



# Security Council

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## **Letter dated 23 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council**

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of the briefings provided by Mr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme; and Mr. Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council; as well as the statements delivered by Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic and by the representatives of Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference convened on Tuesday, 21 April 2020.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of Security Council members dated 2 April 2020 (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* José **Singer Weisinger**  
President of the Security Council



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

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

While addressing the Council today, it is of course impossible to ignore the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its impact on food security. Let me assure the Council that FAO is working at all levels to reduce the risk of the pandemic disrupting food systems and causing a global food crisis among our members.

Today I will focus on three central elements, namely, the 2020 *Global Report on Food Crises* and how it clearly shows the link between conflict and rising levels of acute food insecurity; the connection between livelihood interventions and peace processes; and the importance of early warning and quick action to pre-empt food insecurity caused by conflicts.

Earlier today, we — FAO, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the European Union and 13 other partners — launched the 2020 edition of the *Global Report on Food Crises*. According to the Report, 135 million people in 55 countries experienced acute food insecurity in 2019. That is a substantial rise over the past four years. Almost 60 per cent of all those people did so in contexts of conflict or instability. In South Sudan, for instance, where over 6 million people — more than half its population — are expected to face crisis levels of food insecurity or worse. That will likely deteriorate further between May and July, to almost 6.5 million people. In Yemen, which remains the world's worst food and malnutrition crisis in 2020, the number of acutely food-insecure people is expected to exceed 17 million. The risk of famine persists, particularly if port operations are disrupted by the conflict.

Coherent actions are needed among humanitarian, development and peace actors to address the root causes of acute food insecurity. FAO's experience shows that interventions supporting livelihoods and food security contribute to local peace and broader peace processes because they address not only the symptoms but also the root causes of conflict. That goes to the essence of the Sustainable Development Goals, which we are working to achieve by 2030.

For example, in the Sahel, more than 12 million people experienced acute food insecurity last year. Unfortunately, we expect that number to rise to over 17 million during the coming lean season. Despite large-scale, internationally backed efforts, peace remains fragile, particularly for pastoral and agropastoral communities, whose livelihoods have been increasingly eroded in the Sahel and elsewhere. Pastoralism represents one of the most viable livelihood options in the drylands, making enormous contributions to social, environmental and economic well-being. In West Africa and the Sahel, livestock production contributes up to 44 per cent of agricultural gross domestic product. But the marginalization and neglect of pastoral communities, as well as the depletion of the natural resources on which they rely, has left them exposed. In many areas, the relationship between farmers and pastoral herders, which was once cooperative, has become confrontational as they compete over the same scarce resources. FAO and other agencies are strengthening the resilience of those communities, with a focus on cross-border areas, such as in the Liptako-Gourma region of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger, where insecurity and fragility are particularly acute.

Conflict prevention and acting early to reduce the impact of conflict are highly effective steps that can be taken to avert and reduce acute food insecurity. We need prevention, as the forecasts for food security in 2020 look bleak: conflicts, extreme weather, desert locusts, economic shocks and now COVID-19 are likely to push more people into acute food insecurity. However, by closely monitoring the evolution of those shocks, we can rapidly intervene to mitigate their impact. We are committed to rising to that challenge and have mobilized our organizations in ways not seen since the founding of the United Nations. Because the evidence is clear: widespread conflict and instability lead to food insecurity; therefore, limiting or preventing conflict reduces and prevents hunger.

FAO will continue supporting the Security Council by providing professional consultation with up-to-date information and analysis on food security in conflict contexts. That will facilitate the Council's timely action to avert food crises. Non-traditional security will be an unavoidable problem closely related to food system.

My appreciation goes to all Council members for their continued attention to the direct link between conflict and food security, along with rural development.

## Annex II

### **Statement by Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme**

Forgive me for speaking bluntly, but I would like to lay out for the Council very clearly what the world is facing at this very moment. At the same time as we are dealing with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, we are also on the brink of a hunger pandemic.

