conducive to agriculture.

Fourthly, since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease pandemic, increasing food insecurity and potential instability have soared in LLDCs faster than their capacity to cope with these spiralling conditions.

In the light of the abovementioned, we realize that we can have a sustainable impact on peace only if food security and nutrition initiatives are implemented as part of a larger and broader set of multisectoral, humanitarian, development and peace-related strategies to avert conflicts. So, instead of short-term responses, LLDCs will need sufficient financial and technical support for investments in longer-term resilience building and disaster preparedness, in addition to their own resources. Therefore, the international cooperation of the United Nations system, development partners and donors will help build resilient livelihoods and risk-informed programmes to reduce poverty and effectively implement resolution 2417 (2018).

However, the situation is complex. Many conflict-induced food crises elsewhere can compound the economic crises in general in LLDCs or the neighbouring transit countries. Hence, we see the valuable role of a focal point or envoy for food security in directing and monitoring this process at the regional and global levels. Sustaining peace for LLDCs must be not a mere post-conflict activity, but rather a priority right in the pre-conflict phases with livelihood support, facilitated community-based approaches and capacity-building of governmental and civil society institutions. Only then can we prevent food security disruptions and displacements.

Furthermore, implementing resolution 1325 (2000), on the women and peace and security agenda, will greatly promote women's economic empowerment. It will also enhance social protection measures and thereby close the gender gap in agriculture, together with the engagement of youth groups.

Finally, the Group also calls on all to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect food-related civilian objects, including farms, markets, water systems, mills, food processing and storage sites, and hubs and means of food transportation.

In conclusion, LLDCs must be central to the international food security agenda. The Group will cooperate fully to make the 2021 Food Systems Summit a historic event for our common and secure humankind.

Annex 45

Statement by Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali

I would like to congratulate you, Madam, and the United States on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March and commend you for choosing food security for this open debate.

When children go to bed hungry, this should be the most important peace and security issue for our world and for the Security Council.

The world is facing one of its most challenging tests in our modern history. A pandemic that has left our world on its knees is also leaving millions of people hungry and with empty stomachs around the globe. Hunger and the rise in food insecurity preceded the pandemic. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has estimated that the number of undernourished people increased from 624 million in 2014 to 688 million in 2019. But the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has exacerbated the situation.

The direst warning came from the Executive Director of the World Food Programme when he predicted, the world “could be facing multiple famines of biblical proportions” (*S/2020/340, annex II*). He foresaw, as a result of the economic crisis and the conflicts combined with the decline in aid, a “perfect storm”, where the real danger is “that more people could potentially die from the economic impact of COVID-19 than from the virus itself” (*ibid.*).

The drivers underlying food insecurity and hunger include economic shocks, conflict and protracted crises, access to food, climate change and extreme weather. The economic slowdown of economies around the world prior to the pandemic led to negative growth in many areas and hardships for people especially in vulnerable and low-income countries. This, combined with the decline in oil prices, could lead to at least a 14 per cent decline in remittances to low and middle-income countries in 2021, according to the World Bank, adding 33 million people to those at risk of hunger.

Conflict is one of the most prevalent of causes of hunger. Eleven of the 12 countries that the World Bank designates as food-security hotspots — areas at the highest risk of food insecurity crises — are on the World Bank’s list of fragile and conflict situations for 2021.

Climate change and droughts were already causing disruptions and hardships in many countries around the world. In some countries, wheat production decreased by 50 per cent due to drought.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic struck. It plunged the global economy into the worst recession since the Second World War, according to Columbia University’s Earth Institute. The World Bank reported that the pandemic was estimated to push 150 million people around the world into extreme poverty by 2021.

Hunger increases on every continent and disproportionately affects low-income and poor countries. This effect of COVID-19 on hunger is projected “to continue for decades or even up to 2050”, according to Cynthia Rosenzweig, a senior researcher at the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

The pandemic’s heavy toll on food security is due to the enormous disruptions that it placed on the food supply chain, long lockdowns, job losses, increased consumer prices — with world food prices hitting a six-year high in 2020, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations — and trade restrictions

adding to the severity of the food-security crisis. All of this reversed decades of progress against hunger.

The food-security crisis hit low-income and fragile States the most due to the lockdown and their weak infrastructure, and because most of them depend on food imports. Issues of inclusion of vulnerable groups and internally displaced persons added to their hardships due to the volatility in food commodities.

Nowhere is this situation more pronounced than in the Middle East, where conflict, climate change, economic shocks and disruptions led to the worst food crisis that many countries have seen. The Middle East region is among the most vulnerable of the world as far as food security is concerned. It is among the world's largest food importers, which makes it more vulnerable to trade and supply-chain disruptions.

The region was suffering from negative growth in 2020, oil prices were at their lowest in decades, affecting local economies and expatriates alike, in addition to a drop in tourism and travel. Droughts due to climate change wiped out production of some food products, and access to food became a major problem because of the lockdowns.

Conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Libya created food crises of unprecedented magnitude. In Yemen, 80 per cent of the population required humanitarian assistance. In Syria, half of the population is now food insecure, requiring food and livelihood assistance, according to the Global Network against Food Crisis.

The region's displaced are the most vulnerable, but their host communities are not faring better now, especially in Lebanon. The Palestinians, mostly in Gaza, are food insecure and need assistance, according to humanitarian organizations. Refugees in Lebanon and Jordan have also been hit hard because of the situation in the region.

Global food prices rose everywhere around the world by close to 20 per cent from January 2020 to January 2021. For example, the monthly food costs in Syria increased by 240 per cent, and the number of food-insecure people rose by 1.4 million. Since 2019, the price of wheat in South Sudan increased by 62 per cent; that of rice in Nigeria rose by 30 per cent; and that of maize in Kenya rose by 60 per cent. This added to the food insecurity of hundreds of millions in developing countries. In addition to all of that, the invasion of locusts in Africa had a devastating effect and pushed millions more into hunger. The pandemic pushed over 1 billion children out of school, from Africa to Latin America and the Middle East, tipping millions of school children into hunger because, in poor countries, they depended on school meals for nutrition.

In Lebanon, the pandemic hit a country reeling under the weight of a financial crisis, political gridlock and an explosion that destroyed not only a large part of the city of Beirut but also the country's wheat silos in the port, where Lebanon's wheat supplies are stored.

A report of the Secretary-General states that Lebanon's worsening economic and financial crisis has resulted in over half the population sliding into poverty. The report notes the contraction by 20 per cent in gross domestic product in 2020.

People have lost their life savings and have limited access to their deposits. This in the middle of a debilitating financial crisis, which saw the Lebanese pound loses 85 per cent of its value since October 2019. The consumer price index rose by 145 per cent from November 2019 to November 2020, and food and beverage prices increased by around 402 per cent for the same period.

This past week, the situation got worse with the Lebanese pound dropping to a near-record-breaking 10,750 pounds to the United States dollar, as compared to 1,500 pounds to the dollar in 2019. The World Bank has estimated that “poverty and extreme-poverty rates in Lebanese households during 2020 have reached levels as high as 45 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively”.

The impact of this crisis translated into a food-security crisis and hunger among the most vulnerable population, never before seen Lebanon. The Prime Minister warned of a food crisis, and World Food Programme officials warned last year, even before the crisis worsened, of over 1 million Lebanese dropping under the food-poverty line in 2020.

The situation of displaced Syrians in Lebanon has also become more difficult as a result of the rise in food prices and the loss of the value of the Lebanese pound.

Food security and hunger resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic should be tackled on the local and global levels. International institutions are scaling up their assistance, but the international pool of donors and the resources are shrinking because the crisis is global now and everybody is hurting. The solution rests in international cooperation, working with multilateral international organizations, to keep the “food trade flowing” among nations and to stop trade restrictions.

But, most important, food security can be safeguarded only in a peaceful environment. It is incumbent on the Security Council to engage seriously in ending the conflicts around the world to stop food insecurity and fight hunger. Conflicts are the fires that are eating up peoples’ livelihoods and daily bread. To put food on poor people’s tables, we need to silence the guns depriving them of their daily bread.

Just as we are fighting the COVID-19 virus with a vaccine, we need to fight hunger and food insecurity by spreading peace and conflict resolution. Prevention should remain at the core of the collective actions of the Security Council and Member States, while addressing root causes so that crises do not morph into full-fledged conflicts, thus aggravating the humanitarian situation.

The implementation of Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2417 (2018), and compliance with international humanitarian law obligations are effective tools to that end. Keeping humanitarian assistance lines open during conflict is essential to prevent starvation and hunger.

Let us commit to not letting anyone go hungry. Let us end world hunger by making peace.

Annex 46

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Relations of the Kingdom of Lesotho, 'Matšepo Molise-Ramakoae

Allow me to begin by commending you, Madam President, for convening this high-level open debate of the Security Council on conflict and food security. Today's meeting is a clear demonstration of our resolve and determination to ensure that necessary measures are taken towards the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018).

Fostering food security is one of the daunting challenges confronting the international community. Sub-Saharan Africa appears to face harsh constraints with regard to attaining food security due to several factors, including conflict, climate change and other development challenges, such as weak political institutions, a fragile macroeconomic environment and fledgling fiscus. The situation has been exacerbated by the adverse impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). As a result, the upsurge of armed conflict in Africa is a menace to what little progress there would otherwise be towards achieving global food security.

The most destructive of all the factors fuelling food insecurity appears to be conflict, which disrupts livelihoods and increases the numbers of refugees and internally displaced civilians in conflict-ridden areas around the globe. The Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region, Yemen and Syria have degenerated into the most conflict-prone parts of the world.

Some academics have expanded the debate by broadly classifying the causes of armed conflict into natural and human-made factors. On the one hand, the natural factors include, but are not restricted to, climate change, population size, competition and diversity, while on the other hand the human-made factors include religious extremism, security deficiency, a sense of alienation, endemic elite corruption, inadequate and deceptive reporting systems, military brutality, adverse economic conditions, decrepit systems and underdeveloped infrastructure.

There is an intricate relation between food insecurity and violent armed conflict, as conflict can affect food security through other means and food security itself has been identified as a conflict determinant by some scholars. Conflict potentially reduces food availability and access, as the fighting may disrupt agricultural production and markets. During the course of a conflict, food systems are often damaged; this includes direct damage, such as the destruction of crops or arable land, but also labour diversion away from the agricultural sector, according to reports on this topic. Indeed, the 2017 report on *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization, found that after a long declining trend in the number of people undernourished, recent increases were observed most notably in areas affected by conflict.

Africa has taken encouraging steps to address food security and nutrition challenges. At the African Union summit in Equatorial Guinea in 2014, Heads of State and Government adopted a remarkable set of concrete agricultural goals to be attained by 2025. The Malabo summit reaffirmed that agriculture should remain high on the development agenda of the African Union and a critical policy initiative for African economic growth and poverty reduction. The Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth commits to accelerating agricultural growth by at least doubling current agricultural productivity levels by the year 2025. This resonates with the key principles and values of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.

During the review progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 at the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, increased understanding of interlinkages among all SDGs was evident. SDG 2, about “ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, promoting sustainable agriculture”, highlights the complex interlinkages among other development goals.

Turning to the southern African subregion, with particular focus on Lesotho, it is of paramount importance to note that the absence of armed conflict in recent years in the country has enabled the Kingdom of Lesotho to make an undertaking to modernize her agricultural systems.

With the assistance of the Millennium Challenge Corporation of the United States of America, the Parliament of Lesotho enacted the Land Administration Authority Act of 2010, which went a long way to addressing the issue of security of land ownership, including by removing impediments to women’s access to land. With the assistance of development partners, Lesotho has started applying farming methods intended to be resilient to climate and weather hazards. However, the country still faces major challenges. Climate change is one challenge. Severe drought conditions devastated the entirety of southern Africa in recent years and resulted in severe food shortages. Another challenge relates to the malnutrition and even malnourishment among children under the age of five, particularly those who reside in rural areas.

Lesotho also adopted its food and nutrition policy in 2016. The policy serves as the reference framework for all sectors and implementers to align their policies and programmes, guide the identification of food security-specific interventions as well as create an enabling the environment for food security. We are also proud to report that our Head of State, His Majesty King Letsie III, has, for a number of successive years, been the African Union Champion for Nutrition and also FAO Special Ambassador for Nutrition, positions through which he raises awareness and mobilizes Governments, international organizations and the general public to end hunger and malnutrition.

In conclusion, I wish to highlight that the ability to promote food security and sustainably feed a growing population by 2030 depends on dedicated investments in agriculture, social protection, disaster risk reduction, education, health and efforts to develop the capacities of farmers and fishers to produce food and manage the natural environment.

Finally, I wish to point out that it would be prudent for a United Nations focal point to help guide the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018) in order to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to civilians affected by armed conflict. Better coordinated efforts are required to meet the needs of people in conflict-ridden areas who are affected by major food crises and abnormal weather patterns. These efforts can be achieved through targeted emergency responses as well as medium- and long-term assistance to support recovery and build resilience, or, in other words, to build back better.

Annex 47**Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Justice and Culture of Liechtenstein, Katrin Eggenberger**

Liechtenstein welcomes you, Madam President, to the United Nations and to the presidency of the Security Council this month. I applaud you for your decision to focus the Council's attention on the complex interplay between conflict and hunger, and I am grateful for the invitation to participate in this debate. While we eagerly wait for the Security Council to restore established levels of transparency, inclusion and accountability — as other Charter bodies are making strides to do — we also hope that, in the meantime, contributions like these will help inform the Council's deliberations and decisions on a topic that is of concern to all of us.

