



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

## 9133<sup>rd</sup> meeting

Thursday, 15 September 2022, 3 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival . . . . .	(France)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania . . . . .	Mr. Spasse
	Brazil . . . . .	Mr. Costa Filho
	China . . . . .	Mr. Dai Bing
	Gabon . . . . .	Mrs. Onanga
	Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Agyeman
	India . . . . .	Mr. Ravindran
	Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Mythen
	Kenya . . . . .	Mr. Kimani
	Mexico . . . . .	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
	Norway . . . . .	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
	United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Protection of civilians in armed conflict**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Italy to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; Mr. Maximo Torero, Chief Economist, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization; and Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director, World Food Programme.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

**Mr. Griffiths:** Four years ago, the Security Council made a connection between its responsibility to maintain peace and security and its commitment to address food insecurity and conflict-induced hunger. At that time, the Council asked to be swiftly informed when the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity occurred. That risk, as we will hear and discuss today, is now upon us; and so, regretfully, here we are again today.

Last month, we shared a white note to highlight four contexts where this risk is clear: Ethiopia, north-east Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. Of course, food insecurity has reached alarming levels in other situations that also demand our attention, such as Afghanistan and Somalia — and you, Madam President, may perhaps permit me to make reference to Somalia before I conclude. And the Secretary-General recently wrote to all Member States to convey his concern. More than 200,000 people are already at risk of famine. That number is expected to reach 300,000 very soon, as I imagine we will hear from our colleagues from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and from the World Food Programme. Famine will happen in Somalia, and we feel it will not be the only place either.

In the four contexts I mentioned, recent assessments have identified hundreds of thousands of people facing catastrophic levels of hunger — or phase 5 of the Integrated Phase Classification system, which monitors food security and food insecurity worldwide. As we have all come to know, phase 5 is the system's ultimate, most devastating phase. It simply does not get any worse than that, and it is rare for people to return from it.

This widespread suffering comes down to the direct and indirect impact of conflict and violence, as well as the behaviour of the fighting parties. A similar pattern recurs in each context: civilians are killed and injured; families are forcibly displaced from the land they depend on for their livelihoods and their food; explosive remnants of war disrupt people's access to markets, agricultural production and income generation; civilian infrastructure and equipment essential for people's food security are stolen, damaged or destroyed; and food stocks are looted and livestock is killed.

In those contexts, economic decline and rising prices have put sufficient food out of reach for the most vulnerable. In the most extreme and egregious of cases, the fighting parties have deliberately cut off access to the commercial supplies and essential services that civilians rely on to survive. Hunger is sometimes used as a tactic of war.

Humanitarian organizations have extended relief lifelines to people in all those crises, working with local aid groups — again, the front-line responders who are the first to deal with trouble and the first to understand the suffering of their people. Sometimes they are the only ones there on the ground. Too often, we all face interference, impediments, harassment and attacks on our staff and our reputations and the looting or diversion of assets. That prevents us from reaching people in need and it makes their suffering worse. Humanitarians will stay and deliver, but the conditions in some contexts are simply too difficult and unacceptable.

Other drivers of hunger, including drought — which I will come back to — the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic and rising global commodity prices are also compounding food insecurity and misery. The secondary impacts of the war in Ukraine are also among the drivers of food insecurity in many armed conflicts, increasing food and fertilizer prices and contributing to spikes in energy prices.

Finally, although we are here to discuss the link between conflict and hunger, I would be remiss if I did

not point out that every single one of the countries I mentioned, people are quite literally on the front lines of climate change. People are feeling the impact of climate change first. The Secretary-General has made it clear recently, in both public and private statements, that climate change is here. It stalks the land.

If I may, I will offer a brief snapshot of the situation in each of those countries in crisis.

In Yemen, I know all too well that more than seven years of armed conflict have wreaked havoc on people across the country. Some 19 million people — six out of 10 — are acutely food insecure. An estimated 160,000 people are facing catastrophe, as per the Integrated Phase Classification 5 that I mentioned, and 538,000 children are severely malnourished. The situation there may worsen due to funding gaps for the humanitarian response and continuing economic instability. Disruptions to commercial imports could also exacerbate food insecurity — a prospect that has become very real over recent weeks, as we will hear from the other briefers, as a lack of funding threatens the operations of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen, which inspects all commercial imports, including food, to Yemen's Red Sea ports. We hope that particular funding gap will quickly be addressed so that we can avoid a shutdown of the Mechanism due on 1 October.

In South Sudan, 63 per cent of the population, or 7.7 million people, were projected to be in crisis — or worse, at catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity — during the peak season this year. Assessments project that 87,000 people, mostly in Jonglei state and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, could face catastrophe in the form of Integrated Phase Classification 5. I should add that South Sudan was one of the most dangerous places to be an aid worker last year, with 319 violent incidents targeting humanitarian personnel and assets. Five aid workers — our colleagues — were killed in 2021, and five more have died since the beginning of this year, while doing their best to get people the help they need and deserve.

In Ethiopia, more than 13 million people need life-saving food assistance across Afar, Amhara and Tigray. In June, 87 per cent of people surveyed in Tigray were food insecure, more than half of them severely so. I am sure that Mr. Beasley will speak on the World Food Programme's assessment, but one in February also found very worrisome food insecurity in parts of

Afar and Amhara. We saw some recent improvements in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in northern Ethiopia, but that is done now. The resumption of hostilities in recent weeks is undoing that progress. Elsewhere in Ethiopia, in parts of Benishangul-Gumuz and southern and western Oromia, food insecurity and malnutrition are also believed to be extremely high. The prediction of famine in the Horn of Africa will not be limited to Somalia, and the numbers of people at risk in Ethiopia dwarf even the level of stress that we see in Somalia.

Turning to north-east Nigeria, we project that 4.1 million people are facing high levels of acute food insecurity in the conflict-affected states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. They include 588,000 people who already faced emergency levels between June and August, almost half of whom were inaccessible to our colleagues due to insecurity. Therefore, food security assessments could not be conducted in those areas, but we can deduce and fear that some people may already be at the level of catastrophe and are dying.

Our white note recommends specific steps for each country. Member States could take the following actions in all four of those places and well beyond.

First, they must leave no stone unturned in the pursuit of peaceful and negotiated resolutions to conflicts and other situations of violence. We may hope to see that in Yemen and elsewhere; we may plead to see that in Ethiopia.

Secondly, they must remind and encourage States and armed groups to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. They must not take any actions that threaten the survival of civilians, and they must ensure the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief. I say that knowing full well how absurd that may seem to some.

Thirdly, they must support an integrated response to address the underlying drivers of acute food insecurity. That is a matter of supporting the economies of countries facing severe large-scale hunger. The issues of economic collapse and shocks also related to the climate are those increasingly becoming the agenda of humanitarian action.

Fourthly, they must sustain humanitarian financing for those crises. In all those countries, we are well below

half of the required funding. Without those resources, we will do little.

Finally, I want to highlight an issue that, as I have already mentioned, is central to peace and security: climate change. I have just come back from Somalia and a 10-day visit to Pakistan with the Secretary-General, where the absolute clarity of purpose that we tried to express in those visits was that the impact of climate change is felt variously by those who did little to create it. Access to climate financing remains pitifully little — Somalia has received nothing. Yet if we want to invest in resilience; if we want to shelter the peoples of those countries from a repetition of the shocks of this year; and if we want Somalia to survive the famines that will come later this year and into next year, we need the attention of the climate community and the money pledged by Member States, most — if not all — of which has not yet reached its destination.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Torero.

**Mr. Torero:** I thank you, Madam President, for the invitation to brief the Security Council at this important meeting today.

As Council members are aware and as Mr. Griffiths has just explained, hunger has been steadily increasing in recent years. That is driven by conflict, now also being exacerbated by the war in Ukraine; the impact of climate change; economic slowdowns, downturns and instability; and rising inequality, which has been exacerbated in the wake of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). And all of those have been aggravated by rapidly rising food prices. The link between armed conflict, food insecurity and famine endures. Conflict has immediate and lasting effects on every dimension of agrifood systems, reducing food production, destroying crops, disrupting markets and restricting access to food. Conflicts also severely hamper humanitarian access to civilians. In the long term, they lead to the complete loss of livelihoods, supply-chain disruptions, mass displacement, increased pressure on limited resources and lower resilience. Conflicts also involve macroeconomic disruptions, increased public deficits and debts, reduced foreign exchange reserves, currency depreciation and growing inflation, all of which feed into diminished capacities for social protection and livelihood support.

In addition, because of the slowdowns and downturns that we are facing today, countries, especially food-importing countries — and that is what most of the countries with food crises are — are challenged not only by high prices but because their currencies are being devalued. The *Global Report on Food Crises 2022 Mid-Year Update* was published on Monday, and it forecasts that through the end of this year, 205 million people will be facing the Cadre Harmonisé's three highest phases of acute food insecurity, or Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) 3 or greater. That means they will be in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. That is higher than at any point in the seven-year history of the *Global Report* and represents an increase from 193 million people, reported in the 2022 edition of the *Report*, released in May. Without urgent humanitarian assistance, a record-breaking 970,000 people are expected to be facing IPC 5, or famine-like conditions, across five countries. The consequences of COVID-19, which have had an impact through the slowdowns and downturns, and of the war in Ukraine, are having direct and indirect effects on those countries and are likely to worsen in the second half of 2022 and early 2023.