In my conversations with world leaders over the past many months, before the coronavirus even became an issue, I was saying that 2020 would be facing the worst humanitarian crisis since the Second World War for a number of reasons, such as the wars in Syria and Yemen; the deepening crises in places like South Sudan and, as Jan Egeland will no doubt set out, Burkina Faso and the central Sahel region; the desert locust swarms in Africa, as Director-General Qu highlighted in his remarks; more frequent natural disasters and changing weather patterns; the economic crisis in Lebanon, which is affecting millions of Syrian refugees; and the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Ethiopia, and the list goes on. We are already facing a perfect storm.

So today, with COVID-19, I want to stress that we are not only facing a global health pandemic but also a global humanitarian catastrophe. Millions of civilians living in conflict-scarred nations, including many women and children, face being pushed to the brink of starvation, with the spectre of famine a very real and dangerous possibility. This sounds truly shocking, but let me provide the numbers: 821 million people go to bed hungry every night all over the world, chronically hungry, and as the new *Global Report on Food Crisis* published today shows, there are a further 135 million people facing crisis levels of hunger or worse. That means 135 million people on Earth are marching towards the brink of starvation. But now the World Food Programme (WFP) analysis shows that, due to the coronavirus, an additional 130 million people could be pushed to the brink of starvation by the end of 2020. That is a total of 265 million people.

On any given day now, WFP offers a lifeline to nearly 100 million people, up from about 80 million just a few years ago. That includes about 30 million people whose lives literally depend on us. If we cannot reach those people with the life-saving assistance they need, our analysis shows that 300,000 people could starve to death every single day over a three-month period. That does not include the increase in starvation due to COVID-19. In a worst-case scenario, we could be looking at famine in about three dozen countries, and, in fact, in 10 of those countries, we already have more than 1 million people per country who are on the verge of starvation. In many places, that human suffering is the heavy price of conflict.

At WFP we are proud that the Security Council made the historic decision to adopt resolution 2417 (2018). It was amazing to see the Council come together. Now we have to live up to our pledge to protect the most vulnerable and act immediately to save lives.

But that is, in my opinion, only the first part of the strategy needed to protect conflict-riven countries from a hunger pandemic caused by the coronavirus. There is also a real danger that more people could potentially die from the economic impact of COVID-19 than from the virus itself. That is why I am talking about a hunger pandemic. It is critical that we come together as one united global community to defeat this disease and protect the most vulnerable nations and communities from its potentially devastating effects.

Lockdowns and economic recession are expected to lead to a major loss of income among the working poor. Overseas remittances will also drop sharply, which will hurt countries such as Haiti, Nepal and Somalia, to name just a few. The loss of tourism receipts will damage countries such as Ethiopia, where it accounts for 47 per cent of total exports. The collapsing oil prices in lower-income countries like South Sudan, where oil accounts for 98.8 per cent of total exports, will have a significant impact. And, of course, when donor countries' revenues are down, how much impact that will have on life-saving foreign aid remains to be seen. The economic and health impacts of COVID-19 are most worrisome for communities in countries across Africa and the Middle East because the virus threatens further damage to the lives and livelihoods of people already put at risk by conflict.

WFP and our partners are going all-out to help them and will do everything we possibly can. For example, we know that children are particularly vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition, so we are prioritizing assistance to them. As the Council may know, 1.6 billion children and young people are currently out of school owing to lockdown closures. Nearly 370 million children are missing out on nutritious school meals — one can only imagine that when children do not get the nutrition they need, their immunity goes down. Where nutritious school meals have been suspended by school closures, we are working to replace them with take-home rations, wherever possible.

As members know, WFP is the logistical backbone for the humanitarian world, and even more so now for the global effort to beat the pandemic. We have delivered millions upon millions of personal protective equipment, testing kits and face masks to 78 countries on behalf of the World Health Organization. We are also running humanitarian air services to get front-line health professionals, doctors and nurses and humanitarian staff into countries that need help, especially while the commercial air industry is basically shut down. But we need to do so much more, and I urge the Council to lead the way.

First and foremost, we need peace. As the Secretary-General recently said very clearly, a global ceasefire is essential.