Resolution 2417 (2018) was a landmark decision in the Security Council's overall approach to preventing and resolving conflict. It is a strong case in point that the Council must adopt a comprehensive concept of security to implement its mandate effectively. It also shows that the Security Council is part of an overall United Nations system aspiring to realize the generational promise enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals — a perspective that the Council would benefit from adopting more comprehensively. The potential for the Security Council to address food insecurity as a root cause of conflicts is vast and mostly untapped. At the same time, the Security Council is ultimately responsible to address conflict-induced food crises by ensuring humanitarian access to those in need. The Council's track record in that respect is, unfortunately, also very limited.

Only two weeks ago, the Security Council was briefed about the harrowing fact that 60 per cent of the population of Syria — 12.4 million people — does not have regular access to enough safe and nutritious food. In Syria's north-west, children suffer at unprecedented levels from hunger and its grave health consequences. Ten years of war by the Syrian authorities against its own population also represent 10 years of the Security Council failing the Syrian people — a singular and lasting stain on the Council's legacy. While a direct consequence of the armed conflict, the current humanitarian crisis in Syria no doubt has complex causes. They need to be addressed in the context of a comprehensive political solution to put Syria on the path to peace, prosperity and justice.

At the same time, it is evident that hunger continues to be used as an instrument of warfare and that those responsible are relentless in their efforts to sustain the suffering in a climate of pervasive impunity. Humanitarian access continues to be restricted or blocked arbitrarily by the Syrian authorities in a systematic abuse of the consent principle for cross-line aid deliveries. Therefore, the remaining cross-border humanitarian channel is a lifeline for 3 million people that the Security Council must preserve, ideally complemented by further cross-border channels in accordance with the humanitarian needs on the ground. Should the Council fail in its responsibility to ensure that assistance can be provided to all those who need it, the General Assembly should be prepared to take complementary action. The arbitrary denial of humanitarian access is a war crime, as is the starvation of a population, which has been included in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In the past 10 years, the Security Council has consistently failed to hold the perpetrators of atrocity crimes in Syria to account, with devastating effects in terms of civilian suffering. The work of the General Assembly-mandated International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism is thus of key importance and today provides the most direct pathway to justice, in addition to national prosecutions such as those undertaken recently in Germany. In the light of the far-reaching legal tools that the Security Council has at its disposal, it should urgently revisit its hostile stance

against international justice efforts and use its authority to ensure that the parties to conflict respect international humanitarian law.

The conflict in Yemen stands out as one of the most massive food security crises. The United Nations has tirelessly stressed the need for compliance by all sides with the fundamental rules of war, as enshrined in the Geneva Conventions, to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. Instead, the war has been characterized by the utmost disregard for international law. Hostilities continue to be fuelled by foreign intervention, and their consequences are borne by the Yemeni people, 80 per cent of whom are now in need of humanitarian assistance. Two thirds of all districts are pre-famine, an unconscionable state of affairs. Time and again we have seen the politicization of humanitarian access. To break the cycle of the conflict-induced food insecurity in Yemen, the Security Council must make humanitarian access its highest priority and not accept restrictions for United Nations and other humanitarian actors to safely and efficiently deliver assistance. The Council is credible in doing so only if it is ready to enforce its position. That is also a responsibility the Council has vis-à-vis the humanitarian actors on the ground, including the many dedicated United Nations staff.

The reports on the conflict in the Ethiopian Tigray region are extremely concerning, both from a humanitarian and an accountability perspective. The Security Council must ensure urgent access to the region for humanitarian actors, an end to the communications blackout and an investigation into the reports of atrocities. Liechtenstein welcomes the agreement between the World Food Programme and the Government of Ethiopia on humanitarian access as well as the leadership shown by Ireland in the Council's discussions. It should be the primary interest of the Security Council to ensure that its terms are fully honoured in order to prevent a worsening of the humanitarian crisis, and the worst-case scenario of a famine in the region.

While the Security Council's support for regional mediation efforts will, hopefully, soon lead to political progress towards the resolution of the crisis, the Council has also a responsibility to take the necessary steps to reduce human suffering and increase the prospects for a political solution wherever possible. It is regrettable that the Security Council has so far failed to express itself clearly in that respect, but today's debate should provide additional impetus for a Council product.

Annex 48

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations

Malta thanks the United States presidency for having organized this important high-level open debate on conflict and food security and also takes this opportunity to underline the tireless and invaluable work of David Beasley and his team at the World Food Programme and to congratulate them on having won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 for their remarkable work and contribution to humanity.

Malta fully aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (annex 33) while also delivering a few additional remarks in our national capacity.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 2417 (2018) in 2018 was a watershed moment, and its provisions continue to be as relevant as ever. It is a matter of deep concern that food insecurity is projected to increase in 2021, also considering the gender dimension of food insecurity, where women and girls are disproportionately impacted.

As highlighted by the World Food Programme in its response plan published in February, there are more than 30 million people in emergency conditions across 41 countries, and conflict has been identified as the single most important driver of humanitarian needs.

It is therefore highly appropriate for the Security Council to continue focusing on this issue and to address the link between conflict and food insecurity. This remains even more pressing given the exacerbating circumstances of the coronavirus disease and the grave humanitarian crises and food-insecurity situations that we are witnessing in multiple countries.

In Ethiopia, tensions are hindering the movement of goods, a situation that is having, and will continue to have, a negative impact on access to food. In Yemen, between January and June 2021, the number of food-insecure persons is projected to increase by nearly 3 million, to 16.2 million people. In Syria, 12.4 million people do not have regular access to enough safe and nutritious food. Other countries, such as Iraq, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan, are experiencing food insecurity linked to conflict and urgently need our collective focus.

We need to redouble our efforts to address the root causes of conflicts, prevent new hostilities from emerging and acknowledge the essential framework provided by international humanitarian law in preventing and addressing the prevalence of conflict-induced food insecurity.

Allow me to outline three principles that will serve as our guiding light should Malta be entrusted with the responsibility to serve as a member of the Security Council in 2023-2024.

First, in line with international humanitarian law, we stress the importance of all parties facilitating rapid, safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian actors. The unhindered, immediate delivery of life-saving assistance to the intended beneficiaries is first and foremost crucial to addressing food insecurity. More broadly, it is a basic norm of humanity that should serve as a unifying factor for the international community. We remind all entities of their obligation to allow and facilitate humanitarian access, and to ensure that humanitarian operations are not subject to targeted attacks or other direct and/or indirect forms of obstruction such as access and/or movement restrictions.

Secondly, we encourage all parties to abide by the explicit, and codified, prohibition against the use of starvation of a civilian population as a method of

warfare. Such an account reflects an utmost contempt for human life. Those crimes cannot go unpunished, and the Security Council is a fitting body to highlight this.

Thirdly, Malta reaffirms its wholehearted support for the role and presence of the United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations that ensure vital humanitarian assistance reaches the intended destination in very challenging circumstances, often paying the highest price for their selfless endeavours.

Malta has sought to play its part by proactively tackling cases of food insecurity, both conflict-induced and beyond. Most recently, Malta pledged a financial contribution during the 2021 virtual high-level pledging event for the Humanitarian Situation in Yemen.

In conclusion, we echo the message that international coordination through multilateral entities provides the appropriate avenue to face this challenge. In that vein, we would support the establishment of a United Nations focal point to better facilitate and coordinate the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018). Similarly, we look forward to the upcoming Secretary-General's Food Systems Summit and to producing concrete deliverables that alleviate the suffering of millions of people throughout the world.

Annex 49

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations

[Original: French]

I would like at the outset to thank the United States of America for having organized this open debate in the Security Council on the crucial issue of conflicts and food security. This debate is a good opportunity to shed light on the global humanitarian situation in 2021 and on the historic levels of food insecurity that lie ahead for several countries, particularly those in instability and conflict situations.

Morocco also welcomes the initiative of the Secretary-General in convening, at the level of Heads of State, the Food Systems Summit during the General Assembly high-level week to be held in September 2021. Morocco represents the Group of African States on the Summit Advisory Committee and is sparing no effort to mobilize the relevant national and African stakeholders around the Summit's vision, which is to reform food systems towards sustainable and inclusive models while raising awareness of the security consequences of climate change and the resulting impact on food security and international peace and security.

Making agriculture an engine of economic growth and an effective tool in the fight against rural poverty is the objective of the Green Morocco Plan strategy launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God be with him, in 2008. In 2021, Moroccan agriculture continues to be at the centre of sustainable development and food security concerns. In addition to its contribution to the national economy of nearly 14 per cent, its real socioeconomic impact is much higher thanks in particular to its spillover effects upstream, downstream and through household final monetary consumption expenditure.

As such, the Green Morocco Plan has created a new dynamic in the agricultural sector in Morocco. Since the implementation of the plan, private investment in the agricultural sector is estimated at nearly 56 billion Moroccan dirhams. In 50 years, Moroccan agriculture has made great progress in terms of modernization and diversification, and agricultural activity continues to constitute one of the pillars of the Moroccan economy.

Morocco has also improved its self-sufficiency in certain foodstuffs in a context marked by a growing integration of the international market. The Kingdom thus meets 100 per cent of its meat, fruit and vegetable needs; 82 per cent of its milk needs, 50 per cent of its sugar needs, 60 per cent of its cereal needs; and 20 per cent of its oil needs.

Internationally, Morocco considers the promotion of the national agricultural sector and its integration into its global and continental environment as a priority. As such, Morocco provides support to several African sister countries and finances several programmes in the field of agriculture and marine fisheries. Thus, Morocco contributes, through the concerted action of its Government and its private sector, to strengthening food security in African countries by supporting sustainable agricultural production and improving water management and soil quality and nutrition.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis has highlighted certain global vulnerabilities: the global response to the pandemic has not been coordinated and has been unable to help the poorest countries and their peoples owing to the weakness of the existing health-care infrastructure. Nor has it been able to manage the economic consequences. In addressing the issue of food security, the Security Council should focus on those shortcomings while addressing other major challenges ranging from climate change and growing inequality to technological disruptions and terrorism.

In addition, fragile agricultural and food systems, especially in Africa and other low-income regions, have multiplied the impact of the pandemic. If left unchecked, those systems' shortcomings could intensify the shock of fresh crises in the coming decades.

The World Food Programme warns that the number of people suffering from acute food insecurity in low- and middle-income countries, especially in Africa, could almost double in 2021, to 265 million, as a result of the pandemic. Strengthening African agricultural systems is vital in order to make the continent more self-reliant and resilient when faced with fresh shocks.

Ensuring the functioning of agricultural and food systems in Africa and in developing regions is equally vital, as food and agriculture play a central role in the elaboration of health-care and socioeconomic systems.

Lockdowns and social distancing measures linked to COVID-19 have not been sufficient in the least developed countries, whose economies are largely based on the informal sector, mainly because of fears that such measures could significantly affect people's ability to earn enough to feed their families.

Strengthening global security also requires transforming agricultural and food systems. Terrorism feeds on the deprivation of rural populations in regions such as the Sahel, where they can earn more by engaging in illegal activities than by working in the legal economy and public services.

The reorganization of agriculture is a prerequisite for sustainable nutrition for the global population, which could reach nearly 11 billion by the end of this century.

A host of international events will offer an excellent opportunity to move forward on those issues, including the African Green Revolution Forum, which Morocco will host this year in preparation for the United Nations Food Systems Summit, to galvanize African voices around that event.

Morocco reiterates the importance of the need for Africa to speed up, with the support of the international community, the transformation of its agricultural and food systems in order to enable the world to meet the targets set by the Sustainable Development Goals.

Annex 50**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations, Neville Melvin Gertze**

Namibia is pleased to be participating in this high-level open debate on conflict and food security. Food insecurity, especially in conflict areas of the world, features prominently and repeatedly in one report of the Secretary-General after another. In some cases, food insecurity arises as a result of conflict. It is therefore clear that in order for conflict-driven food insecurity to end or to diminish, conflicts must stop.

For that to happen, peace, dialogue and reconciliation should be nurtured and sustained. However, those are not the only solutions. Strong rule of law, improved governance and putting the interests of the people above personal interests also play an indispensable role in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution.

Not all conflicts are the same. For example, some are driven by power, others by ideology. As such, in some cases the eruption of conflict cannot be attributed to any measure of poor governance, but rather to external influence in a country's domestic affairs for political reasons, regardless of how that influence is framed and projected. In such cases, the Security Council has an obligation to pay attention not only to the manifestation of the conflict but also to the underlying causes.

The emergence and persistence of conflicts and food insecurity challenge the moral conscience of humankind to extend love and show care to the displaced and other affected people. It also puts diplomacy to the test. In that connection, His Excellency Mr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, keeps reminding Namibians that the failure of diplomacy is the beginning of war. Humanitarian personnel who are assisting those experiencing acute food insecurity must be protected, and measures must be put in place and implemented to ensure that aid is delivered in a timely way and without hindrances. Humanitarian personnel do not cause conflict, and neither are they agents of conflict. Namibia therefore condemns all attacks on humanitarian personnel and civilian infrastructure, as they are merely the victims of the disagreements of others.

Early warning signs for conflicts, if ignored, may lead to the evolution and unfolding of more diverse risks in the form of political intolerance, deliberate disruption of the electoral process, incitement to violence and conflict, among others.

Peace cannot reign with weak or non-existent peacebuilding measures, or when these remain unimplemented due to the lack of political will. To fend off food insecurity and their pernicious consequences and to end conflicts, fragile and deteriorating States should be assisted in order to build their capacity to preserve their sovereignty. Considering the degree of interdependence in the world today, assistance rendered to strengthen any State's institutions should be regarded as a pre-emptive, indirect manner to address food insecurity that — in one way or another — could otherwise affect other States in future.