Although it is not included in great detail in the white note, it is important to describe the dire situation in Somalia. Two weeks ago, the IPC Famine Review Committee concluded that without significant humanitarian assistance, agropastoral populations in two districts and displaced populations in the town of Baidoa in the Bay region will face famine between October and December 2022. Those conditions are expected to persist until at least March 2023, owing to decades of conflict, severe economic shocks and mass population displacement, on top of the failure of four consecutive rainy seasons, with an unprecedented fifth failed season forecast. In addition, several areas of central and southern Somalia face an increased risk of famine through at least December 2022. Those facing the famine risks are agropastoralists, and many are in areas where insecurity is hampering humanitarian access. In total, 300,000 people are expected to be in IPC 5 conditions between October and December.

I should also draw the Council's attention to Afghanistan, where the humanitarian situation remains highly fragile. Approximately 19 million people are projected to face high acute food insecurity, notwithstanding a harvest similar to last year's, and winter is fast approaching. Spiralling food, fuel, fertilizer and transportation costs resulting from the

war in Ukraine are only compounding an already brutal situation. The country is largely agricultural, with 80 per cent of livelihoods dependent on agriculture. The sector has proved to be most resilient and offers enormous potential to expand food production, boost rural economies and drive economic recovery from the village level.

Currently, there is no updated food security data for Ethiopia, but it is highly likely that the situation has deteriorated considerably in 2022. Together with the drought affecting southern areas, the resumption of hostilities in Tigray directly threatens the *meher* harvest in October. Last year, farmers in the region produced 900,000 tons of cereals during the *meher* season — the equivalent of seven to eight months of the region's annual cereal requirements — which is far greater than the amount of food that entered the region through commercial or humanitarian sources. That underscores the potential critical impact of further disruptions to food production, especially if access remains constrained.

Heightened and increasingly politicized intercommunal violence has been affecting South Sudan since 2020. Together with the lingering impact of the prolonged conflict, severe macroeconomic challenges and significant livelihood losses, owing particularly to the widespread floods of the past four years and the insecurity caused by the frequent clashes, are driving dire levels of food insecurity. About 7.74 million people — almost two-thirds of the total population — are estimated to be facing IPC 3 or worse acute food insecurity during the lean season. In Leer county, where IPC 5, or famine-like conditions, were reported, armed clashes have continued to drive displacement in 2022.

In northern Nigeria, the security situation continues to deteriorate, owing to escalating hostilities among non-State armed groups, criminality and intercommunal violence. With the end of the rainy season in September, the violence is likely to experience a seasonal jump, disrupting food systems, limiting access to markets and creating new rounds of displacement. Approximately 4.14 million people were estimated to face acute food insecurity in the north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, with many in areas inaccessible to humanitarian assistance.

In Yemen, the outlook on food insecurity is expected to be better than projected. Some assumptions

for the projections were disproved, while the assumed ripple effects of the war in Ukraine on the international markets have not appeared. Additionally, funding for food assistance improved slightly, and major cuts in the number of beneficiaries were prevented. The conflict eased considerably after the parties agreed on a truce in April. However, movement restrictions continue to constrain humanitarian access.

When the Council speaks, the world listens. Preventing conflict is the most effective means of preventing famine. Halting violence and insecurity not only saves lives immediately, but it opens up opportunities for immediate assistance, resilience-building, lasting development and, ultimately, locally owned pathways to peace and stability. It is essential that we act now to minimize all the potential calamities that I have just enumerated. We hope that we can accelerate taking action so that we minimize such risks in the future.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Torero for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Beasley.

**Mr. Beasley**: It is great to be with members of the Security Council, albeit on a truly sad occasion. This morning I returned from Central America, where I saw first-hand how conflict thousands of miles away on one continent is adding fuel to the flames of what is already a severe hunger crisis on another. During my visits to Guatemala and the Darién Gap, in Panama, I heard tragic stories from people migrating northward out of sheer desperation. The impact of climate crises and the ongoing economic ripple effects of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) had already exhausted many families' ability to cope, and now soaring prices, sparked by the global grain, fuel and fertilizer shortages and inflamed by the Ukraine conflict, have left them in despair. They literally have nothing left. They can stay and starve, or they can leave and risk death for the chance of a better future in the United States.

And that is just one corner of our planet. We know of similar stories driven by war in many other nations across the globe. We are here today to raise the alarm about those severe food crises, especially in Ethiopia, north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. And as my good friend Martin Griffiths said, there is also Somalia, which I would be remiss not to mention. I just returned from there, where Mr. Griffiths and I were just a week ago. As Council members know, we are already facing a global emergency of unprecedented magnitude,



with the threat of mass starvation and famine growing constantly. As 2022 began, we were already facing the perfect storm, due to emerging conflicts, COVID-19's economic ripple effects, climate change, rising fuel prices — and then, just when one might think it could not get any worse, Ukraine. Since that conflict began, soaring food, fuel and fertilizer costs have driven an additional 70 million people closer to starvation. What was a wave of hunger is now a tsunami of hunger.

In the 82 countries where the World Food Programme (WFP) currently operates, as many as 345 million people are now acutely food insecure. In other words, they are marching towards starvation — Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) levels 3, 4 and 5. That is two and a half times the number of acutely food-insecure people before the pandemic began. It is hard to believe that number was only 80 million just a few years ago. Here is what is incredibly troubling. Of the 345 million marching towards starvation, almost 50 million live in 45 countries that are knocking on famine's door at IPC level 4. In 2007 and 2008, because of the high inflation and soaring food prices at the time, there were riots, protests and civil unrest in 48 nations. Today the economic factors we see are far worse. Despite the hard work on the Black Sea Grain Initiative and ongoing efforts to get Russian fertilizer, for example, back into the global markets, there is a real and dangerous risk of multiple famines this year. In 2023, the current food-price crisis could develop into a food-supply availability crisis if we do not act.

Let me quickly touch on the countries on which the Council requested information. In northern Ethiopia, the resumption of fighting threatens to push many hungry, exhausted families over the edge. The humanitarian truce declared in March enabled the WFP and its partners to reach almost 5 million people in the Tigray area. But the recent outbreak of violence is threatening those humanitarian relief efforts just as families are struggling through the current lean season. Our assessment in Tigray shows that hunger has deepened. Some 5.2 million people — in other words, 89 per cent of the population — are food-insecure. Almost half are suffering from a severe lack of food. As the Council can imagine, our teams are working day and night to help those in need. But we need fuel, funding and the full movement of supplies across the lines of control to get help to where it is needed most. The recent theft of WFP fuel supplies in Tigray does not make our task any easier. The harvest is next month, and the lack of

fertilizer means it is likely to be poor. We need to get food to people in northern Ethiopia now.

In north-eastern Nigeria, a toxic mix of escalating violence, displacement, damaged livelihoods and soaring food prices is clearly fuelling a growing food-insecurity crisis. The current lean season is coming to an end. There are an estimated 4.1 million food-insecure people in the north-east, half a million of whom are in inaccessible areas. We are hoping to reach 2.1 million people across north-eastern Nigeria. But as the gap between needs and resources grows wider, as many as 1 million people may not receive the food assistance they need. That encourages migration, extremism and exploitation and makes famine more likely.

Meanwhile, in South Sudan, the situation is even worse, as the conflict continues and is compounded by flooding in seven of the country's 10 states to fuel a food-security crisis that is truly becoming catastrophic. There is widespread population displacement. A changing climate has rendered previously fertile agricultural land unusable and food prices have doubled, while the value of the currency has depreciated by almost a third since February. That has all combined to push basic foodstuffs beyond the reach of most of the population. At the same time, as the Council is aware, fighting among armed groups has intensified and humanitarian agencies in the country are being targeted by armed groups and subjected to looting and extortion. We have seen what is happening in Haiti today. Now South Sudan is facing its highest rates of acute hunger since independence in 2011. Some 7.7 million people, more than 60 per cent of the population, are facing critical or worse levels of food insecurity. Without political solutions to end the violence and substantial investment in humanitarian relief programmes, many people in South Sudan will die.

Finally, in Yemen, the humanitarian situation is deteriorating despite the fragile truce, due to the worsening economic outlook. The conflict in Ukraine is stoking inflation, owing to Yemen's almost total reliance on food imports, and thereby pushing more people into extreme poverty, as accelerating inflation erodes the value of already meagre incomes. Compared with just 12 months ago, food prices are now 70 per cent higher in the north of Yemen and 40 per cent higher in the south. We at the WFP hope to feed approximately 18 million people, which will obviously be one of the biggest humanitarian programmes of all time. However, since the start of this year, our cost of doing business

in Yemen has risen by 30 per cent, from \$1.97 billion to \$2.6 billion. As a result, as members can imagine, we have had to cut the assistance we provide. As of September, 13 million people will now be receiving two-thirds rations. With fuel costs and the cost of transportation logistics, our operations have increased globally by more than \$800 million per year.

The conflicts that rage in so many parts of our world today are pushing millions of blameless civilians ever closer to starvation and famine. I urge the Council to show the leadership that the world urgently needs right now. Some Council members have stepped up to provide generous funding for emergency food assistance, and that has helped our teams to avert famine. Others need to do the same. However, beyond funding, we urgently need political solutions to end these wars. In the meantime, we need access to reach all those in need. We need the Council's help with both of those tasks.