Secondly, we need all parties involved in conflicts to give us swift and unimpeded humanitarian access to all vulnerable communities, so that we can get the assistance they need to them, regardless of who or where they are. In a very general sense, we also need humanitarian goods and commercial trade to continue flowing across borders, because they are the lifeline of global food systems as well as of the global economy. Supply chains have to keep moving if we are going to overcome the pandemic and get food from where it is produced to where it is needed. It also means resisting the temptation to introduce export bans or import subsidies, which can lead to price hikes and almost always backfire. WFP is working hand in glove with Governments to build and strengthen national safety nets. That is critical right now to ensure fair access to assistance, help maintain peace and prevent rising tensions among communities.

Thirdly, we need coordinated action to support life-saving humanitarian assistance. For example, WFP is implementing plans to pre-position three months' worth of food and cash to serve country operations identified as priorities. We are asking donors to accelerate the \$1.9 billion in funding that has already been pledged, so that we can build stockpiles, create those life-saving buffers and protect the most vulnerable from the effects of supply chain disruptions, commodity shortages, economic damage and lockdowns. Members understand exactly what I am talking about. We are also requesting a further \$350 million to set up a network of logistics hubs and transport systems to keep humanitarian supply chains moving around the

world. They will also provide field hospitals and medical evacuations to the front-line humanitarian and health workers, on a strategic, as-needed basis.

Two years ago, the Security Council took a landmark step when it recognized — and condemned — the devastating human toll of conflict paid in poverty and hunger. Resolution 2417 (2018) also highlighted the need for early-warning systems, and today I am here to raise that alarm. There are no famines yet. But I must warn the Council that, if we do not prepare and act now to secure access and avoid funding shortfalls and disruptions to trade, we could be facing multiple famines of biblical proportions within a few short months.

The actions we take will determine our success, or failure, in building sustainable food systems as the basis of stable and peaceful societies. The truth is, we do not have time on our side, so let us act wisely and let us act fast. I believe that, with our expertise and partnerships, we can bring together the teams and the programmes necessary to make certain the COVID-19 pandemic does not become a humanitarian and food crisis catastrophe.

## Annex III

### **Briefing by Mr. Jan Egeland, Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council**

I wish to express my gratitude for this opportunity to speak about conflict-induced hunger and what Security Council members can do to follow up on their commitment to “break the vicious cycle between armed conflict and food insecurity”, as expressed in resolution 2417 (2018). The importance and urgency of global food needs have been well presented by my colleagues from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme. I will therefore concentrate on the need for help from the Security Council with our field-based obstacles to reach the hungry in war.

In my 40 years of humanitarian work there have never been as many people — more than 70 million — displaced by horrific violence and conflict. Linked to more, longer and crueller conflicts, we see mounting hunger caused by political violence and violent extremism. Conflict forces families to flee their homes, their farms, their fields and their livelihoods and to become dependent on the generosity of host communities that themselves are often in a precarious situation. To make that storm even worse, climate change is also hitting the displaced and their hosts, which, in turn, deepens hunger and leads to further displacement.

Perhaps nowhere else is that vicious cycle clearer than in central Sahel and the Lake Chad basin in Africa. I witnessed this first-hand when I visited Burkina Faso earlier this year, just before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Nowhere else in the world have we seen such a tenfold increase in forced displacement, from 70,000 to 750,000 people, in just a year.

In the small northern town of Barsalogo, the population had increased manifold due to continuous brutal attacks throughout the region by different armed groups. Most of the families were single-parent and mother-led. Men were targeted by extremist violence and fathers and husbands were dead or had fled further away. These women and children were suffering alone and unprotected. We were only a couple of aid groups present in this large area, and we are overstretched and underfunded. There are no public services or any law and order in sight.

Most families had some basic shelter but they were in acute need of everything else: food, water, sanitation and education. A family of seven or eight people shared 20 litres of water per day. How can one avoid the coronavirus disease with 1,000 huts next to each other, with 10 people in each small shelter and three litres of water for drinking, food and hygiene per person per day? There was no school, as teachers had fled the targeted violence against education. Food insecurity has increased threefold.

The emergency in northern Burkina Faso is not unique. We see the same food and basic relief crisis across the Sahel, from Mali to Lake Chad. There is an overreliance on counter-terrorist military responses. Too little is done to address the root causes of violence, such as massive unemployment, a lack of education, abject poverty, the lack of good governance and a lack of hope for the large generation of young people. And if we go beyond the Sahel to Syria, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Somalia, we see the same need for a real reboot.