Climate change remains a serious challenge that directly impacts every sector of the economy. As such, water cooperation is all the more important. The world is witnessing the interlinkages between water and population migration. Acute migration is affecting food security in many parts of the world, which poses a direct challenge to Government legitimacy and resilience. Migration brings its own challenges, including the emergence of water rights and land disputes, which contribute to food insecurity and precipitate conflicts. Investment in water, climate adaptation and mitigation should therefore be viewed as an investment in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Namibia has no objection to a United Nations focal point to help guide the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018), but the resolution is meant to ensure the smooth delivery of aid to civilians, to protect humanitarian personnel and to safeguard international law — not to resolve conflicts. While we appreciate the importance of this resolution, we can reduce food insecurity only if it is implemented alongside other instruments designed to end conflict.

Annex 51

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations

On 24 March it will be three years since the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018). Three years on, the link between conflict and hunger is more apparent than ever.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has long been a prominent advocate for addressing that link. The unanimous adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), initiated by the Netherlands, Sweden, Côte d'Ivoire and Kuwait, was a key milestone in the fight against conflict-induced hunger. Not only did it for the first time put the spotlight on conflict as the most important driver of food insecurity, it also condemned the use of starvation as a method of war. We are therefore pleased to see that other Security Council members are taking this issue forward.

With the resolution approaching its third birthday, it remains, unfortunately, as relevant as ever. The 2021 Global Humanitarian Overview, published by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, projects a historic level of food insecurity, with famine looming in several countries, due in large part to conflict. While climate and economic shocks are increasingly driving needs, conflict remains the root cause of acute food insecurity in an increasing number of countries. In 2019, 77 million people in 22 countries experienced hunger due to armed violence.

I would like to highlight three elements that need more attention if we are to successfully fight hunger and implement the spirit of resolution 2417 (2018).

First, prevention should be on top of all our agendas. Addressing the root causes of conflict and mitigating their effects on populations is the most sustainable way to fight hunger. If we want long-term stability, we need to develop more sustainable, resilient, equitable and inclusive food systems. Only then can communities provide for their families when exposed to a shock. The Secretary-General's Food Systems Summit in 2021 represents a major opportunity and serves as a testimony of inclusive multilateralism. We are fully committed to achieving an ambitious outcome from that Summit.

The Netherlands has also taken the initiative, through the regional Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to operationalize resolution 2417 (2018) and contribute to resilient food systems in protracted crises by addressing the causal link between conflict and food insecurity. The overall outcome of the Programme will be resilient livelihoods and food systems that contribute to sustainable peace at the local level.

Secondly, we stress the importance of early warning. Resolution 2417 (2018) gave the Security Council the tools to play a pivotal role in averting famine. It enables the Security Council to call on the Secretary-General to inform the Council as soon as famine is looming. The resolution has proven to be effective. In 2018, the Security Council triggered resolution 2417 (2018), leading to better access and, ultimately, to averting famine in South Sudan. In October, resolution 2417 (2018) was triggered again, but did not yield any improvements in the situation in Burkina Faso, north-eastern Nigeria, Yemen or South Sudan. More in-depth and frequent reporting to the Security Council could strengthen the early-warning mechanism and be an important step towards action.

That brings me to my third point — action. The deliberate starvation of civilians is unlawful and amoral and must be stopped. With the unanimous adoption of resolution 2417 (2018) and the amendment to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, extending the application of starvation as a war crime

to non-international armed conflicts, the international community has made clear that deliberate starvation is unacceptable and punishable.

I therefore think that we need to take previous successes to the next level and discuss more concretely how we can make sure that justice is done for the victims of starvation. Preparing for criminal accountability starts with data collection. Information and evidence are needed about the scale and occurrence of starvation, but also about its perpetrators. To that end, we need to build capacity. When evidence is clear and attributable, consequences must follow because action is what the victims of war crimes deserve. The Netherlands stands ready to do its part.

Lastly, I would like to focus on two specific crisis contexts — Yemen and Ethiopia.

To start with Yemen, alarm bells regarding the dire food situation in the country have rung steadily over the past years. In its food security and price monitoring, the World Food Programme reports that the food security situation in Yemen continues to be alarming. The causes are ongoing conflict and the combination of a cumulative deterioration in macroeconomic conditions, the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic, a reduction in food assistance, the fuel crisis in the areas under the control of Sana'a-based authorities and flash floods across the country. In a briefing to the Security Council in January (see S/2021/56), Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock called for immediate action to prevent a conflict-induced massive famine in Yemen.

Reports by the United Nations Panel of Experts and the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen have consistently highlighted cases in which warring parties compromise access to basic food and objects indispensable for the survival of the Yemeni population. That happens either directly, through attacks on vital infrastructure or mining agricultural areas, or indirectly, by restricting access, halting the payment of salaries, hampering humanitarian efforts or exploiting the war economy. Starvation in Yemen is a human-made consequence of warring parties that prolong a conflict at the expense of the Yemeni population. Action must be taken to ensure accountability in Yemen. That is why the Netherlands has helped to strengthen the Group's mandate in the Human Rights Council to enable it to independently investigate human rights abuses in order to prevent impunity for those responsible.

The theme of the today's Council discussion is particularly acute with regard to Tigray, Ethiopia. The outbreak of the hostilities that started in November poses a serious risk of leading to mass starvation. Detailed information on what is happening on the ground is scarce, but the reports we do receive are disconcerting. That includes United Nations reports of widespread and ongoing violence, forced displacement and looting by various armed groups. It also includes reports of attacks on objects critical to the survival of the civilian population and of restrictions on humanitarian access in a region where 950,000 people already depended on food assistance prior to the hostilities. It is worth remembering that such acts may be in violation of international law, which prohibits the use of starvation as a method of warfare. As such, it is paramount that both the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights conduct investigations into those alleged violations. Perpetrators must be held to account.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore calls for full and unfettered humanitarian access to the more than 4.5 million people in need and for a well-funded humanitarian operation that reduces the risk of hunger. The announcement by the Ethiopian Prime Minister, on 3 March, that aid agencies can operate in the region and are no longer restricted by the need to obtain access permits is a promising step,

if fully implemented by the Ethiopian Federal Government and forces supporting its military operations in Tigray. The current situation reinforces my country's belief that a full cessation of hostilities, followed by a political process, is the only way to effectively address the risk posed by a combination of hunger and conflict, which could further afflict the people of Tigray.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the importance of breaking the cycle of conflict-induced food insecurity, highlight the critical role resolution 2417 (2018) can play and stress that action needs to be taken. Making conflict-induced hunger morally toxic requires persistence. Today's Security Council meeting, under the presidency of the United States, demonstrates that persistence.

Annex 52**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations, Jaime Hermida Castillo**

[Original: Spanish]

As stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, given the intrinsic link between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the peace and stability of our nations, there can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without development. Without peace, all the other goals will be impossible to achieve, especially the main goal of eradicating poverty.

Conflicts and disruptions caused by the negative impact of climate change and economic shocks continue to be a major driver of food crises around the world, which traps the most vulnerable populations in a situation of severe food insecurity, poverty and hunger.

We stand in solidarity with all countries affected by conflict and insecurity, especially those facing the food crisis in the Horn of Africa. We hope that the international community will implement the necessary measures in order to resolve that crisis.

Nicaragua is a faithful advocate of a world with a culture of peace, harmony and love among nations, where multilateralism with all its international norms prevails, in conjunction with international and regional organizations, over the greed and avarice of the most powerful, in order to promote solidarity, cooperation and relations on an equal footing, for the benefit of the sustainable development of all our peoples.

The reality is that, given the current pace of the implementation, SDG 2 of the 2030 Agenda — “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030” — will not be achieved. Therefore, a profound change in the global food and agriculture system, as well as increased agricultural productivity and sustainable food production, is needed to help reduce the risk of hunger for millions of people.

Nicaragua believes that, as long as the imposition of unilateral coercive measures on developing countries continues, zero hunger will not be achieved, thus also jeopardizing the achievement of the other 16 SDGs. All coercive economic measures unilaterally imposed on our peoples by certain powerful countries must be immediately suspended, as these sanctions or aggression are one of the main obstacles to the eradication of poverty and hunger. Moreover, the imposition of such measures in times of pandemic is tantamount to a crime against humanity.

It is important to bear in mind that food security requires equitable economic growth, job creation, income generation and technological progress, particularly in the agricultural sector.

It is imperative that the international community continue to take urgent and coordinated action to address the pandemic, without neglecting efforts to protect and strengthen global, regional and local food value chains.

Nicaragua is a country that lives off of its own national production, with the natural resources and capacities of the population and the productive sectors in competitiveness strategy, improving the quality of products, the agro-industrialization of primary products, dialogue and good relations with all productive sectors so as to take full advantage of the domestic market for national production.

The Government of Nicaragua is implementing programmes such as the Bono Productivo Alimentario and the Microcrédito Justo Usura Cero, in line with the

priority of guaranteeing that Nicaraguan families have access to sufficient, nutritious and healthy food.

The implementation of measures aimed at transforming the food systems of developing countries to ensure greater benefits for our peoples requires greater political will on the part of developed countries, particularly with regard to financing and technology transfer to developing countries.

Annex 53**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations, Tijjani Muhammad Bande**

Let me thank the delegation of the United States for organizing today's debate. We also thank other briefers for sharing their perspectives on this very important subject.

Food security happens when the entire population of a country has access to enough safe and nutritious food to maintain a productive and healthy life. The provision of nutritious food within a society guarantees the security and protection of a country from the negative effects of hunger. Sadly, not all countries across the globe are self-sufficient in terms of food security. A nation that has food insecurity is at the mercy of other nations that are food secure, exposing itself to the dangers associated with food insecurity, including unfair economic and trade relations.

According to the 2009 report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), over a billion people across the globe are not food secure. Most food-insecure people live in the developing world. Conflict exacerbates the situation.

The World Health Organization highlights three elements that must define food security across global communities: food availability, food access and food utilization. Any country that is short of these three elements is deemed to be food insecure and would, more often than not, heavily rely on importation from other countries to supplement its needs.

The United Nations estimates the number of people suffering from chronic malnutrition in Africa at 257 million, with sub-Saharan Africa accounting for 237 million of this number, according to the 2018 FAO report. Clearly, conflict, including terrorism, accounts for the worsening situation. Other factors are environmental and technical.

In collaboration with the FAO, the African Union is developing policies and strategies for country-specific plans to reduce post-harvest losses, in line with the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. Apart from reducing the total amount and quality of food availability, food insecurity also exacerbates already-fragile poverty-ridden rural economies by eroding income generation along the food value chain, which affects the accessibility and sustainability of food security.

At the subregional level in West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has developed an agricultural policy under the umbrella of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme to address some of the challenges related to productivity and competitiveness in the agricultural sector of ECOWAS member States.

At the national level, Nigeria has undertaken certain measures to achieve Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. For example, it is transforming its rain-fed agriculture and artisanal fishery to modern and commercial irrigated agriculture and aquaculture using the reservoir created by the impoundment of over 200 dams to achieve food security and nutrition.

Furthermore, as part of its continuous efforts to drastically reduce dependence on rain-fed farming, Nigeria launched, with the support of the World Bank, the Transforming Irrigation Management Nigeria Project with a credit facility of \$495 million. In addition, in January 2020, the Government, in collaboration with the World Bank, put in place the Agro-Processing, Productivity Enhancement and

Livelihood Improvement Support Project, with over \$200 million to cover six states ravaged by the Boko Haram terrorist group in the north-east of the country.

The Government of Nigeria believes that sustainable agricultural production, food security, food safety and nutrition are key elements for the eradication of poverty. It acknowledges the commencement of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028) and the global action plan for the Decade in support of the development, improvement and implementation of public policies on family farming, as well as national plans based on inclusive and effective governance, including timely and geographically relevant data within the first five years of the stipulated duration of the Decade.

Let me conclude by informing the Council that, for optimal utilization of the land and irrigation facilities under the auspices of the River Basin Development Authorities in Nigeria, my country has successfully developed several hectares of irrigated land to support diversification of the economy, guarantee food security and create jobs for its teeming population. Efforts must therefore be sustained at the national, subregional, regional and other multilateral levels to ensure food sufficiency and security for all. It is most fitting that the issue of food security is now garnering the attention it has in the Security Council.

Annex 54**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Munir Akram**

We thank the United States for convening today's high-level open debate in the Security Council on conflict and food security, and we welcome this important initiative.

Situations of conflict and foreign occupation remain among the principal sources of global hunger and starvation. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, nearly 60 per cent of some 700 million chronically food-insecure people around the world live in conflict-affected countries. Likewise, of the world's 144 million stunted children, 80 per cent live in countries affected by conflict. The World Food Programme has warned of the danger of famine in some of the poorest countries and conflict zones.

It is a matter of great concern that starvation and collective punishment have often been used as tools to advance military or political objectives, in stark violation of international humanitarian law and resolution 2417 (2018). A case in point is the inhuman military siege imposed by India on Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir since 5 August 2019 to forcibly change the status and demographic composition of the United Nations-recognized disputed territory, as well as to deny the Kashmiri people their United Nations-prescribed right to self-determination.

According to estimates, the direct economic loss incurred by the civilian population in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir as a result of this military siege is well over \$ 5.3 billion. Nearly half a million jobs have been lost. The agriculture sector, which is a mainstay for the majority of Kashmiris, has been systematically crippled.

The complete communications blackout, the imposition of shoot-at-sight curfews and the severing of all transport links, which have been imposed for nearly 600 days now, has prevented Kashmiri farmers from reaching their farmlands, which has triggered acute food shortages. Thousands of acres of farmland remained untended. Kashmiris have watched helplessly as the produce in their apple orchards has rotted away. Farm products, constituting the entire year's worth of income for most Kashmiri farmers, have perished without reaching markets.