I want to remind everyone that I warned the Security Council in April 2020 (see S/2020/340, annex II) that we were then facing famine and starvation of biblical proportions. The Council stepped up with funding and a tremendous response, and we averted catastrophe. We are on the edge once again, and even worse. We must do all that we can — all hands on deck, with every fibre of our bodies. The hungry people of the world are counting on us, and we must not let them down.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Beasley for his comprehensive and precise briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Costa Filho** (Brazil): At the outset, I want to thank the French presidency of the Security Council for supporting the convening of today's meeting, as proposed by Brazil and Ireland. As co-focal points in the Council on food security and armed conflicts, we aim to keep highlighting the centrality of food security to conflict prevention and resolution, as well as to the mitigation of the impact of armed disputes on the most vulnerable populations. I would also like to thank our briefers today for their very precise and relevant briefings. Each of them highlighted a complementary aspect of the impact of conflict on food security, as well as recommendations for the United Nations and its Member States to tackle the issue.

The state of global food insecurity, especially in countries involved in conflict, is more alarming than ever. According to the most recent *Global Report on Food Crises*, we are witnessing the highest numbers of people in a situation of crisis or worse since the report was first published. That number, 205 million, is almost equivalent to Brazil's total population. By all metrics and parameters, such a high level of food insecurity is unacceptable.

The white note that we are discussing today illustrates why this picture is even grimmer in countries affected by conflict. In Yemen, agricultural lands are at risk from landmines, despite the suspension of hostilities. In South Sudan, many children will suffer lifelong consequences due to violence and their lack of access to school and school meals. In Ethiopia, harvests are going to waste due to forced displacement. And in north-eastern Nigeria, non-State armed groups are impeding the use of roads that are vital to the distribution of food. None of that happens in a vacuum but rather compounds an already worrisome combination of climate extremes and macroeconomic shocks. The conflict in Ukraine, coupled with the effects of the unilateral sanctions applied by some countries, has aggravated the situation.

Armed conflict and food insecurity form a perverse cycle that traps populations and countries in a spiral of deteriorating living conditions. Conflicts generate forced displacement, the destruction of essential infrastructure and the degradation of otherwise viable soil. Food insecurity intensifies competition over resources and hampers any other form of human development that could lead to the necessary conditions of stabilization and sustainable peace. We need to break that cycle, and we need concrete action in the three pillars of the United Nations to do it.

Allow me to start with the humanitarian front. The World Food Programme (WFP) briefing and the white note of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs send a clear message. Two simultaneous factors, the increase in food prices and the growing number of people suffering from acute food insecurity, are putting humanitarian food assistance efforts at risk. Those two factors put the system under pressure and enlarge the funding gap. Donor countries and all those in a condition to do so need to step up so that no humanitarian agency has to choose between the hungry and the starving.

Market stabilization and transparency measures can also play an important part. Such measures help to lower food prices, which can alleviate the pressure both on the WFP and in affected countries and can improve food accessibility. The white note gives a clear example showing that in the case of Yemen, decreasing purchasing power and increasing food prices are contributing to deteriorating humanitarian conditions. In that spirit, building a truly open and fair multilateral trading system for the agrifood sector and eradicating historical price- and trade-distortive practices and subsidies are also important steps for supporting livelihoods, including for populations affected by conflict.

That brings me to my second point, which is the key role of sustainable development in mitigating food insecurity and advancing durable solutions in conflict-affected countries. Actions to generate or rebuild productive capacities, including the delivery of seeds and the improvement of crop production, such as those that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) promotes in Ethiopia, are essential to preventing producers and consumers from falling into internal displacement and severe food insecurity. When accompanied by effective early-warning systems, investments in such durable solutions can also be concrete means for preventing conflicts and promoting long-term stabilization in post-conflict scenarios.

Brazil has vast expertise in producing more with fewer inputs and maximizing agricultural yields even in unfavourable conditions, as well as extensive experience in South-South cooperation and long-standing partnerships with the WFP and the FAO. We stand ready to support that agenda and would like to call on all Member States to step up their efforts, in providing not only humanitarian assistance but also technical capacity and technology transfers, so that countries affected by conflicts can build productive, competitive and sustainable food systems. As the FAO has indicated on multiple occasions, only a small fraction of the resources directed to food and agricultural assistance goes to capacity-building projects. Of course, many, if not all, of those measures do not fall under the purview of the Security Council, and we do believe that the Council must maintain its strict focus on peace and security. However, the appropriate bodies for advancing development-oriented solutions may often lack technical and political expertise with regard to conflict-affected areas. In that context, we believe that

the Peacebuilding Commission is uniquely positioned to help fill that gap by playing its bridging role between peace and security and development solutions, as well as mobilizing international support, in cooperation with the Rome-based agencies and the entire United Nations system, while preserving its demand-driven approach and alignment with the peacebuilding priorities of the countries in question.

Last but not least, there is the peace and security aspect. Bridging humanitarian funding gaps and sustaining agricultural production are indispensable measures, but they will not succeed if conflicts keep roads blocked and people unable to work the land. The truce in Yemen and the Black Sea Grain Initiative have shown that even small steps in favour of peace and stabilization can have a positive impact on food security. We need to preserve and build on those incremental gains. Thanks to resolution 2417 (2018), the Council has a framework to do that. We must uphold its provisions, provide tools for its implementation in line with the recommendations presented in the white note, and secure it as a backbone of our action with regard to food security and conflict.

**Mr. Mythen** (Ireland): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this very important meeting. I also thank the briefers for their messages to the Security Council this afternoon. They have left us in no doubt as to the severity and urgency of the situation, as millions of people are facing conflict-induced hunger. The stark briefings they delivered, not only in relation to the situation set out in the white note but also to Somalia and Afghanistan, make clear the need for the Council to not only hear those warnings — as foreseen under resolution 2417 (2018) — but to listen and to act. We have a collective responsibility to those starving as a consequence of unresolved conflict and insecurity. I want to welcome the recommendations set out in the white note received in advance of this meeting. They underline the link between hunger and conflict. That phenomenon is intrinsically linked to our responsibility to maintain international peace and security. I will focus my remarks on three areas.

First, today's update is clear and irrefutable. Conflict is exacerbating, driving and prolonging hunger and famine. We are failing in our challenge to reach zero hunger — a failure largely driven by armed conflict. The demand for life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian aid is now outstripping our capacity to respond. United Nations agencies and



non-governmental organizations are forced to take food from the hungry to feed the starving. Hard-won progress has been reversed. Gains are being undone. The future for millions is bleak. That is a damning indictment both of the state of food insecurity globally and the Council's response to conflict-induced hunger.

The global insecurity crisis, exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has stretched the international response. Climate events such as the protracted drought in the Horn of Africa have been compounded by a shortage in humanitarian food supplies and resources. Today's briefers were also very clear about the very real risk of famine brought about by drought in Somalia. Ireland's Minister for Overseas Development Aid saw that first-hand earlier this month in South Sudan. He witnessed the disproportionate impact of hunger and conflict on women and children, with child malnutrition rates doubling since February.

Conflict-induced hunger is taking lives today and altering outcomes for generations to come — damage we cannot undo, but which we can, and must, work to prevent in the future.

My second point is that hunger is not only a consequence of conflict. It is also cynically used by some as a weapon of war.

In Yemen, explosive remnants of war have made agricultural land unusable to populations totally reliant on that land for their livelihoods. In north-east Nigeria, farming assets have been stripped by non-State armed groups. That has reduced the availability of food to communities in need.

At the same time, parties to conflict are diverting or blocking vital aid flows to communities in dire need. In the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia, access to critical aid supplies has been highly constrained. Humanitarian workers in South Sudan, Ethiopia and other conflict-affected contexts have been targeted, abducted and even killed in the course of their vital work. Ireland condemns those acts in the strongest possible terms.

There can be no impunity for parties to armed conflict who target humanitarian actors and who utilize starvation and denial of access to humanitarian assistance to civilians. The law is clear, including the Security Council's resolutions. There must be accountability for violations of international humanitarian law.

Thirdly, although essential, humanitarian assistance is not the answer to the scourge of conflict-induced hunger. The answer is peace. We often talk around this table about the need to act early to prevent suffering before it is too late. That means having the courage to take action to protect civilians. That means putting pressure on the parties to conflict to come to the table. That is our job.

As in all contexts, sustainable peace requires the active participation of women in all processes. It requires the input of youth to determine their futures.

In Yemen, an expanded truce leading to a durable ceasefire is the most viable path to an inclusive political settlement, led and owned by the Yemeni people.

The conflict in Tigray is a stark example of conflict-induced hunger. Our message to the parties is simple: stop fighting and return to the negotiations. That will end the risk of famine. It has been Ireland's consistent view that the way to end conflict in Ethiopia is through the African Union-led mediation process. We, the members of the Security Council, should provide our full support to that process.

The road to peace and security in South Sudan must include accountability — accountability for the serious violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and human rights, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by parties to the conflict.

In north-east Nigeria, an end to the persistent conflict will enable much-needed, and shamefully blocked, life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection. It will also shut off the drivers of forced child recruitment and the abhorrent attacks on, and persecution of, humanitarian workers.

The answer to the violence, the violations and the suffering we have heard about today lies in peace and security — the essence of our collective mandate. Our political will must match the need if we are to break that deadly cycle and reverse escalating conflict-induced hunger.

**Mr. Dai Bing** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, Executive Director Beasley and Chief Economist Torero for their briefings.

Food security is both a key element for realizing lasting peace and security and a long-standing challenge facing the international community. We should stay

calm and pragmatic and focus both on the present to resolve urgent matters and on the long term to achieve the goal of eradicating hunger. In that connection, China wishes to stress the following three points.