So, what should be done? Having consulted with many field colleagues, let me focus on five asks.

First, we need safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to all populations in need. The Council must help us, as front-line humanitarian agencies, to reach all communities in need in conflict areas. States have an obligation to facilitate



impartial humanitarian aid according to humanitarian law. Yet, when we try to reach children, women and men — all civilians — with life-saving relief, every day we face obstacles, roadblocks and prohibitions in multiple conflict settings. Both assertive Governments and non-State armed groups are blatantly denying civilians access to relief.

We urge the Security Council to avoid politicizing access to aid and rather, by default, to enable us, as front-line humanitarian actors, to provide relief wherever and whenever there are unmet needs — across front lines, borders and political, religious and ethnic lines. Women, children, the elderly and the disabled everywhere must always receive aid. Resolution 2165 (2014), on cross-border relief in Syria, is an example of the type of mechanisms needed.

Secondly, we need stronger humanitarian diplomacy to promote humanitarian access. Missions deployed by the Security Council, as well as the bilateral diplomatic missions of Council members, must give priority to humanitarian diplomacy with parties and actors that can eliminate access challenges and ensure that we can reach people with food and other assistance. Access challenges are nearly always man-made. The Council's intervention can enable life-saving food and other aid.

From 2016 to the end of 2018, I chaired a humanitarian task force on access in Syria with some 25 influential United Nations Member States. The task force was set up after horrific reports of children starving to death in besieged towns in Syria. Within 72 hours of the creation of the task force, convoys were rolling into several besieged areas that had not received any food or other relief for many months. Humanitarian diplomacy by States and the United Nations system was a key factor in enabling that. States with influence over the parties to conflict have a particular responsibility in that regard. When many besieged areas were again denied food and hunger took hold, it was primarily because the pressure on the parties by States was waning. A criminal military logic won over compassion and humanitarian law.

Thirdly, we must strengthen the instrument of deconfliction with parties to armed conflicts. Deconflicting by informing parties of protected humanitarian and medical sites is a key tool to enable food, medical relief and humanitarian assistance to reach civilians without being attacked. The protection of neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian relief is a basic tenet of humanitarian law. To attack medical and humanitarian sites are war crimes.

When military commanders are informed of when, where and what will be supplied in terms of food and other relief items, they have an obligation to ensure the safety and security of a relief convoy for the entire operation. That has worked in many conflicts and with many parties but, too often, the parties, their sponsors and the humanitarian system fail to ensure that deconfliction is effectively organized and respected. We have often seen convoys get through to places of hunger and hopelessness after having been successfully deconflicted with multiple governmental armed forces and non-State armed groups. In other places we have seen deconflicted convoys, hospitals, schools, camps and humanitarian offices and warehouses attacked and bombed.

Deconfliction and humanitarian diplomacy can work, even in the cruellest of wars, but the information provided must always be verified and accurate and, most importantly, there must be accountability for attacks on protected sites. States must work to ensure respect for international humanitarian law among their own armed forces and among those they support and can influence.

Fourthly, standard exemptions for humanitarian aid, including food and agricultural products, must be included in counter-terrorism laws and sanctions regimes. Humanitarian work, access, supply, procurement, visas and movements in



conflict zones are increasingly affected by counter-terror legislation, measures and sanctions regimes.

A well-known example is the drought-related food crisis that in 2011 became a famine in south-central Somalia, where sanctions imposed on Al-Shabaab greatly complicated the response to the famine. It delayed donor funding and caused widespread risk aversion among humanitarian organizations, which believed that they could not respond in those areas owing to the legal risks. Exemptions were introduced too late, and too many died.

Today, in many of the conflict areas where the Norwegian Refugee Council's 15,000 humanitarian workers struggle to get food and other relief to civilians in the crossfire, we are delayed or restrained by the lack of clear-cut exemptions for the provision of humanitarian aid in all sanctions regimes and counter-terrorism measures.

In a similar vein, the many current COVID-19 restrictions put in place by States should also always include provisions that allow coronavirus-safe humanitarian assistance to continue, for example, by designating humanitarian workers as essential personnel, just like medical personnel. Otherwise, the current health crisis may provoke a food crisis with even graver consequences for vulnerable populations.