Such deliberate actions to coerce the civilian population into submission constitute violations of resolution 2417 (2018), which, inter alia, calls for protecting civilian objects, including sources of food production and distribution, and condemns actions that deprive civilian populations of all essentials indispensable for their survival. Those measures run counter to General Assembly resolution 3201 (S-VI) of 1 May 1974, which, among other things, guarantees for peoples living under foreign occupation effective control over their natural resources and economic activities. Pakistan supports the resolution of ongoing conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy on the basis of United Nations resolutions and international agreements.

A peaceful and stable Afghanistan is indispensable for peace and stability in our region and beyond. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan, has consistently maintained that the conflict in Afghanistan can be ended, not by military force, but through a political settlement that engages the full spectrum of Afghanis across the country's political landscape. We believe that sustainable peace in Afghanistan can be achieved only through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. We have therefore fully facilitated the Afghan peace and reconciliation process.

Pakistan is Afghanistan's largest trading partner and continues to help provide support in the areas of agriculture, health, education and infrastructure development. Pakistan has committed \$1 billion to development in Afghanistan, of which nearly \$500 million has already been used for infrastructure and capacity-building projects.

Pakistan believes that infrastructure development and regional connectivity through Afghanistan can spur economic growth for the entire region. Pakistan and Afghanistan naturally link the Central Asian and Eurasian heartland to the Arabian Sea, which offers immense opportunities for regional connectivity through mutual cooperation. Such projects will benefit the Afghan people by generating economic activity and helping lift millions of Afghans and other people in the region out of poverty and isolation.

Conflict-induced food insecurity has assumed even greater significance in the wake of the coronavirus disease pandemic, which will push around 100 million people into extreme poverty and add 83 to 132 million to the total number of undernourished people around the world. Failure to address this challenge will exacerbate existing global and national inequalities, thereby feeding the vicious cycle of hunger, deprivation, poverty and conflict.

The world faces multiple challenges in recovering from the pandemic and achieving the vital first two Sustainable Development Goals: "No Poverty" and "Zero Hunger". There is lack of financing, shortage of investment, trade distortion, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, the degradation of agricultural lands and forests, an impending water crisis, loss of biodiversity, and polluted rivers and oceans. The world needs a common plan and strategy for global recovery and the survival and prosperity of all humankind. We must address the systemic causes of poverty and hunger, eliminate rural poverty and protect our food systems, which are the main source of livelihoods for nearly 4.5 billion people.

The huge agricultural subsidies provided by certain richer economies distort global markets and make it impossible for farmers in developing countries to compete. International agricultural trade must therefore be rationalized. Governments need to be more active in ensuring adequate and fair prices for agricultural and food products and not leave farmers at the mercy of corporations. Moreover, we need to invest in sustainable agriculture infrastructure, apply new technologies to enhance food production and ensure efficient usage of water and land, and rethink our patterns of food consumption and production.

While discussing the linkages between conflict and food security, we must also take into account the impact of unilateral coercive measures designed to intensify food insecurity, aggravate poverty and endanger livelihoods in the targeted countries. The negative impact of such measures has been repeatedly affirmed in numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and by the Human Rights Council. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council have recognized that people should not be deprived of their means of subsistence, especially food and medicines, even when enforcement action may have been authorized by the Security Council.

Overcoming the challenge posed by linkages between conflict and food security requires a comprehensive response and concerted international efforts. We must address not only the symptoms but also their underlying causes. Pakistan hopes that today's debate will help generate momentum for meaningful action to this end.

Annex 55**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We welcome the initiative of the United States presidency of the Security Council this month in convening today's high-level open debate focused on the links between food insecurity and conflict. This problem takes on even greater meaning against the convulsive and uncertain backdrop we are facing today, which calls for a united response from the international community and concerted action by the Security Council. We are grateful for the lucid briefings delivered by the briefers.

Peru notes with great concern the current estimates and future projections of historic levels of food insecurity in countries involved in situations of armed conflict as well as the devastating impact this has had on millions of civilians, including women, children and persons with disabilities. It is clear that ongoing violence in various parts of the world translates into unemployment, lack of basic goods and services, poverty and marginalization — factors which, combined with the obstacles that parties often impose on an effective humanitarian response, significantly increase the risk of famine. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has exacerbated this scourge, deepening income loss and unemployment, and exacerbating and making more visible internal inequalities, creating a scenario that the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) has described as a “hunger pandemic”.

For example, we know that conflict is the main driver of serious food insecurity in Yemen, which affects 16 million of its citizens, 5 million of whom are already on the brink of famine. Peru notes with regret the extreme vulnerability of the Yemeni population, intensified by the collapse of public services and the economy, the interference by Ansar Allah authorities in the delivery of humanitarian aid, and the recent forced displacements resulting from the evolving war in the town of Ma'rib.

Similarly, we are following with concern the ever-present threat of famine in Syria, Gaza, Libya, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia, Tigray and other areas, which makes it clear that we must urgently recognize — in word and in deed — that there is no military solution to these conflicts, and that there is a need to consistently prioritize the protection of civilians.

In this delicate context, we underscore the importance of resolution 2417 (2018), adopted in 2018 after five months of arduous negotiations, in which Peru played a crucial role. The resolution's value lies in recognizing, for the first time and unequivocally, the close correlation between belligerent confrontations and food insecurity, and in highlighting the proactive role the Council can play in addressing this challenge. We wish to highlight the resolution's reaffirmation of the obligation of the parties to allow safe, timely and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance, to facilitate the import and distribution of essential goods and to refrain from attacking infrastructure related to food supply, in line with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 — in short, to establish that famine as a method of warfare will not be tolerated.

In the light of the importance of resolution 2417 (2018), we support any initiative that contributes to its more effective and robust implementation, which certainly includes the designation of a focal point, more exhaustive monitoring by the Security Council of possible or imminent cases of conflict-induced food insecurity, pursuit of a preventive approach, and the energetic imposition of sanctions against actors that hinder humanitarian assistance or divert food. Accordingly, Peru commends the work of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in alleviating human suffering in very complex logistical circumstances and despite a high risk of contagion of such diseases as COVID-19. At the same time, we note that their

capacities are being overwhelmed by the scale of the tragedy and that, in various scenarios, the battle against the famine is being lost.

That makes it essential to continue mobilizing the support of the international community, whether by providing the necessary financial resources to the respective humanitarian response plans led by the United Nations, increasing contributions to stabilize and reactivate the local economy or influencing the parties to return to the path of moderation, avoid new escalations and promote an easing of tensions.

Similarly, it is crucial to strengthen coordination with countries that border conflict zones and those that have food production surpluses in WFP-led efforts to ensure a more efficient supply of essential goods to the most vulnerable populations. The establishment of food banks could also be explored to mitigate possible situations of famine caused by fighting, with the participation of the private sector and civil society. For example, Peru has a food bank that has played a decisive role during the current pandemic.

Peru hopes that, in the coming weeks and months, there will be new and substantive progress on the sensitive issue that brings us together today, as it is our moral and legal obligation to put an end to the suffering of millions of civilians trapped in conflict situations.

Annex 56**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Poland to the United Nations**

Let me begin by thanking the United States delegation for organizing this timely debate on an incredibly important set of concerns.

Two years ago, during Poland's presidency of the Security Council, the Council voted unanimously to adopt resolution 2417 (2018), on conflict-induced food insecurity. The adoption of that document marked a milestone towards the general understanding that the connection between armed conflict and famine is undeniable. It also recognized the important role that the Council can play in addressing such an emergency.

Unfortunately, in the past two years, the situation regarding food security in conflict-affected areas, as indicated in the relevant report of the Secretary-General, has not only failed to improve, but continues to deteriorate as we speak.

Poland firmly believes that conflict remains one of the root causes of acute food insecurity. The World Bank estimates that geographical areas at the greatest risk of hunger are concentrated in 12 countries, out of which 11 are on the list of fragile and conflict situations.

The ongoing pandemic is yet another challenge that has emerged as a severe problem contributing to food insecurity. The epidemiological situation has put many places in a constant danger of supply chain disruption, which, unfortunately, is one of the negative consequences of the sanitary restrictions. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is considered to have increased the total number of acutely food-insecure people from 149 million in 2019 to 272 million by the end of 2020. Those numbers are just unacceptable and require an urgent response from the international community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated previous inequalities, leading to complex and severe consequences for multiple levels of human existence. It is greatly impacting human mobility. Due to restrictions, assistance to asylum seekers has slowed, and the economic situation of many refugees and internally displaced persons has significantly deteriorated. One of the most dangerous consequences is the growing threat of hunger and malnutrition, the gravest for populations in conflict zones.

We also draw attention to the impact that conflict-induced famine and food insecurity in situations of armed conflict may have on vulnerable groups of civilians, including, inter alia, children and persons with disabilities.

In war-torn Yemen, for example, as indicated by the United Nations, childhood cases of life-threatening malnutrition rose by 15.5 per cent in 2020 to 98,000. With that being acknowledged, we reiterate the critical need to respect the rights of vulnerable groups and to guarantee adequate protection and the assistance they require.

No less significant is the necessity to ensure safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians, which is often hampered by violence, insecurity and bureaucracy. Unfortunately, delays in the provision of humanitarian aid still remain very high on the international agenda.

We urge all parties to armed conflict to respect international humanitarian law in all circumstances. Poland strongly condemns the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. Responding effectively to humanitarian needs in armed conflict settings is of paramount importance.

In that regard, I would like to stress that in Polish aid programming for the current and upcoming years we indicate that food security has become one of the most pressing issues within the global humanitarian and development policy.

We welcome the prioritization of food security in the COVID-19 emergency by relevant United Nations agencies and international organizations in their plans for 2021 and beyond. We recognize in particular the role of the World Food Programme in that matter. In that respect, Poland is a proud contributor to its activities in Kenya and Syria, with donations amounting to 1.47 million zlotys in total.

Malnutrition and hunger still represent a serious challenge in many countries of Africa and Middle East. Poland remains an active donor, taking actions focused on combating and preventing malnutrition, especially among children. During the past two years, through our project implemented in Senegal, Polish aid provided assistance to more than 2,000 households. We believe that knowledge-sharing with, and training for, local societies by Polish experts could bring us closer to the common goal, which is hunger eradication.

In Palestine, to overcome water shortages and ongoing deprivation of farmed land, Polish aid, together with the Polish Centre for International Aid, implemented several projects focusing on the installation of hydroponic and tank systems that allow multiple harvests of fresh vegetables and herbs per year. In addition, Poland successfully implemented a pilot project in which wastewater from sewage treatment plants is used for farming purposes.

Poland also supports agricultural cooperatives in Palestine and Lebanon in capacity-building for the better management of the cultivation cycle, as well as professional marketing of food products.

Food security is a growing global concern that cannot be adequately addressed without a truly global response. It is now time to act so that we are not caught off guard. The current pandemic, which has affected each and every one of us with no explicit prior warning, should be our wake-up call to step up our efforts in addressing other global challenges, with food security definitely being one of the most pressing.

Annex 57**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, Francisco Duarte Lopes**

Portugal aligns itself with the statement submitted on behalf of the European Union (annex 33) and, in its national capacity, would like to add the following points.

In recent years, we have been witnessing an increasing number of violent conflicts and wars and their devastating impact on civilians, especially rural populations, and their means of survival, affecting their livelihoods, agriculture, infrastructures and economy and leading to hunger and malnourishment.

Phenomena such as inter- and intra-State conflict, forced migration, displacement and food insecurity are mutually reinforcing, and the emergence of non-traditional threats to security, such as terrorism and climate change, inter alia, are further exacerbating that link.

No sustainable solution to food insecurity and famine in conflict-affected environments can be achieved without peace. Portugal therefore reiterates its support for full compliance with the call for a global ceasefire, as expressed by the Secretary-General and echoed by resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021), in the wake of the coronavirus disease pandemic, as it compounded an already alarming situation and increased vulnerabilities in countries with pre-existing food crises.

Responding to food insecurity and famine in conflict-affected environments requires a comprehensive approach, focusing on the most fragile food-insecure contexts, particularly in protracted and forgotten crises. In that context, initiatives such as the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, developed by the Committee on World Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, may provide relevant bases for further work.

Such further work, in our view, should privilege an increase in triple nexus collaboration, bridging humanitarian, development and peace actors and capitalizing on the comparative advantages of each pillar, while taking into account their respective mandates, in order to reduce vulnerabilities and unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address the root causes of conflict and food crises. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development International Network on Conflict and Fragility on the triple nexus approach has been conducting valuable work in that regard, encouraging lessons learned and the sharing of good practices.

Furthermore, Portugal supports the designation of a United Nations focal point to help guide the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018), namely, by facilitating collaboration between United Nations food-related agencies, reinforcing preventive measures, including food security clusters, to improve coordination and ensure timely and accurate information on food and nutrition needs. Coordination among different actors on the ground remains of paramount importance to maximize the response capacity and to ensure immediate to long-term solutions, while increasing accountability to national and local authorities.

Concurrently, we should promote inclusive and participatory processes on access to and governance of natural resources, including the participation of women, considering the disproportionate impact of food insecurity on women and girls.

The development of early-warning/early-action systems that are risk-informed should also be fostered and complemented by shock-responsive social protection and by efforts to build resilience, helping countries and households to prevent, anticipate, prepare for, cope with and recover from conflicts.

Allow me to draw attention to two concrete situations.

In Mozambique, with more than 660,000 people displaced in the region of Cabo Delgado, according to estimates by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, humanitarian partners and the international community should prepare for continued and significant needs in food assistance, as households focus on fleeing conflict-affected areas, not on agriculture or fisheries.