We must promote the political settlement of hot-spot issues. Armed conflicts undermine agricultural production, destroy agricultural infrastructure, disrupt trade in food, cause displacement and directly worsen the local food security situations. As long as conflicts and wars are not fully resolved, local populations will continue to suffer from hunger. The international community should vigorously promote the political settlement of hot-spot issues and foster a peaceful and secure environment for ensuring food security.

Secondly, we must ensure stable and smooth industrial and supply chains. Secretary-General Guterres has articulated that there is enough food in our world for everyone, and the issue is about distribution. Major food exporters and countries with major grain companies should join efforts to curb artificial inflation of food prices. So far, over 700,000 tons of grain has been shipped to destinations across the world under the Black Sea Grain Initiative. At present, owing to many obstacles in bank settlement, insurance and shipping, millions of tons of Russian fertilizers are stranded in ports in Europe, and there has been a failure to export it on time. It is imperative to remove such barriers to ensure the free and steady flow of key agricultural resources.

Thirdly, we must help people in conflict areas overcome difficulties. Last year, 53 countries and regions were food insecure. At present, around 7.7 million people in South Sudan are facing food shortages; 4.1 million people in Nigeria do not have a secure food supply; Yemen is mired in the most severe food crisis in recent years; in Somalia, millions are struggling to earn a living amid a major drought which is now in its seventh year; and the basic needs of many Afghan families are not being met.

No one and no country should be left behind in achieving food security. Assistance to regions and countries in conflict must only be increased, not decreased. Developed countries should earnestly fulfil the commitment of spending 0.7 per cent of their national income on official development assistance. International financial institutions and developed economies should step up their policy and

financing support for developing countries facing special difficulties.

Fourthly, food security capacity should be comprehensively strengthened. At present, the world food supply and demand pattern is characterized by food production being highly concentrated in a few countries and consumption highly dispersed geographically. Helping more countries become more self-sustaining with regard to food is the most direct and effective means of improving food security. We should help the relevant countries increase agricultural investment, support the early recovery and reconstruction of agricultural infrastructure and strengthen support for agricultural technologies. Developed countries should reduce trade and technical barriers and offer more support to developing countries in funding technologies, markets and capacity-building, among other things.

As the most populous country in the world, China has managed to feed approximately one fifth of the world's population with less than 9 per cent of the world's arable land. That in itself is a major contribution to global food security. China has provided more funding and experts and undertaken more projects under the framework of the South-South Cooperation programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) than any other developing country. We set up the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Trust Fund to help developing countries build their capacities for poverty alleviation, agricultural production and food security.

China has carried out agricultural cooperation with more than 140 countries and regions and provided more than 1,000 agricultural technologies to other developing countries, driving their crop yield up by 30 to 60 per cent on average, benefiting more than 1.5 million small agricultural households. China will continue to work with all countries in the world to contribute even more to maintaining food security.

**Mrs. Nusseibeh** (United Arab Emirates): I would also like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Mr. Maximo Torero and Mr. David Beasley for their excellent briefings. The magnitude of the crises they are describing is, as David Beasley said, of biblical proportions. Their projections of the hundreds of thousands of people who will experience catastrophic levels of food insecurity are indeed deeply alarming, and that call for action must not go unheeded.

Four years ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018). It recognized the impacts that armed conflict has on food security and expressed the Council's intention to give its full attention to the issue. Since that time, the need for our dedicated attention to this issue has never been greater, and we thank those who have brought this matter to the Council's attention.

I would like to make the following points on the impact of food insecurity on some of the conflict situations that we are considering today, as outlined by the briefers.

On Yemen, we reiterate that the Houthis need to end all violations of the current humanitarian truce and fully implement it to see our way through this. The note by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs underlines how the blockading of roads by the Houthis in and out of Taiz is perpetuating grave hardships for the civilian population. And this purely humanitarian issue affecting millions of Yemenis needs to be resolved without delay. The note also makes clear how urgent economic support can improve the living conditions of the population.

In the Horn of Africa, including in Ethiopia and Somalia, agricultural activity continues to be undermined by climate change and phenomena such as water scarcity, the degradation of farm land and deadly cycles of droughts and flash floods. The effects of that are severely exacerbated by conflict, violence and displacement across the region. It is critical to ensure that the millions of people who are at risk of starvation be able to access food. The international community should support the work of local and regional partners in the Horn of Africa to develop mechanisms that help communities build resilience to mitigate the risks of rising food insecurity. In Ethiopia in particular, it is imperative to build on recent developments to reinvigorate the indefinite humanitarian truce, which was instrumental for the resumption of humanitarian aid.

Finally, on South Sudan, growing food insecurity has resulted from the complex dynamics and challenges the country is facing, including rising intercommunal tensions, the impact of climate change and limited infrastructure. Our collective efforts to address the humanitarian needs of the people of South Sudan are now more critical than ever.

On the broader impacts of food insecurity globally, I would like to raise three issues.

First, we know that singular short-term approaches will not be sufficient in addressing the impact of armed conflict, rising food prices, stalled economic growth and disruptions in global supply chains. Parties to conflict must engage constructively to forge frameworks for ongoing cooperation on issues such as humanitarian access security challenges and food distribution. Food insecurity is indeed part of a symptom of deeper divides. The added benefit of that approach is that cooperation between parties to address food security at a technical level can actually help build the confidence that is necessary to achieve broader political progress on the issues underlying the conflict.

Secondly, we need to do more to alleviate the impacts of the global food crisis today, exacerbated by recent conflict. Ukraine and Russia accounted for 12 per cent of all calories traded globally, and some 26 countries relied on them for 50 per cent of their grains. The United Arab Emirates, as a country that imports the majority of our foodstuffs, understands the vulnerabilities food importers are exposed to. To make matters worse, the increase in fertilizer prices is putting further pressure on food producers — increasing costs, reducing yields and threatening future harvests. Ukrainian grain and other foodstuffs must reach those most in need, not just those able to pay. Likewise, as was pointed out in the briefing we heard the at the start of this meeting, fertilizers play a critical role in ensuring future harvests, and Russian fertilizers must be able to reach global markets to help ensure that future agricultural production is not further imperilled.

Thirdly, the current food security crisis is a telling example of how the impacts of climate change can contribute to insecurity. Developing countries, especially fragile States, are more exposed to climate-induced natural disasters that, in turn, drive down agricultural output. That is impacting the lives and livelihoods of millions around the world. Yet currently only \$2 per capita of climate financing reaches extremely fragile countries, 80 times less than other developing countries that are also underserved. We must prioritize investments in early-warning systems, anticipatory action and agricultural resilience, and we must increase the risk appetite of international financial institutions.

In the Council, the United Arab Emirates has been consistently advocating for taking more unconventional drivers of conflict systematically into account — for instance, by receiving regular updates on risk factors

in fragile settings. That, in turn, will help preventative action by the Council to address the worsening security and humanitarian situations of concern. Climate and food security are closely intertwined, and both are key to maintaining international peace and security. The United Arab Emirates looks forward to working with all the members of the Council and with all Member States in order to ensure that food security is given the global attention it deserves.

**Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the briefings made by Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths, World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Director David Beasley and Mr. Maximo Torero, from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

As we heard, food security challenges are unprecedented in our contemporary history. Conflict is one of the main causes of hunger, even if it is not the only one. According to the WFP, 345 million people in 82 countries face acute food insecurity, as compared to 282 million at the beginning of the year; 50 million people in 45 countries are on the brink of famine; and it is estimated that as many as 60 million children could experience severe malnutrition by the end of this year. Those are stark figures that should spark collective action to reverse the situation.

The white note provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as an early-warning element and in line with the mandates of the Security Council is a useful tool to identify problems in a timely manner and to take concrete actions to prevent the risks of food insecurity and famine from increasing.

The precarious food situation in many countries has also been exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine. In that context, we reiterate our deep appreciation for the efforts made by the Secretary-General and Türkiye towards the agreement reached, which has allowed grain exports from Ukraine. That has contributed to lowering food prices. Regrettably, placing more grain on the markets has not translated into a reduction of famine conditions in various parts of the world. In that sense, as others noted, it is equally important for Russian fertilizers and food products to be able to reach global markets.

Ending hunger and malnutrition, addressing humanitarian crises, preventing and resolving conflicts are not separate tasks; they are distinct aspects of the same challenge. It is no coincidence that in the five

countries identified by the WFP as most at risk of famine — Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen — there are conflict situations. But those are not the only countries suffering from hunger. Hunger is even present among the most developed countries.

It is essential to attack the structural causes of food insecurity and famine. That is why we join others in calling on the parties in Ethiopia to put an end to the hostilities in the north of that country.

In Yemen, we call for the truce conditions to be maintained and expanded. In both cases, as well as in Afghanistan, it is imperative that unrestricted and safe humanitarian access be guaranteed.

In Somalia, we are witnessing one of the worst droughts in decades, while the people of South Sudan are victims of floods. We must build the resilience necessary to cope with the adverse effects of climate change, the other factor exacerbating food insecurity. We must address food insecurity and famine in a differentiated manner. Mexico therefore proposes the following initial steps.

In order to address the structural causes of the risks of famine, we must contribute to the quest for peaceful and negotiated political solutions to armed conflict and violence through all available means, starting with those set out in the Charter of the United Nations. In order to directly address food insecurity, we must encourage increased local production, reduce the scandalous levels of food waste, improve access to fertilizers, enhance social protection systems for vulnerable people and increase the functionality of fertilizer and seed supply chains. It is unacceptable that in a world of material overabundance and hyperconsumption, millions of people face food insecurity or famine because of our collective indifference and the profoundly unjust distribution of income that remains endemic in so many countries.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): Let me begin by expressing our deep appreciation to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme for sharing their very important insights.