Fifthly, monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms must be strengthened. The starvation of civilians in warfare and the denial of humanitarian relief are grave violations of humanitarian law, for which perpetrators must be held to account. The recent amendment to the Rome Statute, expanding the war crime of deliberate starvation to situations of non-international armed conflicts, is a welcome step. States parties should ratify or accept the amendment to ensure that it enters into force.

There must be consequences when men with guns and power prevent children and families from accessing food through harvests or aid, and hunger is the consequence. The Security Council must ensure investigations and accountability through a mechanism to monitor and report on humanitarian access and starvation crimes. Only then will generals, commanders and politicians think twice before they deny civilians food. Starving civilians is a war crime and will never achieve legitimate military objectives. We urge the Security Council to renew its commitment to breaking the vicious cycle of conflict and food insecurity and to consider the five points that I have listed.

## Annex IV

### **Statement by Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic**

Allow me to begin by acknowledging the work undertaken by Governments and international organizations to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the nutrition of the most vulnerable populations.

I welcome Mr. Qu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); Mr. Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP); and Mr. Egeland, Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. We deeply appreciate their acceptance of our invitation to share their assessments of the impact of conflicts on food security.

The COVID-19 pandemic has once again placed before us the unbearable evidence that in the twenty-first century, despite increasingly efficient production capacities, the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of zero hunger is not guaranteed. FAO, which recognized the Dominican Republic as being among the countries that achieved the Millennium Development Goal of reducing hunger and malnutrition, indicates that my country is on track to attain that SDG. However, the current crisis threatens the possibility that many developing countries can eradicate hunger.

The joint report produced by FAO, WFP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Health Organization and UNICEF, entitled *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019*, reveals that 821.6 million people are in a state of food insecurity. That is approximately 1 million more than the previous year, which suggests that the state of hunger has at least remained stagnant or has slightly worsened.

The prospects of the social and economic crisis that will engulf the globe in the second half of 2020 portend negative developments. Economic inequality, extreme poverty, climate change and natural catastrophes, as well as conflicts, are undeniable factors that contribute to food insecurity.

The rise of internal conflicts since 2010 is responsible for more than half of those suffering from chronic food insecurity. The unanimous adoption of resolution 2417 (2018) represented a milestone. The acknowledgement of a clear relationship between armed conflict and food insecurity provided the international community with guidelines to prevent such conflicts from becoming food crises for civilian populations. In that context, it is timely to apply the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises of the Committee on World Food Security.

I would also like to refer to the link between food insecurity and political stability. The evidence is irrefutable — food insecurity is a breeding ground for conflict, even more so if paired with inequality and institutional weakness. Hunger, an increase in social tensions and the displacement of populations can result in increased social and economic pressure for host countries, often affected with diverse vulnerabilities.

Hunger affects more than 40 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean. Undernourishment quadrupled in Venezuela between 2014 and 2018. That occurred simultaneously with a severe economic recession and a mass exodus of people.

The situation in Haiti, on the other hand, requires urgent attention and calls for the solidarity of the international community. According to the report published in January 2020 by WFP and FAO, 3.7 million Haitians are in a state of severe food

insecurity. The lessons learned from Colombia serve as a reminder of the vicious circle of conflict, displacement of people and hunger.

Timely actions are needed to improve food security and nutrition, and they must be understood as initiatives that contribute to peacekeeping. Early actions can mitigate the effects of conflict on livelihoods and access to food. This concern must remain on the agenda of the Security Council by means of humanitarian diplomacy and peacekeeping missions.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to multidimensional situations. Many countries affected by conflict also suffer the adverse effects of climate change, an interaction that, in already vulnerable contexts, implies a serious threat to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As often happens, women, children and the elderly, as well as refugees and internally displaced people, are among the most affected.

It is imperative to combine efforts to strengthen the pillars of peace, security, development, the environment and humanitarian assistance of the United Nations. The Secretary-General, States, specialized agencies of the system, humanitarian and development actors and the affected communities themselves must have the information, analysis and early-warning tools and ensure concerted efforts to address conflict-induced food insecurity exacerbated by climate change, economic crises and, now, the COVID-19 pandemic.