The tragic attack on a United Nations/World Food Programme convoy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in February was a gruesome example of acts of interference in life-saving aid delivery in conflict contexts, an infringement of international conventions. Portugal condemns in the strongest terms all recent armed attacks on aid workers and facilities.

This very timely meeting underscores the Security Council's responsibility in maintaining humanitarian access, with the cross-border mechanism for humanitarian aid delivery into Syria being a concrete example. The role played by several peacekeeping operations in facilitating humanitarian assistance and protecting civilians and humanitarian personnel makes it possible to bring help and hope to the most vulnerable. Breaking the vicious cycle between conflict and food insecurity will continue to require the engagement and mobilization of the entire international community. I affirm Portugal's continued commitment in that regard.

Annex 58**Statement by Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani**

[Original: English and Arabic]

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to the United States for convening this timely open debate in the light of the alarming estimates indicating high levels of acute food insecurity. We thank His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the briefers for their valuable and comprehensive interventions. We commend the important efforts made by the World Food Programme in response to the growing needs.

While many of the factors that contribute to food insecurity cannot be overlooked, conflicts and protracted crises remain the most prominent factor conducive to the creation of ripe conditions for food insecurity and its dire humanitarian consequences. There is therefore a need for a consistent, sustainable and people-centred approach in addressing the nexus between conflicts and high levels of acute food insecurity and in addressing its underlying causes.

Accordingly, the nexus between armed conflict and food insecurity rightfully deserves its prominence on the global agenda and in the work of the Security Council, as highlighted in resolution 2417 (2018), which calls for compliance with international humanitarian law to ensure respect for and the protection of civilians and strongly condemns the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in a number of conflict situations.

In the light of the unprecedented level of food insecurity plaguing many regions of the world, the clear adverse impact of conflicts on food security, the risks associated with climate change and the extraordinary challenges and additional burden on food systems resulting from the coronavirus disease pandemic, it is important to hold the United Nations Food Systems Summit, to be convened by the Secretary-General in September. We trust that the Summit will be a pivotal event that will drive and induce transformative efforts geared to fully leveraging food systems in order to accelerate progress and achieve the vision set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The issue of food security constitutes a strategic priority and is a particular focus of the development policy of the State of Qatar, resulting in the country consistently achieving a high ranking in terms of food security indicators. In line with the well-known commitment of the State of Qatar to international cooperation in addressing common challenges, and given the disastrous effects of desertification on countries suffering from such a phenomenon, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, launched an initiative to establish the Global Dryland Alliance, a mechanism aimed at achieving food security in drought-afflicted countries and, by extension, at promoting international peace and security. The foundation treaty of the Alliance, concluded in Doha in 2017, entered into force following ratification by the States parties, in accordance with its provisions. The Alliance was also granted observer status in the General Assembly last December.

Guided by the principle of cooperation with its partners in the international community, the State of Qatar will remain committed to working towards creating favourable conditions for strengthening global food security.

Annex 59

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

Resolution 2417 (2018) represented a clear wake-up call to the alarming “link between armed conflict and violence and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine” (*resolution 2417 (2018), para. 1*). Conflict has nonetheless been one of the main drivers of food insecurity, with its impacts further compounded by the coronavirus disease pandemic, climate shocks and natural hazards, such as the recent locust outbreak.

The Republic of Korea is deeply concerned about what we are witnessing as a result. The year 2020 marked the most severe increase in global food insecurity and, according to the World Bank, that worsening trend is likely to continue into 2021 and beyond. In addition, the *Global Humanitarian Overview 2021* indicates that funding requirements for food security in humanitarian appeals almost doubled in five years.

Food insecurity does not merely constitute a crisis of today. Indeed, the resulting hunger, malnutrition and forced displacements would also stunt future opportunities for sustainable peace and development in conflict-affected and fragile States. As such, our efforts must focus on holistically addressing various factors of food security to save the lives and livelihoods of both the current and future generations.

In this respect, the Republic of Korea sincerely appreciates the United States leadership, as well as the critical role of the Security Council, in placing a renewed spotlight on this urgent and critical issue for all Member States. In hopes of contributing to today’s timely debate, we would like to highlight the following three points.

First, we believe that immediate action is needed to ensure full, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to populations in need. It is critical that all parties to armed conflicts engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause, in accordance with resolutions 2417 (2018) and 2532 (2020), as well as international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions. We also reiterate our strong support for the Secretary-General’s appeal for a global ceasefire.

More attention should be given to strengthening protection for humanitarian personnel. It is essential, in this respect, to comply with all international instruments that govern the safety and protection of humanitarian workers, including the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The protection of civilians mandate for United Nations peacekeepers could be enhanced to help create an environment more conducive to humanitarian assistance, including by securing a humanitarian corridor. It is also important to raise awareness of respect for humanitarian action and personnel, including by engaging with local communities.

Of particular importance is ensuring that humanitarian assistance is scaled up to meet soaring needs. It is crucial not only to increase the volume of support for people facing emergency levels of acute food insecurity. Longer-term preparedness also needs to be strengthened to respond more swiftly to future incidences of food insecurity and the risk of famine. The Republic of Korea, for its part, is committed to providing a timely response to humanitarian needs, including by expanding assistance to conflict-affected and fragile countries. We have continuously increased our contribution to the World Food Programme, the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds to this end.

Secondly, we believe that now is the time to build the resilience of today’s food systems against future crises. The pandemic has exposed one of the weakest

links in the current food systems: global agricultural value chains. Their restoration and reinforcement should therefore be prioritized in our efforts. As Governments around the world were quick to introduce restrictions on the movement of goods, services and persons as part of their response to the pandemic, there have been lingering disruptions to global value chains. This, in turn, aggravated uncertainties surrounding food systems. Indeed, the World Bank estimates that global food prices rose close to 20 per cent last year alone, which inevitably had greater impacts on populations in low-income and fragile countries. Mindful of these consequences, the Republic of Korea has been advocating multilateral cooperation to keep the food trade flowing among countries, including by stressing that export restrictions should be based on scientific evidence and kept to a minimum.

Priority should also be given to increasing the productivity and resilience of the food and agricultural sector in fragile States where stronger international support is needed. While small-scale farmers and food producers comprise up to 85 per cent of all food producers in the developing world, they are the ones hit hardest during crises. Women, in particular, often find themselves more disadvantaged in food systems, when they are the mainstay of small-scale agriculture. In this regard, targeted support for small-scale farmers and women is crucial for more productive and resilient agriculture.

Lastly, we believe that the ultimate solutions to food insecurity lie in tackling its root causes from a longer-term perspective.

Humanitarian needs resulting from conflict can be reduced when violent conflict is successfully prevented from occurring or recurring. We believe that this can be achieved through a holistic approach to the interlinkages among humanitarian assistance, development and peace. This humanitarian-development-peace nexus aims to meet people's immediate needs while securing longer-term investment in measures aimed at avoiding the systematic causes of vulnerability before, during and after crises.

As a member of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, the Republic of Korea has been prioritizing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in its efforts to contribute to lasting peace and development. We have continued our financial contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund, a catalytic instrument to help the nexus, as well as to the Multi-Year Appeal of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. We are also currently coming up with a Government-wide strategy to operationalize the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, with a view towards aligning our humanitarian and development assistance with it.

It is also crucial to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women throughout the entire peace continuum. This is not only a goal in itself, but also key to sustaining peace. The Republic of Korea will continue to work towards more gender-responsive peace operations, in line with resolution 1325 (2000) and the United Nations Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy. In particular, the upcoming peacekeeping ministerial, which the Republic of Korea will host in Seoul at the end of this year, will offer a unique opportunity to further mainstream the women and peace and security agenda.

In addition, the interactive dynamics among food, energy, climate and conflict must be taken into consideration in order for our response to be truly effective. Today's food systems are estimated to consume approximately 30 per cent of total energy production, as well as account for more than one-fourth of global emissions. The climate crisis, in turn, causes extreme weather events only to disrupt global food supply, worsen humanitarian situations and fuel conflict and instability particularly

in fragile States. In this respect, the Republic of Korea has been incorporating this food-energy-climate nexus into our official development assistance for sustainable rural development.

Our collective action to achieve food security should span from respecting international humanitarian law to building the resilience of food systems and mainstreaming the humanitarian-development-peace and food-energy-climate nexuses. Nevertheless, its starting point must be securing an immediate humanitarian pause and adequate humanitarian assistance. As such, global solidarity is the key; it is about helping children, women and men in desperate need of assistance to survive the worst humanitarian crisis and famine. In this regard, the Republic of Korea commends the instrumental role of the Security Council in advancing this noble cause. We will continue to actively participate in international cooperation to address food insecurity and look forward to further engagement of the Council going forward.

Annex 60

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations

The Government of Rwanda congratulates the United States on its presidency of the Security Council during the month of March and for organizing today's important high-level open debate on conflict and food security, which is a critical aspect of international peace and security and concerns the fundamental right of all peoples to access food at all times, including during conflict.

The Government of Rwanda would like to thank Secretary-General Guterres; Mr. Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme; and Ms. Bucher, Executive Director of Oxfam International, for their very useful briefings.

In the lead-up to the Food Systems Summit to be convened in September by the Secretary-General and aimed at building more resilient, sustainable and equitable global food systems, Rwanda welcomes this important discussion on conflict and food security.

After decades of decline, hunger has drastically increased over the past few years. The situation is alarming, as the current coronavirus disease pandemic crisis could add 83 million to 132 million more people to the number of undernourished people.

While the root causes of food insecurity are multifactorial, one of its underlying common factors results from human intervention. This is especially the case for food insecurity in conflict situations, with its consequences on forced displacement and its devastating impact on agricultural production and livelihoods.

Out of 10 chronically hungry people, 6 live in countries affected by conflicts. If we, as humans, are the main cause, we are responsible for taking action against it. To this extent, resolution 2417 (2018), unanimously adopted in 2018, is a first crucial step towards collectively breaking the vicious cycle of conflict and hunger. Resolution 2417 (2018) rightfully condemns the use of starvation as a method of warfare and represents a significant milestone in promoting accountability, as well as ensuring the compliance of conflicts' stakeholders with international humanitarian law, to limit the adverse impact of conflicts on civilians, including on their access to food and livelihoods.

In practice, to reach the goals we collectively set in resolution 2417 (2018) to prevent and eradicate conflict-induced hunger, we must first and foremost invest our resources and efforts in peacebuilding and preventing conflict. To this extent, I would like to commend the \$439 million pledged during the High-Level Replenishment Conference for the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.

The cost-effectiveness of conflict prevention and sustaining peace has been established beyond doubt. The World Food Programme has found that ending conflict could reduce food assistance costs by over 50 per cent per year. This is of particular importance at a time when the humanitarian system is overstretched, further putting pressure on countries hosting refugees fleeing conflicts and hunger.

In this context, we cannot, of course, discuss hunger, including in a conflict environment, without looking at the bigger picture, leading us to rethink our food systems and transform the way the world produces and consumes food. Indeed, sustainable food systems offer a solid ground for peace and strong institutions to take hold.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Rwanda's commitment to playing its part and role in our common goal of ending hunger and food insecurity, including for vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas around the world.

Annex 61**Statement by the Permanent Representative of San Marino to the United Nations, Damiano Beleffi**

First of all, I would like to thank the United States for convening this important meeting which allows us to share our views on such a critical topic. I would also like to thank the briefers for their presentations and insight.

Food insecurity affects the lives of millions of people across the world and is mainly concentrated in conflict-affected regions. Furthermore, the vast majority of stunted children live in countries affected by violence and conflicts. Therefore, there is clearly a correlation between food insecurity and conflicts.

Conflicts remain the main cause of food insecurity and acute malnutrition in several countries, such as Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as in the Sahel region. Unfortunately, the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the subsequent health and economic crisis have even worsened the situation in these and other regions.

We also should not underestimate the effects of climate change and climate disasters in aggravating food insecurity.

Hunger is both a cause and a result of conflict. Armed conflicts displace farmers and can destroy agricultural assets and food stocks. Furthermore, they disrupt markets and vital services for food systems. Hunger drives forced displacement, resulting in devastating humanitarian crises. Regrettably, the risk of famine has become a sad reality in different areas.

It is therefore important to keep food security on our agenda and, in this regard, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for hosting the Food Systems Summit during the General Assembly in September 2021. San Marino also reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in the context of COVID-19 — a necessary initiative if we want to guarantee swift and unimpeded humanitarian access to vulnerable communities.

We are deeply concerned by the inaccessibility of humanitarian personnel due to increasing violence in areas where vital supplies cannot be delivered to the most vulnerable.

San Marino underlines the importance of resolution 2417 (2018) and strongly condemns the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, as well as the unlawful denial of access to humanitarian personnel. The use of intentional starvation of civilians as a war tactic is morally repugnant and prohibited under international humanitarian law.

We welcome the recent amendment of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to include the crime of starvation as a war crime in non-international armed conflicts. The use of intentional starvation of civilians is a war crime, and it should not go unpunished.

We call on all parties to respect and protect humanitarian relief operations and to respect their obligation under humanitarian law and to protect civilians, their farms, their markets, their food storage sites and means of food transportation. We also urge all parties to refrain from attacking and destroying livestock, crops, agricultural assets, water installation and supplies, which are necessary for the survival of civilians.

In conclusion, the Republic of San Marino considers it essential to further monitor the link between food insecurity and armed conflicts. It is fundamental to monitor fragile areas and to receive timely information on food insecurity to prevent and mitigate such crises.

Safe humanitarian access to people in need should be provided by all actors, and the Security Council should facilitate the conditions for achieving that.

Furthermore, improved coordination between humanitarian and peace actors is needed in order to address fragilities and to sustain peace and development. As a matter of fact, food security should be perceived as an important part of peacekeeping and sustainable development. Only in doing so will we break the vicious cycle of hunger and conflict and will we build sustainable food systems, which are the basis of peaceful and stable societies.