We listened with great concern to OCHA's update on food insecurity due to conflict and violence in Ethiopia, north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. We are also alarmed by the levels of food insecurity in Somalia and Afghanistan. The OCHA



white note clearly points to conflict as a driver of food insecurity and underlines the importance of the early-warning mechanism foreseen in resolution 2417 (2018). It is evident that the Council has a preventive role to play in line with that resolution by breaking the cycle of armed conflict and hunger and stepping up its efforts to avert conflicts in the first place. The Council must also speak out loudly and clearly against violations of international humanitarian law and in support of accountability, including in relation to the obstruction of humanitarian assistance and the use of starvation as a method of warfare.

One striking situation that demands the Council's attention is the conflict dynamic in the Horn of Africa. Civilians in that region have experienced widespread food insecurity due to conflict and violence for several years, and now the renewed fighting in Tigray is having serious and immediate consequences for the region. The Council should urgently encourage and support the good offices of the African Union and the United Nations in working for an immediate ceasefire and the start of talks.

We appreciate and support the general and context-specific recommendations outlined in the OCHA white note. We also want to highlight the gendered impact of conflict-induced food insecurity, including for malnourished women and children. Accordingly, in response, women must play an active role in the prevention of food insecurity and conflict as well as in the design and implementation of peacebuilding efforts and humanitarian responses.

Global food insecurity has been exacerbated by Russia's illegal war against Ukraine, with far-reaching consequences for millions of people. Once again, we commend the Secretary-General for his efforts in launching the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We must make sure that the most vulnerable benefit from it. The global food crisis requires us to step up funding and scale up our investments in food production and resilience, both inside and outside conflict zones. We must also respond in a way that reduces future risks by ensuring better interaction between humanitarian, development and peace efforts and addressing climate change as a driver of further conflict. Accordingly, Norway has increased its own funding and our new food-security strategy focuses on small-scale food producers and climate resilience.

Finally, we appreciate the clear recommendation in the OCHA white note on the role of regional organizations. We agree that we must strengthen partnerships with the African Union and other regional organizations as a vital part of our efforts to prevent both conflict and food insecurity.

**Mr. Ravindran (India):** Let me thank the delegations of Brazil and Ireland for convening this meeting today. I am also grateful to Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, the Food and Agriculture Organization's Chief Economist, Mr. Torero, and the World Food Programme's Executive Director, Mr. Beasley, for their statements.

The level of food insecurity has reached alarming proportions. More than 140 million people are reeling under conflict-induced hunger. More than 640,000 face catastrophic levels of food insecurity in parts of South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Ethiopia and elsewhere. Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, in India's own neighbourhood, have also been seriously affected by the food-insecurity crisis. The global impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and ongoing conflicts, including in Ukraine, have had an adverse impact on the lives of ordinary people, with spiralling energy and commodity prices and disruptions to global logistical supply chains. Those effects have been disproportionately felt by the countries of the global South and are already derailing their efforts to ensure food security and eradicate poverty in the run-up to 2030.

A sudden spike in the global price of wheat and other food grains has put our own food security and those of our neighbours and other vulnerable countries at risk. A number of low-income societies are confronted today with the twin challenges of rising costs and difficulty in accessing food grains. It is clear that hoarding and speculation are at work. In order to manage our own overall food security and support the needs of neighbouring and other vulnerable developing countries, we have put in place some measures regarding the export of food grains. I want to make it clear that those measures allow for export on an approval basis to countries that request India's support in meeting their food-security demands. That policy ensures that we will truly respond to those most in need. It is imperative that we all adequately appreciate the importance of equity, affordability and accessibility when it comes to food grains. We have already seen how those principles were disregarded in the case of COVID-19 vaccines, where

open markets became an argument for perpetuating inequity and promoting discrimination. With food-insecurity challenges rising to global proportions, the steps we need to take are clear.

First, food and energy security are interlinked and have emerged as pressing issues. We reiterate that the international community needs to work collectively to find common solutions through dialogue and diplomacy. In that regard, we appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General to establish the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance in connection with opening up the export of grains from Ukraine via the Black Sea and facilitating the export of Russian food and fertilizers.

Secondly, rapid humanitarian access to the people in need in all areas affected by conflict and violence is critical. At the same time, the United Nations guiding principles on humanitarian assistance — humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence — are paramount. Those measures should never be politicized. Furthermore, we need to avoid linking humanitarian and development assistance with progress in political processes. At the same time, we have recently also seen a disturbing trend in which humanitarian aid, including much-needed fuel supplies for the World Food Programme, has been looted. That is unacceptable.

Thirdly, the growing food grain shortages can be addressed only by going beyond current constraints. We welcome the recent decision by the World Trade Organization to exempt the WFP's purchases of food for humanitarian assistance from food-export restrictions. However, that is not enough. We need to go beyond that to make a real difference and unshackle the limitations on food exports.

Finally, armed conflict and terrorism, combined with extreme weather, crop pests, volatile food prices, exclusion and economic shocks, can devastate any fragile economy, leading to food insecurity and increased threats of famine. Capacity-building support for countries facing those issues in designing, implementing and monitoring policies and programmes related to food is therefore extremely critical.

As for our own track record of helping our partners in distress, even in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts, India has never been found wanting. We have provided food aid in the form of thousands of metric tons of wheat, rice, pulses and lentils to several countries, including in

our neighbourhood and Africa, to strengthen their food security. In the past three months alone, India has exported more than 1.8 million tons of wheat to our nearest partners, including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Yemen and the Sudan. India will continue to walk the talk when it comes to assisting its partners in need.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We note the timely topic of today's meeting, and we thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Mr. Maximo Torero and Mr. David Beasley for their opinions and assessments.

The situation of civilians as a result of worsening food security against the backdrop of numerous armed conflicts throughout the world continues to be extremely worrying. The causes of food crises in any country need specific analysis without hasty generalizations. Nevertheless, according to experts' estimates, conflict is now the main cause of acute malnutrition in a couple of dozen States. The Secretary-General recently warned of the risk of mass famine in five countries, four of which have been on the agenda of the Security Council for years. Unfortunately, today the subject of food security is shamelessly being manipulated for geopolitical ends. Western countries continue to blame Russia for every problem, including the food crisis, even as they acknowledge that it preceded the special military operation in Ukraine. In the propaganda attack on Russia, any argument that does not conform to the West's goal is declared disinformation or propaganda while our opponents' claims are termed facts. Let us therefore look at the actual facts.

In May, at a Security Council meeting (see S/PV.9036) and in the media, United Nations representatives spoke about the importance of the grain exports through the Black Sea from Ukraine, which they portrayed as the world's breadbasket. They noted that the Black Sea region accounts for 30 per cent of world wheat exports without mentioning the fact that Russia's share is about 25 per cent. They asserted that the main problem was high food prices and that if the issue surrounding the ports in Odesa remained unresolved, millions of people would die, with "the poorest of the poor" (*ibid.*, p.4) throughout the world "on the brink of starvation" (*ibid.*, p.21). We in Russia understood the seriousness of the situation and did not block the export of Ukrainian grain through the humanitarian corridor we opened. The real reasons for the grain export issue are illustrated by the recent incident in which a Romanian warship was blown up by a drifting

Ukrainian mine near Constanța. Russia, however, had guaranteed that it would not exploit the situation for the purposes of the special military operation. Türkiye and the United Nations brokered the Istanbul agreements, set up as a package, which I want to point out was the idea of the initiators, not Russia.

What are we seeing now? Even before the conclusion of the grain deal, wheat prices had fallen to their December 2021 levels. After that, in the two months since the Black Sea Grain Initiative launched, approximately 3 million tons of grain have been exported. The Food Price Index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has fallen for a fifth month in a row. While it is still high, international prices for food commodities had been steadily rising since 2020, long before the deterioration of the situation in Ukraine. Does that mean that the previously stated goal of lowering prices has been achieved? If we are to judge by United Nations statements, it has not. International prices have fallen, but that has not translated into lower prices at the national level in the countries of the South. So what is going on?

The geography of the shipments within the framework of the Black Sea Grain Initiative shows that almost half of all shipments go to high-income countries, while only six shipments out of 136 — that is, 4 per cent — with just over 250,000 tons of cargo sent to the poorest countries experiencing a food crisis. In comparison, 58 ships — that is, 42 per cent — with a cargo of more than 1.2 million tons were destined for European Union (EU) countries. More than half of all the shipments are maize, and according to FAO estimates, a significant percentage of this year's Ukrainian maize is not food grade. Most of the food-grade wheat, amounting to millions of tons, was exported from Ukraine in 2021. At the time there was even a debate in Ukrainian media on possible food-security risks to Ukraine itself. The data correspond to Ukraine's typical shipments of maize to Europe but do not correlate with its statements about helping the hungry in sub-Saharan Africa, where other crops are consumed. Incidentally, at the beginning of September we learned of an article in *The Guardian* about British projects to help Africans raise edible insects. At one of today's events we heard that similar projects are also being supported by the World Bank, which cited the high cost of fertilizer. It is unlikely that such a cynical approach will solve the problem.

