

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 12 May 2022 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of the United States of America, the Security Council will hold an open debate on conflict and food security on Thursday, 19 May 2022. In order to help to steer the discussion on the subject, the United States has prepared the attached concept note (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Linda **Thomas-Greenfield**
Representative of the United States of America
to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 12 May 2022 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on conflict and food security, 19 May 2022

Objective

1. A sharp increase in global food insecurity threatens to destabilize fragile societies and exacerbate armed conflicts and regional instability. The Security Council open debate seeks to identify ways to break the cycle of conflict-driven food insecurity. It provides an opportunity to review and consider ways to mitigate these impacts, including bolstering global food supply in a manner consistent with international trade obligations, promoting compliance with international humanitarian law obligations, and mobilizing resources and collective action to improve food security and resilience, especially in the least developed countries.

Background

2. During its March 2021 Security Council presidency, the United States convened an open debate focused on the cycle of conflict-driven food insecurity and the need to confront famine and acute malnutrition. The meeting reinforced the commitment of the Security Council to advance international efforts to address global food insecurity.

3. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing drivers of fragility, widened gender inequalities and exposed structural vulnerabilities of local and global food systems, hitting the most economically vulnerable households particularly hard and pushing an estimated 161 million people into food insecurity. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather disasters resulting from climate change are a driver of food insecurity. Violent conflict over access to land and water has already been discussed as a matter of concern for the Security Council. Climate adaptation is underfunded and, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, is not being prioritized in countries that are most vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis.

4. In December 2021, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated up to 811 million people are undernourished. Without immediate life-saving assistance, over 43 million people will fall into famine or famine-like conditions. The Office's most recent Global Humanitarian Overview noted that without sustained and immediate action, "food insecurity outcomes in 2022 could be catastrophic".

5. According to the World Food Program (WFP), 60 per cent of the world's hungry people live in areas of conflict. This includes dire cases such as the situation in Yemen, where 19 million people are food insecure. Armed conflict is exacerbating hunger in many other areas of the world, including the Horn of Africa, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Russian Federation's war against Ukraine – the world's fifth-largest exporter of wheat and second-largest exporter of sunflower oil – is compounding these threats. In addition to the war's disruption of agriculture and the normal growing season, the Russian Federation's blockage of ports and destruction of civilian infrastructure has further led to a dramatic disruption in global agricultural supply chains. The impact is being felt in countries already facing dangerous levels of food insecurity, and many have already reported alarming increases in the price of staple commodities. The WFP found the price of a food basket

in Ethiopia has risen 66 per cent, and in Somalia 36 per cent. Both countries depend heavily on wheat from the Black Sea basin. The cost of cooking oil is up 36 per cent in Yemen and 39 per cent in the Syrian Arab Republic, and wheat flour is up 47 per cent in Lebanon.

6. On 23 March, the Secretary-General held the first meeting of his Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, with a view to improving coordination in response to various food crises, proposing solutions, generating data to inform decision-making and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Security Council has long recognized the links between armed conflict and violence and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine, including through its adoption of resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#).

Format

7. The briefing will be chaired by Antony Blinken, United States Secretary of State, and Security Council members are encouraged to be represented at the level of foreign minister. Member States wishing to participate should inscribe their names on the list of speakers through the eSpeakers module of e-deleGATE+. A letter addressed to the President of the Security Council, duly signed by the permanent representative or the chargé d'affaires, a.i., requesting to participate in accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure must be uploaded to the eSpeakers module of e-deleGATE+. Inscription for the meeting will open on 16 May.

Briefers

8. The following speakers will brief the Security Council:

- The Secretary-General
- David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme
- Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- Civil society representative

Guiding questions

9. Participants are encouraged to consider the following questions:

(a) What are immediate actions Member States can take, individually and collectively, to alleviate growing food insecurity and the accompanying risks to international peace and security?

(b) How have recent developments in international peace and security increased global food insecurity, and what can be done in response?

(c) How can the international community collectively act to halt and reverse an acceleration of global food insecurity and prevent food insecurity from destabilizing fragile States and disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable, including women and girls?

(d) What is the role of non-governmental actors, particularly civil society and the private sector, in developing resilience and addressing global food insecurity?