Annex 62**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, Abdallah Y. Al-Mouallimi**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, on assuming your new post as Ambassador of the United States of America to the United Nations. I wish you and the United States presidency of the Security Council this month every success.

Many countries around the world are experiencing sharply declining food security and severe malnutrition owing to drought and other natural disasters that have reduced food production. Military conflicts are among the most important causes of displacement, hunger and malnutrition for many people.

The Saudi humanitarian response has had and continues to have a significant effect on alleviating hunger and malnutrition. With regard to food security and nutrition, Saudi Arabia has implemented and continues to implement relief and humanitarian projects to mitigate famine and the deterioration in the food situation in many countries.

Since the beginning of the coup by the Iran-backed Houthi militias, the Republic of Yemen has experienced a decline in economic and living conditions, and has suffered human and material losses because of the militias' military operations, indiscriminate bombardment and laying of mines, as a result of which Yemenis have left for other regions and provinces to avoid the Houthi aggression. Despite many peace initiatives, the ceasefire and the agreements on Yemen, the Houthis have persisted in their aggression and continue to violate truces and peace agreements, and to refuse to observe the ceasefire. The result has been a continuous deterioration in the living situation of Yemenis, a lack of basic services for civilians and an increase in the number of displaced persons in the country.

The displacement crisis in Yemen remains a cause for the utmost concern, as the Iran-backed Houthi militias continue to drive people out of their areas, rob their houses at gunpoint and destroy their homes. Most recently, the militias attacked Ma'rib, which hosts a large number of internally displaced persons. In order to stop this ongoing aggression, the international community must make a concerted effort, and pressure must be applied by the United Nations and international organizations whose assistance to the Yemeni people has been looted and destroyed by the militias.

Saudi Arabia has implemented various projects related to food security in Yemen and continues to provide assistance in that regard by supporting the humanitarian response plans of United Nations organizations for the country. Most recently, it provided \$430 million in support of the 2021 plan. Saudi support for Yemen since the beginning of the crisis has amounted to more than \$17 billion.

Food security and nutrition have been greatly affected by the outbreak of conflicts in Syria. Through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, Saudi Arabia has played a major role in providing food assistance to Syrians, both in Syria and in the refugee-receiving countries of Jordan and Lebanon, on the basis of humanitarian needs and the areas affected. In total, 75 projects have been implemented, at an approximate cost of \$152 million.

In Afghanistan, conflicts have worsened food insecurity, which affects a large proportion of the Afghan people. Saudi Arabia, through the King Salman Centre, has been instrumental in providing displaced Afghans with food assistance, through 16 projects costing approximately \$11 million.

In Somalia, through 53 projects carried out by the King Salman Centre at an estimated cost of \$95 million, Saudi Arabia has helped to alleviate food insecurity and malnutrition, which have been aggravated by escalating violence, conflict and such natural disasters as drought.

In South Sudan, the King Salman Centre, in cooperation with the World Food Programme, has implemented three food security projects at an approximate cost of \$370,000. It has also provided food assistance in north-eastern Nigeria and the countries of the Sahel.

The role of Saudi Arabia in providing humanitarian assistance in the area of food security worldwide, particularly in conflict zones, is clear. The Kingdom is one of the leading countries in terms of the speed of its response and in helping people all over the world; as a result, it is one of the largest aid donors in the world. There will be no development without genuine peace, commitment to international laws and norms, and the resolution of conflicts through peaceful diplomatic means to avoid wars and conflicts, the most prominent consequences of which are poverty, hunger and displacement.

Annex 63

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Michal Mlynár

Thank you, Madam President, for organizing this important debate on food security under the agenda item “Maintenance of international peace and security” during these times of unprecedented challenge for us all. Slovakia associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU) (annex 33). Allow me to make a few additional observations.

Over the recent years, the Security Council has increasingly recognized the importance of the issue of food security in armed conflicts. In unanimously adopting landmark resolution 2417 (2018), the Security Council, for the first time, addressed the link between conflict and hunger. It recognized the need to break the vicious cycle of conflict and food insecurity, emphasized the obligation of Member States to help ensure that food assistance reaches those in need and condemned the use of starvation as a method of warfare.

As the Security Council has recognized, armed conflict and violence are a major direct and indirect cause of food insecurity and famine. The situation varies from country to country, but civilians are being killed, injured and displaced, livelihoods destroyed and the availability of and access to food disrupted amid growing fragility. At the same time, humanitarian operations are attacked, delayed or obstructed from delivering life-saving assistance. Conflict-induced food insecurity is now further exacerbated by natural disasters, economic shocks and public-health crises, all compounded by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Combined, these factors are endangering the lives of millions of women, men and children.

The *2020 Global Report on Food Crises* shows that conflict was to blame for six out of the ten worst food crises in the world, and for nearly 60 per cent of humanitarian needs. This means that, without conflict, the number of people affected by food crises could be less than half, and the humanitarian funding gap dramatically reduced.

State fragility and weak institutions, yielding complex and persistent humanitarian emergencies, compound the disruptions from food insecurity, natural disasters and forced displacement. All parties to armed conflicts should respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and facilitate the free passage of humanitarian relief.

As the Secretary-General has stated, the world is facing “a global health crisis unlike any in the 75-year history of the United Nations”. Slovakia strongly supports the Secretary-General’s call for cessation of all hostilities and implementation of a global ceasefire in all corners of the world to focus together on the true fight — defeating COVID-19.

Addressing the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity is a collective problem, which requires a collective response. Developing regional strategies, strengthening regional cooperation and engaging in preventive diplomacy are of the utmost importance. We need to enhance our capabilities and develop common strategies regarding both conflict and food security, which must be underpinned by a deeper understanding of the linkages between them.

We welcome the idea of convening the Food Systems Summit in September 2021, which will launch bold new actions as part of the United Nations Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. Slovakia fully supports the stated goal of the Food Systems Summit, transforming the way food is produced, processed, transported, sold and consumed within the context of the 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development. We believe that Summit is an opportunity for the world to meet the challenges of poverty, food security, malnutrition, population growth, climate change and natural-resource degradation and thus drive peace and prosperity.

The field of agriculture being one of the main sectoral priorities of the Slovak development-cooperation programme, we have in the last seven years carried out over 70 food-security projects, for a total of nearly €4.2 million, in cooperation with community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and local authorities. The overall value includes two financial contributions by Slovakia to joint programming in Kenya, for the years 2019 and 2020. The aim is to improve food security and support Kenyan smallholder farmers by providing incentives to invest in the agrifood sector under the EU Agriculture Financing Initiative. These projects, implemented in around 20 countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership — South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Moldova, to name a just few — had positive long-term effects in socioeconomic terms, on peacebuilding and on women's participation.

Given the magnitude and complexity of the challenge, as well as the limited resources, international coordination is essential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian and development assistance. Slovakia, together with other EU member States, is active in multiple processes and initiatives in this area, and supports significant work of the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Committee on Food Security and other partners to achieve zero hunger and break the cycle of conflict and hunger, especially in rural areas.

The international community needs to take a more outspoken stance in calling on all parties to conflicts to respect international humanitarian law, condemning access restrictions and finding political and practical solutions to remove access constraints. Slovakia wholeheartedly supports the Security Council in its critical role in steering this issue forward and ensuring accountability.

Annex 64

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (annex 33) and would like to add some remarks in our national capacity.

We welcome the decision of the United States to place this item on the Security Council agenda during its presidency. With growing food insecurity and malnutrition, the world is facing an impending food emergency, unless immediate action is taken. In the short term, hunger and food insecurity destabilize individuals, households, communities and nations, leading, in the long run, to social unrest, disenfranchisement, displacement and political instability. Consequently, food security is a major global challenge and risk multiplier of the twenty-first century.

The most recent estimate shows that almost 690 million people, or 8.9 per cent of the world population, were undernourished prior to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. As a result, the world is not on track to achieve zero hunger. By 2050, the world will likely have 2 billion more mouths to feed, which is a quarter more than today, with competition for natural resources remaining a major trigger of instability and conflict.

COVID-19 has exposed weaknesses and fragilities in every single country and is likely to double acute hunger, particularly in vulnerable countries and contexts.

A recent Security Council debate on climate-related risks to peace and security showed that the effects of climate change, biodiversity decline, water scarcity and conflict exacerbate food insecurity and affect the functioning of food systems (see S/2021/198). Sixty per cent of people facing hunger live in war-torn areas. War disrupts all stages of human nutrition, leaving malnutrition, disease and death in its wake. We must enhance our call to all parties at war to uphold the principles of international humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions and human rights norms to protect people's lives, health and dignity. The use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict could constitute a war crime or crime against humanity.

With food insecurity on the rise, humanitarian aid is becoming increasingly important. Humanitarian organizations need unimpeded, sustained, impartial, rapid and safe access to affected populations. Increased attacks on humanitarian personnel constitute a grave disregard for international law and the protection of civilians. It must be ensured that those responsible are held to account. We cannot accept the state of a world in which food cannot get into conflict zones but guns can.

On this occasion, we would like to express our appreciation for the work of the World Food Programme (WFP) and other humanitarian agencies distributing food to the most vulnerable groups worldwide at all times, and for WFP's receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize, which should serve as a reminder of how acute the situation really is.

In addressing food security, sustainable, unearmarked funding focused on people's livelihoods, nutrition and living conditions needs to be enhanced. Since 2014, Slovenia has doubled its humanitarian and development contribution for food security. As a member of the Food Assistance Convention, our country also earmarks 10 per cent of humanitarian aid for preventive action and resiliency-building, focusing mainly on food security. I should also mention that, since 2017, Slovenia has provided WFP a significant amount of humanitarian aid for food security in Yemen. Its past contributions to WFP also reached South Sudan, Somalia, Mali, Syria, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, the Central African Republic and other countries vulnerable to hunger and food insecurity.

With regard to the response of the international community, we need to enhance early-warning analysis, such as the identification of food-insecurity hot spots and capacity-building needs. All this may be achieved through a prominent role being played by the Security Council and the Secretary-General. We also support the idea of setting up a United Nations focal point for the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018).

Food security cannot be achieved without water, which is a crucial ingredient of the necessary agricultural transformation leading to sustainable food systems. Moreover, the close connection between water, peace, security, health and development cannot be ignored. Slovenia therefore devotes special attention to addressing the water and peace nexus.

In light of the general vulnerability of the entire food system, we would also like to mention the Secretary-General's Food Systems Summit, which comes at a crucial moment to scale up our collective action for food systems transformation, thereby also contributing to peace and security. We welcome the inclusive nature of the Summit, which is aimed at reaching action-oriented and game-changing solutions, with a follow-up process. Slovenia will be closely engaged in the preparations for the Summit, which is to be held during the Slovenian presidency of the European Council, in the second half of 2021.

The interconnected nature of food security calls for reinvigorated commitment to multilateralism and efforts to address the root causes of insecurity.

Annex 65**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Mathu Joyini**

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your Government, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and for convening this meeting focusing on conflict and food security. I also wish to extend my best wishes to the presidency of the United States.

I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for keeping the Council informed of developments pertaining to the impact of conflict on food security and acute malnutrition. I also thank Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, and Ms. Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director of Oxfam International, for their comprehensive and enlightening briefings.

Let me start by stating that South Africa regards the right to access food as a fundamental human right enshrined in its Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and I believe this falls squarely within the ambits of international human rights law, to which my country fully subscribes.

South Africa remains deeply concerned about the rising number of civilians affected by hunger and malnutrition as a result of persisting conflicts. It is regrettable that most parties to conflicts have failed to heed the appeal for a global ceasefire made by the Secretary-General. This call presented an opportunity for a cessation of hostilities. Cessation of hostilities would have increased access for humanitarian actors, which would have significantly contributed to improving humanitarian situations in conflict areas.

Regrettably, given the failure to heed the call for a cessation of hostilities, long-standing and protracted conflicts are continuing while new and emerging threats are on the rise, leading to an increase in the number of worsening humanitarian situations. Conflict and instability contribute significantly to increasing the high numbers of civilians affected by food insecurity, which has led to a deteriorating humanitarian crisis globally, with many experiencing famine-like conditions.

In that context, I would like to underscore the importance of concerted efforts to end conflicts by the parties thereto, including commitments to earnestly address the root causes. I also wish to reiterate that holistic approaches to addressing conflict situations are paramount if optimal success is to be achieved in finding sustainable solutions and lasting peace. I would like to also stress the need for continued attention to promoting conflict-prevention mechanisms, dialogue and negotiated political settlements, as well as close cooperation between regional organizations and the Security Council in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

South Africa is also concerned that in some conflict situations hunger is used as a weapon of war. That tactic, used to intimidate and exacerbate the vulnerabilities of civilians in order to gain advantage over opponents, has had devastating consequences, especially for vulnerable groups, including children. Clearly this is a violation of both international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We therefore call on parties to conflict to put an end to that practice and to prioritize the interests of civilians and ensure their protection. We further call on parties to allow the impartial and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in urgent need of it. That should be done in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has exacerbated the existing socioeconomic conditions of civilians and has also contributed to worsening the living conditions of internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees. The pandemic has also

burdened health systems, affecting the provision of the requisite medical assistance in conflict areas. In that regard, I wish to emphasize the importance of enhancing and providing adequate health services in conflict areas so as to deal with infectious diseases, which should be part of a strategy to eradicate hunger.