In response, we hear that part of the grain that is shipped to Europe will be re-exported to countries in need. As far as we know, our Turkish colleagues have continued those efforts, processing the grain before re-shipping it. But so far we have heard nothing about the re-export of grain by European Union countries other than from EU diplomats in New York. I wonder how the re-exports from Europe to those in need are being done. Are they being sold on a commercial basis at market prices? In that context, we learned unexpectedly from a statement by our United Nations colleagues the day before yesterday that the original purpose of the Black Sea Initiative was to restore commercial shipments from the region to customary buyers. But how does that line up with the previous declarations about helping the poorest of the poor? So far only two ships have reached them through the World Food Programme (WFP), with a third being prepared. The United Nations officials say that shipments depend on donors' contributions. We would like to ascertain from the WFP Executive Director why funds already available in the budgets of its largest country programmes are not being used for that purpose in Somalia, for example, where as we understand from what Mr. Griffiths said, the chances of avoiding famine are minimal.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), there is another explanation for unaffordable food prices in the developing world, and it is high inflation. Where did that come from? We are once again pointed to the consequences of the events in Ukraine, which demonstrably ignores the effect of Western countries' ill-conceived monetary policies aimed at combating the coronavirus disease crisis, when against a backdrop of disruptions to supply chains, trillions of unsecured dollars, yen and euros were poured into Western economies. The inflation that could be expected to result from that spread to other countries. And now the fact that Western central banks are raising interest rates poses a new threat to excessively indebted developing countries.

To return to the goal of resuming commercial shipments and the Istanbul agreements package, the latter, as we know, has a second part, which is a memorandum of understanding between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat on assisting Russian food products and fertilizers in accessing world markets. It can be found on the websites of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNCTAD. So far, there have been great difficulties in implementing that

document because our deliveries are being hindered by illegal unilateral sanctions. The repeated claims by the EU and the United States that their sanctions are not an obstacle to exports of food and fertilizers does not correspond to reality. The restrictions complicate banking transactions, including for banks that are systemically important to Russia's agriculture sector, where accounts are simply being closed. Transportation insurance rates have skyrocketed. As we understood from a recent United Nations briefing, those rates have been significantly reduced in relation to the price of grain from Ukraine, but the same cannot be said of Russian goods.

There are also problems emerging regarding interactions with shipping operators. Our ships have been denied access to European ports, which are important transshipment points for the normal functioning of supply chains. But the explanations given to the business sector by the sanctioning countries' authorities often exacerbate the situation. For example, a memo with clarifications from the European Commission dated 10 August essentially bans European shipping operators from transporting Russian fertilizer to third countries — that is, in Africa, Asia and Latin America — but allows them to ship to EU States, which is certainly a fantastic help to poor countries. That selfishness, cynicism and hypocrisy from European Union officials is particularly telling.

The situation regarding Russian fertilizer is alarming. In 2021, the global price of fertilizer reached record levels, including as a result of the destabilization of the markets due to ill-considered and forced energy transition policies and non-competitive resistance to Russian energy carriers. This year, with new sanctions and supply chain disruptions, the situation is even worse. The managers of private Russian fertilizer companies are facing personal restrictions. Their products are being blocked by the authorities in a number of European ports to the tune of almost 300,000 tons worth tens of millions of dollars. Our producers are prepared to send those goods to developing countries free of charge, but they are simply not being allowed to export them.

It is important that we acknowledge the severity of the problem. According to the assessment of the head of UNCTAD, if farmers do not get fertilizer in October and November, they will use significantly less of it, by approximately 20 per cent in Africa, for instance. That will inevitably lead to reduced production volume at the next harvest and already threaten represents a

physical food shortage. Our businesses are warning that if the disruptions of Russian fertilizer exports do not end — we are talking about 14 million tons of fertilizer a year, which helps grow 100 million tons of crops — an additional 500 million people around the world could soon face hunger. I would therefore like to ask our Western colleagues if that is what they are trying to achieve. The sanctions on Belarusian fertilizer are also exacerbating the situation. We would like to hear calls on the leaders of Western countries about this from the leadership of United Nations agencies, including the WFP, at international meetings and in the media. We hope to see the United Nations join in those efforts.

The Western sanctions are also undermining global food security in another way. Due to disruptions in banking transactions, Russia has been unable to safely transfer its voluntary contributions to the WFP for several months. We are talking here about tens of millions of dollars that among other things would help countries facing the risk of mass famine. There is a similar situation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, where projects supporting the food industry in States in need, including Syria, are also being disrupted.

For its part, Russia is seeking ways to support global food security. Between May and August this year alone, we were able to export 6.6 million tons of grain, of which 6.3 million tons went to countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. By the end of the year, we expect to ship 30 million tons of grain, and we are prepared to increase that amount to 50 million tons. Despite the obstacles, we have been able to send 7 million tons of fertilizer abroad, including 3 million tons to countries of the global South. To get essential goods to market, the Russian part of the grain export deal must be implemented with real results. If not, a selective approach to the Istanbul grain agreement could torpedo it.

In conclusion, we would like to remind the Council that in the context of resolution 2417 (2018), it would be a good idea for the specialized agencies of the United Nations and the Council to pay attention to the situations in other countries as well. We would like to hear a precise assessment from United Nations experts of the situation in Syria, where the country was once not only self-supporting in the provision of grain but also exported millions of tons. Now, however, according to the recent FAO/WFP report entitled *Hunger Hotspots*, it is losing food produced in the major grain-producing



regions in the north-east, which are de facto occupied by the United States, and suffering from the impact of Western sanctions on its own food security. It is also important to consider the humanitarian impacts of freezing the foreign assets of Afghanistan, where under the threat of mass famine the people have been resorting to extremes, including selling their own organs and children.

We hope that all members of the Council and observers will refrain from using the fight against hunger in their geopolitical games and focus on the real actions they can take to prevent hunger.

**Mrs. Onanga** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The briefing we have just heard confirms the severity of the global food crisis that the world is facing and that is affecting countries in situations of conflict in particular. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Torero and Mr. Beasley for their detailed briefings and revealing updates on the issue of food insecurity in the countries in question.

It is particularly regrettable that the situation affects vulnerable people, including children. We are aware of the many factors driving that complex situation, first and foremost the growing numbers of worsening security crises and tensions. That is why we must work harder than ever to put an end to conflicts wherever they emerge and to reduce tensions, in order to give peace and development agendas a chance. It is essential to strengthen our efforts to resolve conflicts and at the same time increase emergency humanitarian assistance to meet food needs and respond to the suffering of the people affected. The combined effect of destructive conflicts, limited humanitarian assistance and populations trapped by the effects of climate change is a source of concern, as it could spark a large-scale humanitarian crisis. The unprecedented situation in the Horn of Africa reminds us that urgent action is needed.

We must take urgent action and invest in the long term by addressing the root causes of the structural deficiencies that many countries face, whether they are shortcomings in national and international governance, difficulties in implementing sustainable development commitments or, more specifically, in addressing the climate crisis. In that regard, we hope that the upcoming twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be a critical opportunity to affirm the international commitment to addressing those

combined threats and securing the necessary funding for a response that is in line with the expectations of humankind.

In conclusion, we reiterate our appreciation for the conclusion and effective implementation of the grain export agreement, while at the same time recalling the scale of needs and expectations of the African continent regarding an opportunity that African leaders helped to make possible.

**Mr. Spasse** (Albania): I thank Brazil and Ireland for convening today's meeting. I also thank Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Torero and Mr. Beasley for exposing the sad realities of food insecurity and its connections with conflict and violence.

In resolution 2417 (2018) of May 2018, the Council recognized squarely how wars drive hunger, directly and indirectly. Wars force people to flee their lands and livelihoods, destroy livestock and agricultural products and increase food prices in global markets. More than four years later, the situation is worse than it was in 2018 — much worse. We are facing a looming food catastrophe. The year 2022 is likely to set the record as the most food-insecure year around the world. Millions of people across the globe face acute food insecurity. Areas such as northern Ethiopia, north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, are likely to be the hardest hit, but they are just the tip of the iceberg. As a result of conflict and violence, it is estimated that approximately 648,000 people will experience catastrophic levels of food insecurity. Many other countries, such as Afghanistan and Somalia, are facing alarming situations. Globally, 276 million people are struggling to find food. Some 49 million, in 43 countries, are knocking on famine's door.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is compounding a growing humanitarian crisis, with ramifications that constitute a global threat to peace and security. Resolution 2417 (2018) sets out the basic framework for addressing conflict-driven hunger and its devastating impact on peace and security. Now more than ever we need the Security Council to redouble its efforts to address this global threat with the necessary urgency. We must find the political will to use all the tools available to eradicate this grave crisis and work to abolish famine and hunger once and for all.

The World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

are facing growing challenges in the delivery of food aid and basic commodities and in building resilience. In that regard, we need to answer the following three pressing questions. First, with increased food insecurity as a consequence of conflict, would further white notes help facilitate earlier action by the Council in response to conflict-induced hunger? Secondly, what other actions could the Council take to strengthen anticipatory measures? Thirdly, how can we best ensure accountability for instances of conflict-induced hunger in violation of international humanitarian law?

In our opinion, humanitarian action and respect for international humanitarian law can only mitigate the effects of a conflict on food systems. Peaceful and negotiated political solutions to armed conflicts and violence are urgently needed. Early warning and early action lead to prevention. Preventing conflict-induced hunger requires the parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law, especially when hunger is used as a method of war.

There is also an urgent need to empower women and young people in securing access to food and ensuring their participation in policy and decision-making processes. That requires an integrated response in order to address the drivers of acute food insecurity and sustain financing for humanitarian crises. Those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law must be held accountable. Independent, impartial, full, prompt and effective investigations into alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law are equally important.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I thank Ireland and Brazil for gathering us here to discuss the pressing issues of conflict-induced hunger. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, Executive Director Beasley and Chief Economist Torero for their informative and very sobering briefings. As many here have heard me say since I arrived in New York, this issue is important. Hunger caused by conflict has been the centrepiece of our two Security Council presidencies since I arrived. I therefore want Mr. Griffiths to know that I am deeply appreciative of the white note his Office sent us on conflict and hunger, because while there is a mandated obligation to deliver those reports to the Council, we cannot forget that there is also a moral obligation to tell the world why people are being starved to death.