Furthermore, in the context of the persistent coronavirus pandemic, civilians have faced higher prices for food items owing to failing economies and limited supplies of food. South Africa remains concerned at the fact that the blanket economic sanctions imposed on countries in conflict areas may inadvertently give rise to conflict-related hunger, as civilians may have less access to food and medicine. In order to alleviate the plight of civilians, sanctions should be targeted, balanced and include realistic benchmarks in order to achieve the goals envisioned. Moreover, sanctions should no longer be applied as blanket conditions for an entire country, especially when they relate to the provision of sustenance and/or health care.

Ensuring sustainable and adequate resources for humanitarian assistance is a serious challenge. The common goal of providing urgent assistance is vital in order to alleviate the plight of civilians affected by hunger and acute malnutrition in conflict situations and should be met with adequate funding to achieve that goal. South Africa acknowledges the continued support of donor countries that have contributed generous funding to United Nations humanitarian work.

I wish to conclude by highlighting the importance of cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations on this issue. I take this opportunity to express South Africa's gratitude to the United Nations for the continued cooperation and support for the African Union's commitment to ending hunger and food insecurity in Africa by 2025. That is one of the various examples of effective cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, and, in that regard, South Africa encourages such partnerships to be emulated in similar situations towards the goal of addressing hunger and food insecurity in conflict areas.

Annex 66**Statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, Maria Aránzazu González Laya**

[Original: Spanish]

Spain considers this meeting of the Security Council very timely and aligns itself with the position of the European Union. I would also stress the need to find solutions to the growing humanitarian problem posed by hunger among the civilian population, which is sometimes an intentional effect of conflicts.

The worrying increase in food insecurity worldwide, which has been aggravated by factors such as the spread of the coronavirus disease, the adverse effects of climate change and the intensification or prolongation of conflicts, as reflected in the “Global Report on Food Crises — 2020”, has highlighted the obligation to enhance and step up our humanitarian efforts in the most vulnerable communities.

In addition to the many regions in which food crises have been significant and have deepened, such as Yemen, we consider it vitally important to expand the focus to other places where hunger is leading to a sharp deterioration in the conditions facing the civilian population, including Syria and the countries of the Sahel area. We must emphasize our efforts to strengthen the triple nexus between humanitarian action, development and peace, all in accordance with the Agenda for Humanity, the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Spain actively supports the work of the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Global Network against Food Crises and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to reduce and prevent food insecurity. In particular, Spain contributes to the work of the Committee on World Food Security, which in 2015 approved the Framework of Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Prolonged Crises.

We are strong promoters of the development and implementation of resolution 2417 (2018) and condemn the use of hunger as a weapon of war, as set out in our penal code. Our humanitarian diplomacy strategy 2020-2026 specifically considers hunger and conflict as a primary aspect of humanitarian action and strengthens our commitment to resolving that problem.

We promoted the adoption of resolution 2286 (2016), on medical personnel in armed conflicts, which, in protecting and promoting access to the population, contributes to improving the nutrition of people experiencing food insecurity in armed conflict. In the process of the follow-up and development of the resolution, we have carried out numerous measures at the national and international levels to enhance its implementation. We urge the international community and non-State actors to join in those collective efforts and to promote respect for international humanitarian law.

We are aware of the need to redouble our joint efforts to combat this scourge, which affects millions of people throughout the world. We reiterate Spain's commitment to and support for the actions of the Security Council.

Annex 67**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Switzerland, Pascale Christine Baeriswyl**

[Original: English and French]

Switzerland would like to thank the United States for having organized this open debate and the speakers for their perspectives.

In 2021, armed conflicts remain the main factor of acute food insecurity. That is exacerbated by climate change, environmental degradation, economic shocks and the coronavirus disease. In those conflicts, food insecurity and diseases related to malnutrition kill silently but surely: they often claim more lives than confrontations. But hunger is not inevitable: it can and must be prevented and alleviated. More efforts are urgently needed. That means the prevention of armed conflict, respect for international humanitarian law, the delivery of humanitarian assistance and a rapid and effective response to early warnings. Security Council action is vital for the 77 million people suffering from acute hunger in conflict zones.

Switzerland would like to highlight three areas of action that it considers to be priorities.

First, it urges all parties to armed conflict to assume their primary responsibility to meet the needs of the civilian population. Failing that, they must allow and facilitate rapid, long-term and unimpeded humanitarian access to populations in need. Switzerland calls on the Council to authorize such access when the parties do not consent thereto while the civilian population is threatened by famine.

Secondly, sanctions and counter-terrorism measures should not increase food insecurity. Switzerland calls on the Council to include safeguard clauses for humanitarian action when deciding or extending such measures. Safeguard clauses must ensure effective and impartial humanitarian engagements. Switzerland encourages expert groups assisting sanctions committees to monitor and report on the impact of sanctions on humanitarian action and food security.

Thirdly, Switzerland emphasizes the fundamental importance of accountability in deterring potential perpetrators of violations and providing justice for the victims. Upon our initiative, the Rome Statute was amended to allow the International Criminal Court to investigate and prosecute the crime of starvation in internal armed conflicts. The Council can now refer to the Court situations of internal and international armed conflict where that crime appears to have been committed. Switzerland has initiated the process to ratify that amendment. It strongly encourages other States parties to the Court to also ratify it and Member States to criminalize those acts in their national legislation.

Switzerland supported resolution 2417 (2018) from the outset and reaffirms its unwavering support therefor. It remains committed to the people affected through an immediate and long-term humanitarian presence and by financing World Food Programme operations, including in Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Nigeria. In addition to food security, Switzerland also supports access to vital services such as drinking water and shelter. Finally, it is committed to peace and reconciliation processes and to respect for and the strengthening of the legal framework.

Annex 68

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu

Food insecurity remains a global concern, threatening political stability, worsening humanitarian crises and derailing hard-won progress in global health.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has further complicated the situation. Economic downturns and disrupted supply chains have led to a lack of adequate, safe, affordable and nutritious food for millions of people. Food insecurity is likely to worsen, with extreme climate events threatening all aspects of agricultural production as well as distribution channels and market flows. The world's population is expected to increase to 10.9 billion in 2100, potentially resulting in a substantial surge in food demand.

Unfortunately, we are losing sight of our global commitment to ending hunger by 2030. Failing to achieve that fundamental goal will have dramatic social, economic and political implications.

Conflict continues to pose the biggest threat to global food security. Clearly, there is an urgent need to increase cooperation on creating conditions for peace so as to end conflicts. Through resolution 2417 (2018), the Security Council recognized for the first time the intrinsic link between hunger and conflict. The effective implementation of that resolution is essential in humanitarian settings such as Syria and Yemen and in various parts of Africa.

The use of starvation as a weapon of war is unacceptable. Unfortunately, we are witnessing this heinous crime as a frequent tactic of war in Syria. For too long, the Syrian regime has left civilians without access to food and has deprived them of their most basic humanitarian necessities. The harsh winter conditions in north-west Syria, the increased morbidity from flooding and the burning of unsafe materials for heating or cooking have caused the nutrition situation to deteriorate further.

According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, across the region there has been a 55 per cent increase in cases of severe acute malnutrition as of January 2021 compared with the same period last year. Chronic malnutrition, currently affecting one third of children, is also on the rise.

In this human-made disaster, United Nations cross-border humanitarian operations remain the only hope and a crucial lifeline that is vital to the survival of the millions of people who are trapped in a vicious circle of violence in the north-west, in lamentable conditions. The response by the international community, particularly the United Nations, to the victims of the Syrian crisis has been carried out through that mechanism. Within that framework, more than 40,000 truckloads of United Nations humanitarian assistance have been sent through Turkey to north-west Syria.

We commend the efforts of the World Food Programme in delivering almost 30,000 truckloads of food assistance under that mechanism as well as contributing to the devising of better logistical conditions under its status of "cluster lead agency". The mechanism ensures that international aid is directly delivered to 4.1 million people in need, including 2.7 million internally displaced persons, in the north of Syria.

In view of those appalling conditions, the Security Council has no other option but to renew the United Nations cross-border humanitarian mechanism next July, with additional border gates and the Bab al-Salam crossing point in particular, to resume aid delivery for 1.3 million people in northern Aleppo. To that end, the

Council should uphold its responsibility and take action to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people.

While reports of hunger and the threat of famine are growing, we cannot stand idly by. As the international community, we need to adopt a preventive approach to the growing challenge of acute hunger and food insecurity. We must act before food emergencies turn into full-blown famines.

We need to put in place solid institutional reforms and strengthen our efforts to improve the resilience of the agricultural sector against droughts and floods. Agrotechnology practices could be useful and provide us with valuable solutions in that regard.

Also vital is preventing speculative food prices in marketing and trade and supporting the continuation of supply chains. Moreover, the strengthening of existing financial assistance mechanisms and the establishment of new funds will help address the needs of the people living in conflict areas or food-insecure countries. Enhanced cooperation between international financial institutions and humanitarian organizations will undoubtedly facilitate efforts on the ground.

Rural livelihoods should be supported by investments and additional grants. Women and girls, especially rural women, have to be empowered in their efforts to gain full access to land, affordable loans and local, regional and global markets.

Finally, we also need to focus our efforts on delivering basic emergency tools without delay, including food, water, health and protection services, to conflict-affected regions.

We hope that the Secretary-General's upcoming Food Systems Summit will help address those multifaceted issues in relation to global food security. We expect that the Summit will provide all relevant stakeholders with valuable guidance as to how we can adapt and adjust our food systems to address current and future challenges. Turkey remains committed to contributing to the global efforts to achieve a successful outcome at the Summit.

Annex 69

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations

The delegation of Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of the European Union (annex 33) and would like to make a statement in its national capacity.

The delegation of Ukraine thanks the United States for having organized this open debate on the topic of conflict and food security.

Global food insecurity continues to represent a serious threat to humankind. We note with concern that, according to the World Food Programme, more than 200 million people faced acute food insecurity at the end of 2020. That is a mind-boggling figure. Yet, there is no end in sight to this crisis. Even more alarmingly, World Bank projections suggest this figure could further increase to more than 300 million in 2021.

The poorest and most vulnerable countries have been disproportionately affected by food insecurity due to the compounding impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which disrupted food supply chains, economies and jobs.

The sharp rise in acute food insecurity is likely to roll back much of the progress made over the past few decades on women and children's nutrition. With the COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbating hunger, both 2020 and 2021 are projected to be lost years, from an economic perspective.

As shown in recent years, people living in fragile and conflict-affected situations are particularly at risk as conflicts rapidly undermine all aspects of life, destroy livelihoods and institutions and restrict access to food. The world is currently experiencing the highest levels of displacement on record, with 65.3 million people forcibly displaced and the most vulnerable to food shortages.

We fully support the notion that violent conflicts cause food insecurity, among other adverse consequences. At the same time, food insecurity, driven by many factors, including climate shocks, trade distortions, volatility, food prices and exclusion, has increased the risk of conflict.

The armed aggression of the Russian Federation caused a protracted humanitarian crisis in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, thus affecting millions of innocent citizens of Ukraine. In that regard, we express our profound alarm that the Russian occupation forces have not taken sufficient measures to facilitate the access of humanitarian organization to the temporarily occupied territories. The situation is particularly disturbing in temporarily occupied Luhansk. As a result, food security in these territories has deteriorated over the past year. In that regard, we call upon the Russian Federation to comply with its humanitarian obligations, including with regard to granting international organizations safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the affected population.

We are convinced that the complexity and multidimensional causes of food insecurity warrant the participation of all stakeholders in seeking ways to eradicate it, as well as the need to focus on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security.

We also want to reiterate the importance of a comprehensive approach that integrates the necessary responses to climate, biodiversity loss, conflict, epidemics, economic crises, food insecurity, malnutrition and structural inequalities.

The problem of global food insecurity is of special concern to Ukraine. In November, we marked the eighty-seventh anniversary of one of the deadliest crimes

of the twentieth century — mass starvation in Holodomor, Ukraine, engineered by the Soviet regime. It claimed the lives of millions of Ukrainians. It is telling that this tragedy occurred in Ukraine, almost half of which has the most fertile soil in the world.

Today, with so many people worldwide pushed towards acute hunger, my country cannot remain idle, and is ready to help promote food security as a leader in spearheading the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2 and driving the transformation of food systems internationally by combining the core competencies of diverse organizations through multi-stakeholder partnerships.

In order to ensure respect for the most basic human right — the right to food — Ukraine keeps the response to global food insecurity at the top of its agenda.

As a country with a traditionally strong agricultural sector and developed food exports, Ukraine is already playing a role of food security guarantor in many countries around the world. Despite the current challenges, Ukraine ranks among the top 10 largest exporters of sunflower oil, barley, corn, wheat, butter, poultry and milk powder, thus contributing to resolving the problem of global hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Ukraine's key role has been on display since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, when global supply chains were disrupted. Ukraine continues to fulfil its obligations and has significantly contributed to the food security of its partners in the Middle East, Europe, Southeast Asia and North Africa. We stand ready to do our part in strengthening world food security in future.

Ukraine believes that an overhaul of the food system is long overdue. Food system dynamics are likely to exacerbate inequality within and between nations, and growing inequality will negatively affect society. New and bold smart policies are needed to redesign food systems, with opportunities to adopt a whole-of-Government approach to integrate the true costs of food systems; link food, agriculture and environmental policies to healthy diets; and create an enabling environment for inclusive technologies.

In that regard, we look forward to the holding of the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit and hope that it will be instrumental in shaping a balanced approach to addressing global hunger and malnutrition while respecting human rights and supporting sustainable development for present and future generations.

Annex 70**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations**

The United Arab Emirates would like to thank the United States for prioritizing this important matter during its presidency of the Security Council.

The United Arab Emirates recognizes the role of food security in ensuring human security. The United Arab Emirates has therefore actively supported the United Nations in its global efforts to supply provisions, including food, to those in need in conflict zones. In that connection, in May, the United Arab Emirates, in partnership with the World Food Programme, established an air-bridge operation that reconnected aid operations with a supply of medical equipment, goods and expertise when food insecurity in conflict areas was exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. That operation delivers much-needed supplies from the United Arab Emirates to key locations across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In addition, the United Arab Emirates recently announced \$230 million in funding for the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan, in continuation of its efforts to alleviate hunger and suffering in the region and around the world.

Conflict-driven food insecurity is causing millions to suffer in conflicts around the world, particularly in the Middle East and Africa. Protracted conflicts, in particular, pose a grave risk to the health and livelihoods of women, men, and children. The situation was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused disruptions to humanitarian aid and further afflicted areas already devastated by conflict. The United Arab Emirates therefore welcomes resolution 2565 (2021), which calls for increased international cooperation to facilitate access to the COVID-19 vaccine in conflict situations. Furthermore, the impact of climate change, as a driver of both conflict and food insecurity, exacerbates the plight of civilians in conflict areas. By unanimously adopting resolution 2417 (2018), the Security Council showed its determination to address conflict-induced food insecurity.

The United Arab Emirates believes that the Council must continue its efforts to ensure full implementation of this resolution. In that context, we would like to make three recommendations for improving food security in conflict zones.

First, humanitarian aid cannot be used as a bargaining chip. What we have seen in places like Yemen, where the Houthis repeatedly obstruct the delivery of aid, is unacceptable. The Council must unequivocally condemn such actions and demand full compliance with international humanitarian law.

Secondly, in his reports to the Security Council, the Secretary-General could incorporate lessons from scientific models that forecast natural disasters. Council members could take such risk factors into account when discussing issues on its agenda. Predictive modelling for natural disasters and disease outbreaks is sophisticated and could be an integral asset in the Council's preventive action. While this does not apply to human-made disasters, anticipatory action can help us all prepare for the impact of natural phenomena on food insecurity.

Thirdly, women and youth need to be part of the equation when it comes to reaching a sustainable solution for conflict-induced food insecurity. The specific short- and long-term needs of women and youth, both in the short and long term, have to be prioritized since food insecurity disproportionately affect their lives.

We are encouraged by the Security Council's continued attention to this topic. International collaboration is required if we are to mitigate and resolve this clear threat to international peace and security. The United Arab Emirates will continue to focus on addressing this scourge during our Council term in 2022-2023.

Annex 71**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations, Samuel Moncada**

[Original: English and Spanish]

As expressed on many occasions at the Security Council, the delegation of Venezuela attaches great importance to comprehensively addressing the root causes of armed conflicts in order to effectively and truly achieve sustainable and lasting peace. Addressing poverty and the lack of access to basic services, housing, health and food is key to ensuring stable and peaceful societies.

The United Nations is, par excellence, the most appropriate framework to organically engage in multilateral discussions on this issue. For the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the role of the General Assembly, as a broad organ for discussion, is of crucial importance when it comes to defining the international dialogue on food security strategies at both national and international levels.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 2, entitled “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”, places the eradication of poverty and hunger among its key priorities and identifies agriculture and sustainable food systems as key drivers of sustainable development.

Similarly, our various development, production and capacity-building initiatives and our experience-sharing projects, implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are aimed at eradicating hunger and malnutrition in a multilateral cooperation framework.

Venezuela is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports the work of FAO and UNDP, and reaffirms its commitment to those bodies. It regrets, however, that for the conveners of this high-level meeting, the 2030 Agenda and its goals, including the one referred to as “Zero Hunger”, are not as important as they are to other responsible members of the international community.

In the context of armed conflicts, regardless of their intensity and generation, the civilian population is the first victim of the shortages resulting from the lack of food and the disruption of production and distribution mechanisms, which then intensifies the suffering of those who are subjected to the onslaught of war.

Our delegation notes that the lack of means to implement food policies or address trade barriers, economic slowdown, armed conflicts and the adverse effects of climate change are the main factors contributing to reversing long-term progress in the fight against global hunger.

Nowadays, food security challenges have been exacerbated by the devastating impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the extraordinary measures implemented to contain its spread and their resulting economic effects, which have, in turn, exposed significant vulnerabilities in many national food systems. As the Secretary-General stated in 2020, over 820 million people suffer from food insecurity and another 130 million people could suffer from acute hunger due to the effects of the pandemic. The human crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic reminds us of the urgent need for sustainable food systems that reliably provide safe, nourishing and affordable food.

Resolution 2417 (2018), on starvation as a means of warfare, reaffirms full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, in accordance with the

Charter of the United Nations. Hence, each country must work, without external interference, to ensure food security, in accordance with its own national policies and priorities.

In that context, our delegation notes with serious concern that, according to official Syrian sources, in January, United States troops confiscated a convoy of 50 trucks loaded with wheat and barley from the Al-Tawiba silos. This is not an isolated event, and it has been described as a systematic and organized theft of crops by the United States military. Consequently, we categorically reject the use of hunger by State and/or non-State actors as a tactic of war, or as a mechanism to destabilize and overthrow legitimate and democratically elected Governments, or as a tool to foment conflict and instability, which undoubtedly results, rather deliberately, in social chaos and suffering.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will not cease to insist on the fact that, in the context of a global pandemic, the negative impacts of the illegal imposition of unilateral coercive measures violate a broad range of economic and social rights, and specifically threaten the food security of one third of humankind, including 30 million Venezuelans, who are being subjected to that criminal policy.

We consider such hostile policies to be a double standard — showing concern for food security while illegally imposing unilateral coercive measures that affect the food supply chain at the national and international levels; and causing sustained damage to economies and populations, particularly impacting the most vulnerable segments of societies as part of a calculated policy of maximum pressure to deliberately cause grief and pain to civilian populations, including that of our country. In that regard, we echo the position of the General Assembly that essential goods such as food and medicines should not be used as tools for political and economic compulsion and that, under no circumstances, should people be deprived of their own means of subsistence and development.

The pernicious effects of the so-called sanctions have been recognized by independent United Nations experts, including the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Alena Douhan, who recently concluded an official visit to Venezuela in order to assess the negative impact of these criminal measures on the Venezuelan people's enjoyment of human rights. Like other States that are victims of illegal unilateral coercive measures, we reiterate our international denunciation of the economic and financial siege to which we are currently being subjected, demand its immediate derogation and repeal, and call on all to reject its application.

In conclusion, we consider that efforts to eradicate the human tragedy of hunger and to fully guarantee food security must be carried out in a concerted and coordinated manner, broadening as much as possible the spaces for discussion and ensuring the full participation of Member States as primarily responsible for guaranteeing the implementation of national, regional and international strategies in the global fight against hunger.

Annex 72**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations, Abdullah Al-Saadi**

Allow me at the outset to congratulate the President, and through her, the United States, for presiding over the Security Council for the month of March, and to express our best wishes to her during this presidency. I would like also to extend our gratitude to the United Kingdom for its delegation's successful presidency during the month of February.

The eradication of hunger sits at the top of the Sustainable Development Goals, yet, despite the progress made in this context, in some countries and regions, severe hunger and malnutrition remain major obstacles to development, especially in countries enduring conflicts.

In Yemen, according to the latest analysis of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, more than 24 million Yemenis are in need of humanitarian assistance, while more than 20 million people are facing hunger. Malnutrition rates among women and children in Yemen remain very high. Figures show that 1.2 million pregnant or breastfeeding women and 2.3 million children under five need urgent treatment for acute malnutrition. Of these children, about 400,000 remain without treatment and are at a risk of dying.

Unfortunately, this dismal picture of the situation in Yemen is a human-made crisis and results from the Houthi militia having waged war against the Yemeni people since 2014. Understanding the causes of hunger and food insecurity in Yemen is a key element to finding a solution. Allow me therefore to illustrate some of those causes in the following few points,

First, the main driver of hunger in Yemen is not the lack of food, but rather the people's inability to afford it. When the Houthis took control over the Central Bank headquarters in Sana'a before they were moved to Aden, they squandered over \$4 billion of the bank's foreign reserves. As a consequence, the Government lost its ability to provide letters of credit and foreign currency for traders who import the majority of food consumed in the country. This led traders to secure their currency from the market, thereby driving up food prices dramatically. Saudi deposits between 2018 and 2020 provided the Government with the resources to slow food price hikes. Another deposit is therefore very much needed to avert a looming famine.

Secondly, even when the generous contribution of the international community provided free food and aid to Yemenis, hunger persisted in Houthi-controlled areas. United Nations agencies, in particular the World Food Programme (WFP), have spoken loudly and clearly about the obstacles to aid delivery imposed by the Houthis. We have seen enough evidence in United Nations reports and reports of other international non-governmental organizations that show how the Houthis steal aid from the mouths of the hungry and divert it to the fighting fronts to prolong the war. The Security Council should act immediately to stop these Houthi practices and ensure that aid reaches its intended beneficiaries.

Thirdly, even when the aid, which mostly arrives in Yemen through the Al-Hudaydah seaport, bypasses the Houthis' obstacles and makes it to the internally displaced persons camps, it often arrives too late, that is, after the conflict has driven the internally displaced persons to flee to different camps. It takes a lot of effort and time for the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations to assess the new locations of displaced persons and to establish adequate supply chains for aid delivery, causing the levels of food insecurity in those camps to soar. A living

example is the Houthi attack on Ma'rib, a city that is hosting 2 million internally displaced persons, or 70 per cent of the internally-displaced-person population in Yemen. For this reason, the Security Council should act immediately and apply the utmost pressure on the Houthis and their regional sponsor, Iran, in order to stop this heinous attack on civilians, which is clearly a violation of international humanitarian law.

Fourthly, the most abhorrent reason for hunger in Yemen is the Houthis' use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. This disgraceful tactic has been used against the people of the resilient city of Taiz, where Houthis have besieged the city for over six years. They have blocked the roads into and out of the city, forcing people to take long, unpaved and bumpy roads to reach their destinations. Nowadays, a trip that used to take around four hours is taking almost a full day. The effect that that has on the food accessibility, not to mention access to health care and hospitals, is incalculable. The Security Council should therefore act immediately to stop this war crime and hold the Houthis accountable.

Finally, although urgently addressing the aforementioned pressing issues is crucial to save lives, it will not be enough to end hunger and food insecurity in Yemen. The Government of Yemen therefore calls on the Security Council and the international community to provide support to the new Yemeni Cabinet, which was formed in accordance with the Riyadh Agreement. The Government, which is working from the interim capital of Aden, is focused on paying salaries and providing services to the Yemeni people across the country, including in Houthi-controlled areas. We would welcome a deposit to the Central Bank as a good start.

Next, the Council and the international community should use urgent measures to deter and stop the Houthi from manipulating the *FSO SAFER* tanker issue. The Houthis must immediately allow the United Nations technical team to gain access to the tanker so it can make its assessment and undertake urgent repairs. The spilling of over a million barrels of crude oil into the Red Sea would have devastating environmental, economic and humanitarian consequences for decades. It will affect fisheries activities and deprive Yemenis of an important food source.

The Security Council and the international community should apply the utmost pressure on the Houthis to end their absurd war and engage in good faith with the United Nations Special Envoy to reach a sustainable peaceful solution to the conflict, based on agreed references, including the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference, and relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

Annex 73

Joint Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, José Blanco Conde, and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Günter Sautter

We would like to thank the United States for convening today's meeting and the briefers for their briefings.

As Security Council members in the 2019-2020 term, Germany and the Dominican Republic consistently strived to put the issue of hunger and conflict high on the Council's agenda. We aim at further advancing this tremendously relevant topic.

Today's open debate on conflict and food security is very timely, since hunger crises and the risk of famine around the world — for example, in Yemen and South Sudan — are increasing in number and severity. Already last year, the situation was alarming, with the World Food Programme (WFP) warning that, owing to the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, 270 million people were expected to be acutely food insecure by the end of the year. In 2021, the situation has not improved: the WFP warns that over 34 million people are currently approaching emergency or famine conditions.

While climate change, economic hardships and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic play a devastating role, we want to emphasize that the most significant driver for humanitarian needs — and thus for food insecurity — is conflict and violence. Famine in a new dimension driven by conflict could soon become a reality for millions of people. Without immediate action, innocent civilians will starve — and die.

Hunger is a recurrent, persistent threat for conflict-affected countries. It is shameful that humankind has not been able to draw the right lessons from this situation. Instead, we are trying once again to solve a problem that could have been prevented in the first place. Conflicts must be solved before they lead to famine.

Based on the growing evidence that conflict is the primary driver of hunger that significantly increases the risk of famine, the interlinkages between hunger and conflict were recognized in resolution 2417 (2018). Accordingly, we need to act more decisively on this topic and on the interlinkages behind the problem. In accordance with its mandate, the Security Council must become much better at conflict prevention, first, by using the tools at its disposal to monitor conflict-affected countries when the risk of food insecurity is still preventable; secondly, by ensuring safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need, with all actors taking measures to allow and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance; thirdly, by playing its decisive role in ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law and respect for the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence by the parties involved in armed conflicts — which is the only way that humanitarian organizations can reach affected people, wherever and whoever they are.

Of course, the most effective way to address conflicts as drivers of hunger is to end and prevent conflicts, which remains the key task of this Council. We also call for a scaling-up of humanitarian operations. Joint efforts among the humanitarian, development and peace pillars must be developed and implemented in a coordinated manner so as to end conflict-driven food insecurity and hunger. Finally, the persisting funding gap for the humanitarian response to this crisis remains alarming. All of us must step up our commitment to ensuring that the most vulnerable continue to receive the assistance they need.

We must do better. We can prevent hunger. We need to take concrete steps together to collectively avert the risk of millions of people facing the tragedy of hunger and famine — forever.