White notes are a warning siren for the Council. We must respond, because behind that sobering report and the numbers we have heard today, this is about raw humanity. We are talking about real people. We are talking about children and mothers whose voices are being silenced by hunger and violence. We are talking about the difference between life and death. We cannot accept what is reported in the white note as the way of the world. We cannot fail to see our common humanity in those who are suffering. The white note makes clear that the scourge of hunger has not gone away since resolution 2417 (2018) was adopted more than four years ago. In fact it has only gotten worse.

There are many causes behind today's global food insecurity crisis. The coronavirus disease pandemic has strained supply lines. Energy costs have made it more expensive to produce and ship food. Rising temperatures and severe drought and flooding have destroyed crops and left fields fallow. But chief among the causes of food insecurity are conflicts. In many contexts, food is weaponized for war and intentionally blocked or destroyed. That is cruel and dangerous, and it demands our attention. In the case of Russia's war in Ukraine, the weaponization of food has had global ripple effects. The war has exacerbated the crisis. Before the war, Russia and Ukraine accounted for almost a quarter of global grain exports. But now Ukraine's once rolling wheat fields have become battlefields, and the effects on wheat, food, oil and fuel are being felt by all of us. And if I may respond briefly to the litany of complaints provided by our Russian colleague today, the answer to all those questions is simple — end the war, end the unprovoked attack on Ukraine, and that will get us out of part of this situation.

We can clearly see how conflict is causing hunger across the world. As the most recent report of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs highlights, four areas in particular are now projected to face widespread and catastrophic levels of food insecurity — Ethiopia, north-east Nigeria, Yemen and South Sudan, countries where conflict and violence has led directly to a food crisis. In Ethiopia, 20 million people are facing food insecurity, many more than in the current estimates we have heard. Farms have been damaged and looted. Harvests in Tigray, for example, produced half of their typical output last year, and supply lines have been severely disrupted. We call on the Government of Ethiopia, the Tigrayan authorities and all the parties to allow the unhindered delivery of

humanitarian relief. Humanitarian assistance should not be used for military purposes but to save lives. And we urge the parties to cease the fighting and to begin talks under the auspices of the African Union as soon as possible. Peace needs to be given a chance. Too many people have died and too many more are suffering.

In north-eastern Nigeria, more than 4 million people are projected to experience high levels of food insecurity. The severity in some areas is the worst we have seen in almost a decade. Farmers are worried about being attacked and are abandoning their farms. That means fewer farms and crops and more displacement and suffering. We are particularly concerned about the violence from non-State armed actors. Humanitarian access is vital to keep the situation from spiralling.

In Yemen, the truce has brought some relief to civilians, but it has not been enough to reverse one of the world's most desperate humanitarian crises. In fact, the level of food insecurity in Yemen remains higher than ever. More than 19 million people are facing food insecurity, and that is likely to get worse without humanitarian funding. We call on the international community to join us in addressing the crisis. Donors need to increase and expedite support. We need to bolster the Republic of Yemen's Government to stabilize the economy and strengthen basic services.

In South Sudan, a country only 11 years old, more than 60 per cent of the population is projected to face crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity — almost 8 million people, in a country that is rich in resources. We call on the Government of South Sudan to issue a decree mandating the free, unimpeded, unhindered movement of humanitarian assistance and protection for humanitarian workers. It is time for all the parties to end the hostilities. The Government should hold the perpetrators of violence accountable and help the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and humanitarian actors address the dire needs of civilians. And we just heard from Mr. Griffiths that famine will happen in Somalia. Those are just a handful of the countries facing food insecurity. According to the World Food Programme, as many as 50 million people in 45 countries are right on the edge of famine and risk being tipped over without humanitarian support. We must act. I was recently told that addressing famine is not the responsibility of the Security Council. But I would posit that the causes of famine and the consequences of famine are our responsibility, particularly when

famines are driven by conflict and induce them. Which is exactly why we have come together today.

For its part, the United States has provided more than \$5.7 billion in humanitarian assistance to food-security operations since February. But we know we cannot do this alone, and we know it is not enough. That is why we brought together partners from around the world to New York to craft a road map for global food security, and 103 countries have now signed on to a common picture of this crisis and a common agenda for addressing it. Food security is one of our top three priorities for the upcoming session of the General Assembly. We will continue to use every diplomatic tool in our arsenal to tackle the food-insecurity crisis head on. And we call on every other country to do the same. While the challenge can feel overwhelming, we must remain focused, and we must stop famine before it happens. We can and must stop these famines from happening again.

**Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana): Let me begin by thanking the delegations of Brazil and Ireland for requesting the convening of this meeting. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths, Chief Economist Maximo Torero and World Food Programme Executive Director David Beasley for their respective briefings. And we have taken note of Mr. Griffiths' white note focusing on food insecurity caused by violent conflicts in northern Ethiopia, north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen.

We note with regret that notwithstanding the best efforts made over the years to limit the negative impact of violent conflicts on civilians and civilian infrastructure, we continue to witness serious violations of civilians' rights and a high number of civilian casualties in war-torn countries. In 2021, for instance, the United Nations recorded at least 11,075 civilian deaths in 12 armed conflicts. Besides the needless loss of human lives and livelihoods, armed conflict also contributes to dangerous food shortage situations, which some combatants resort to and calibrate as a weapon of war. The critical nature of the issue and the hostile environments that are deliberately created by parties to conflicts and armed combatants to impede humanitarian access to civilian populations continue to justify the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), which highlighted the nexus between armed conflict and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine.

Today's meeting, coming on the back of the Under-Secretary-General's concerning white note, underscores the urgency of the situation and the need for prompt action. In addressing the challenges of food insecurity faced by civilians in armed conflict, Ghana believes that careful consideration should be given to some of the following points.

First, as highlighted in the white note and repeated in this Chamber by Mr. Griffiths, the peaceful resolution of armed conflict and violence remains the surest way of guaranteeing the safety and security of civilians and averting the dangers of starvation and famine that come with conflict. We therefore stress the importance of prioritizing politics in conflict resolution and management and note the need for the protection of civilians, not only in terms of peace agreements and ceasefires, but even in moments when humanitarian pauses and truces may offer an opportunity to centre the protection needs of the civilian populations.

Secondly, we believe that respect for global conventions and treaties, including international humanitarian law, should be reinforced to provide a solid foundation for protecting civilians in situations of armed conflict. States must renew their commitment to the preservation and protection of principled humanitarian action, including by encouraging both State and non-State parties to conflicts to comply with international humanitarian law and human rights law. That includes prohibiting the starvation of civilian populations as a weapon of war and the deliberate targeting of their means of livelihood. In that regard, we must also be unwavering in exacting accountability for egregious violations of the laws of armed conflict.

Thirdly, parties to conflicts must be made to feel the weight of accountability if they target humanitarian workers or impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In that regard, the risks to civilians and humanitarian workers posed by misinformation, disinformation and hate speech during armed conflicts are also a driver that must be managed.

Fourthly, we encourage the strengthening of support for regional arrangements to help sustain efforts in the protection of civilians. They are the proximate international actors in armed conflicts and usually have a better understanding of the best way to assist civilian populations before their situation gets out of hand. Some regional organizations also have a food-security architecture that should be strongly

supported and tapped into in order to better manage food insecurity during conflicts.

In conclusion, we believe that there is a need for concerted efforts to address food insecurity in times of armed conflict. Ghana therefore reaffirms its belief that strong and genuine political will and commitment on the part of Member States, with support from civil-society organizations and other partners, is crucial to enhancing the protection of civilians in armed conflict and ensuring their right to food, even in conflict situations.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Brazil and Ireland for convening this meeting. Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Torero and Mr. Beasley have painted a devastating picture from the front line of conflicts and hunger, as set out in the recent white note. We pay tribute to the work of their teams on the ground, and we look forward to the Secretary-General continuing to raise the alarm on the impact of the devastating cycle of conflict and hunger, in line with resolution 2417 (2018). We hope all Member States can support him in that. We also welcome the efforts of the United Nations to raise the alarm on famine-risk contexts, including in the Horn of Africa, and we are pleased to be co-hosting an event next week to focus on that, alongside Italy, the United States, Qatar and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I would like to make three key points in response to what we have heard today.

First, we call for all parties to conflict to abide by international humanitarian law. That includes the protection of humanitarian workers. It is a matter of deep concern that in South Sudan and Yemen, where millions of people are at risk of starvation, we continue to see attacks on humanitarian actors. The parties to conflict must also facilitate rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access, including by removing bureaucratic impediments to aid. The United Kingdom is deeply concerned about the fact that aid deliveries to the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia have not been possible since the resumption of conflict in August. We call for immediate access for fuel, cash and food. Violations of international humanitarian law must be investigated, and impunity must end.

Secondly, we need concerted action to protect food systems and promote resilience. In north-eastern Nigeria, for example, objects indispensable to the survival of civilians are being destroyed, and the conflict there is preventing essential agricultural



activity. Ordinary people need to be able to farm their land in safety so that families can feed the 1.74 million children who are now acutely malnourished. We also have a responsibility to ensure that global food markets are open so that the cost of feeding the hungry does not increase. In that regard, let me reiterate the importance of the continued implementation of the United Nations-brokered Black Sea grain deal, which has contributed to a 5.1 per cent decrease in global wheat prices. Twenty-three thousand tons of Ukrainian wheat arrived in Djibouti last month, some of which has already entered Ethiopia. The World Food Programme said that is enough to feed 1.5 million people on full rations for a month. A further 30,000 tons of wheat will arrive this month thanks to the deal.

I am sure that our briefers will respond to some of the wilder claims from our Russian colleagues. For example, we have been clear throughout that there were no sanctions imposed on food and fertilizer. Over 50 per cent of wheat exported under the agreement went to Africa, but as my American colleague said, none of that would be needed if Russia ended its illegal war.

Thirdly, let us be clear that what is urgently needed is an end to conflict and investment in sustainable, durable peace. The United Kingdom is proud to be a leading donor to the Organization's humanitarian appeals. We will continue to provide \$3.5 billion in humanitarian assistance over the next three years. But more funding alone will not end starvation caused by conflict or used as a weapon of war. We have the tools to prevent human-made famine. What we need now is the collective political will to use them.

**Mr. Kimani** (Kenya): I thank Martin Griffiths, David Beasley and Maximo Torero for their briefings. I also welcome the participation of Ambassador Maurizio Massari.

Given that we are discussing specific countries whose people are suffering the distress of food insecurity, we would ideally want to hear from the States concerned in order to have a fuller picture of the situation. After all, if practical solutions are the outcome we seek, every useful insight shared today will need to build on the efforts of those States and their ability and willingness to work with the United Nations and the international community.

We welcome the humanitarian briefings and the briefers' awareness that the emergencies are taking place in a broader political, economic and environmental

context. That context is further complicated by the fact that we are presently in the grip of a global food and energy crisis whose causes extend far beyond the national situation and include geopolitical, economic and climate-change drivers.

Humanitarian organizations are undertaking heroic efforts all over the world. They are short of the resources they require, and the emergencies are growing by the day. Our humanitarian colleagues should be supported in their urgent calls for adequate funding and, indeed, for rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access. However, we should not focus entirely and exclusively on the emergency responses to human-made conflicts. We know that in most of the countries and regions most affected by violent conflict, its causes include climate change, development shortfalls and the consequent poverty and inequality.

While food insecurity may be most acute in the limited areas where violence is occurring, in most conflict-afflicted countries it is a broader phenomenon. We therefore urge the relevant States, regional bodies and United Nations entities to bring a renewed and resourced focus on Sustainable Development Goal 2, which seeks zero-hunger by 2030. Their efforts should be coordinated and collaborative in order to ensure that they are conflict responsive.

Pursuing that target requires an immediate focus on increasing agricultural productivity, particularly in supporting access to affordable fertilizers and de-risking investments in fertilizer production, particularly in Africa. The push to broaden fertilizer production in Africa will go hand in hand with a just energy transition that allows countries to use their hydrocarbon resources for economic development. Countries that strongly advocate for humanitarian response should regard a just energy transition in the global South as key to meeting their humanitarian advocacy.

We also argue that this is the right time for the Security Council to re-engage with its preventive mandate, particularly in regard to the climate crisis in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, to mention only two of the most-affected regions. There is sufficient evidence that the climate crisis aggravates conflict and may even be a direct driver. We urge the Council to heed the strong call by countries of the region for initiatives that link climate action with the Organization's peacekeeping and political missions.

The Security Council must maintain its strong support for humanitarian action while making progress in meeting its mandate to protect civilians in situations where international peace and security are threatened. The best way to achieve our mandate is to make stronger efforts to encourage, facilitate and enforce political settlements that deliver ceasefires, dialogue, reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction. That is practical work, first and foremost. The efforts we undertake in the Council, particularly in the timing and thrust of meetings, statements and resolutions, is most effective when connected to ongoing efforts to mediate and negotiate ceasefires and settlements.

In situations where there is no peace to keep and there are terrorist or militant groups present that are a pervasive and devastating threat to civilians, the Council must reconsider its continuing reluctance to support United Nations financial support for regional enforcement efforts. It should also further embrace the work and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission as it embraces the deployment of livelihood support and development in preventing conflict.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I thank Martin Griffiths, David Beasley and Maximo Torero for their briefings.

The year 2022 will mark a grim record for the number of people in a situation of food insecurity due to conflicts, the coronavirus disease pandemic and climate change.

In countries that depend on imports for their food needs, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has tragic consequences. The figures bear that out. The war is aggravating food insecurity and increasing the risk of famine worldwide. In 2022 and 2023, 13 million additional people may face undernourishment as a result of the war.

Let us be clear, as recognized by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in April, it is in fact war that worsens global food insecurity and malnutrition. No sanctions are aimed at the food sector. On the contrary, we are fighting so that agricultural products do not in any way become a weapon of war to serve geopolitical goals. Only a multilateral, coordinated and inclusive approach

can address the risk of famine and prevent the disastrous effects of the war waged by Russia in Ukraine.

France fully supports the initiative launched by the Secretary-General through the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance. It recalls the joint responsibility of international partners to ensure that the countries most at risk continue to receive the necessary foodstuffs. In that respect, it is essential that the agreements concluded in Istanbul on 22 July continue to be implemented so that cereals arrive via the Black Sea to those who need it most urgently. It is also imperative that that mechanism be renewed beyond its initial duration of four months.

The solidarity corridors set up by the European Union have also made possible to extract more than 10 million tons of cereals from Ukraine since March, thereby helping to lower prices and avoid a crisis of anticipation.

In that same spirit, France, alongside the European Union, launched the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM), in the framework of the Secretary-General's efforts and in coordination with other international initiatives. FARM aims to support the countries most affected by the global food crisis by improving the transparency of agricultural markets, promoting fair access food and agricultural products at a reasonable price and by strengthening sustainable local production in order to reduce dependencies. The first results of this road map are the product of an international cooperative effort. In that context, the World Food Programme has set up a specific solidarity mechanism to guarantee affordable supplies, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development will host a secretariat aimed at uniting donors around high-impact projects impact for food security and nutrition. We call on all actors to contribute to those international efforts.

France is also mobilizing by increasing its financial contribution for food security and nutrition, which should exceed €706 million this year. It is also doing so through its contributions to international organizations, by supporting civil society-led projects and through the operations of the French Development Agency. The doubling of France's financial support to the World Food Programme this year and the funding of the secretariat to be established by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which I referred to earlier, also testify to that commitment and to

our desire for solidarity with countries in highly vulnerable situations.

Preventing famine and food crises requires that all parties to conflicts respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. Resolutions 2417 (2018) and 2573 (2021) must be fully implemented. The protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure is an absolute imperative. Humanitarian access must be guaranteed.

In the longer term, the response to food insecurity must include the transformation of our food systems towards sustainability and resilience in order to address the effects of climate change and biodiversity erosion, as well as the challenge of human population growth. The mobilization of donors to that end is essential.

Moreover, while conflict remains the primary driver of food crises, we need to increase efforts to find sustainable political solutions to conflicts. France reaffirms its unwavering and continuous support in that regard.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Italy.

**Mr. Massari (Italy):** I thank Brazil and Ireland for calling for the convening of this timely meeting, as well as the three briefers for their insightful and sobering accounts. The state of global food insecurity is of great concern to Italy. It is crucial that food security remain at the top of the international agenda.

In the context of a pre-existing deteriorating situation, the illegal Russian war against Ukraine further jeopardized global food chains, exposing the most vulnerable countries of the Global South to even more dire consequences, especially in terms of limited access to food and taking food price inflation to record levels.

The dramatic situation in fragile areas such as the Horn of Africa, particularly in Somalia, is deeply disturbing. In that regard, I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths for his personal engagement and his recent mission there. Along with the United States, Qatar and the United Kingdom, and in collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

Affairs, we will therefore host a high-level side event on the humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa region during the General Assembly high-level week. We hope that the event might help to raise awareness about the alarming situation on the ground.

Against that bleak background, the key Black Sea Grain Initiative, brokered thanks to the good offices of the Secretary-General with the relevant parties, has become a beacon of hope. We applaud the Initiative and call on all parties involved to fully comply with it. Time is of the essence. The European Union's solidarity lanes are also efficiently adding to efforts to accelerate exports to the global South via much-needed alternative routes.

Ensuring access to food, starting with those most in need, is an international and moral obligation that we must fulfil, including in line with resolution 2417 (2018). As food security has been a long-standing priority for Italy, we have increased our political, financial and technical support to the United Nations, in particular through, and in partnership with, its Rome-based agencies. We call on all Member States to increase their support as well. It is our mission, as Chair of the Group of Friends of Food Security and Nutrition, to keep the level of attention high and efforts proactive.

In order to avert the worst-case scenarios, a drastic shift in attitude and commitment is needed. The current cross-cutting crisis touches us all, and it therefore requires a cross-cutting response from all of us. Those challenges include maintaining open food chains, the resilience of both value chains and food systems, new investments for localization and a full transition towards sustainable, climate-smart and resilient food systems. Rural populations and local actors must also be put back at the centre of those processes.

Food diplomacy is crucial to mitigate the effects of the food crisis. At the same time, effective political diplomacy is needed to prevent and resolve conflict. We must build on both food diplomacy and political diplomacy with great urgency in order to avert famine and food insecurity globally. Italy stands ready to actively engage in those efforts here in New York, in Rome and on the front line where humanitarian crises are unfolding.

*The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.*