As I previously mentioned, the United Nations recognizes that the Dominican Republic has undertaken food security as a key component of its Government policies. We declared 2020 as the Year of the Consolidation of Food Security, based on a national plan to ensure that all Dominicans have access to proper nutrition and are protected against hunger.

The priority given to food security requires greater commitment at the international level. We know that the world will not achieve its shared goals of development without satisfying its food and nutrition needs.

We are pleased to have had the opportunity to reopen this debate during this critical moment in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which currently constitutes a real global threat, in order to reflect on how to adapt our response during this complex situation.

**Annex V****Statement by Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations**

I would like to thank you, Sir, for your leadership on the topic of conflict-induced hunger, illustrated by this timely briefing, as well as for your initiative for a presidential statement, which we support.

I thank our briefers for reminding us what this topic is all about. It is about States not protecting their own civilians; about starving civilians; about warring parties denying humanitarian access, attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure, destroying livelihoods, cattle and agricultural fields; and about the disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable, especially on children.

It is about Governments impeding humanitarian assistance by imposing less visible administrative impediments and restrictions, and about the difficulties humanitarian organizations experience due to adverse effects of counter-terrorism measures and sanctions.

It is also about the less visible effects of conflict-induced hunger; when a whole generation suffers from malnutrition, the long-term consequences compromise the prosperity of the whole society, as well as its prospects for sustainable peace.

All 15 members of the Security Council recognized these challenges in unanimously adopting resolution 2417 (2018). You have asked, Sir, how a more comprehensive implementation of that resolution could be achieved. We believe that there are many actions the Security Council and Member States can take to prevent conflicts from causing or aggravating hunger. I will name just a few, inspired, of course, by resolution 2417 (2018).

Those States having influence over parties to conflict should use such influence to incite compliance with international humanitarian law, for example by supporting national investigations and encouraging Member States in whose jurisdiction violations are committed to ensure accountability. If and when national jurisdictions fail to take action, the Security Council has the tools to trigger a range of international investigation and accountability mechanisms. We welcome, in this respect, the amendment to the Rome Statute to include as a war crime the intentional starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, including in non-international armed conflicts, and we call on Member States to adhere to the Rome Statute and to ratify this amendment.

The Council should also continue to sanction individuals or entities obstructing humanitarian access. Giving appropriate protection-of-civilians mandates to peace operations and having them engage in dialogue on access challenges are other examples.

Finally, we believe that the Secretary-General has an important role to play in alerting the Security Council when the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in the context of armed conflict arises, and in providing us with the necessary information during country-specific and protection-of-civilians briefings.

Lastly, we would like to underline that populations in armed conflicts, weakened by years of violence, destruction and malnutrition, and pushed to their limits by the adverse effects of climate change, are now once again particularly vulnerable to the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We therefore fully support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire to ensure adequate response to the pandemic. We also recall that COVID-19 does not exempt Governments from their obligations under international, human rights and humanitarian law, and call on all Member States to prevent COVID-19-related restrictions from curtailing the ability of humanitarian actors to provide assistance.

## Annex VI

### **Statement by Mr. Zhang Jun, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations**

I would like to thank Foreign Minister Miguel Vargas Maldonado for his statement. I also thank Director-General Qu Dongyu, Executive Director David Beasley and Mr. Jan Egeland for their briefings.

War and armed conflicts result in catastrophes and grievances. They may threaten the survival of innocent civilians, destroy infrastructure, affect the development of the countries concerned and lead to humanitarian crises, including the worsening of food insecurity.

It is recognizable that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and other international organizations follow the situation very closely, maintain insights on conflict-induced hunger issues and provide focused observations and recommendations. We also appreciate the initiative of the Dominican Republic to convene the present meeting.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the breakdown of the global industrial chain have also impacted the economies and food security of Member States. Desert locust infestations are rampant in Africa and Asia, increasing global food-security risks. Against this backdrop, there is added value to engaging in discussions on this topic. I wish to share the following points.

First, it is imperative to prevent and resolve conflicts, and promote dialogue and political settlement of hotspot issues. The Security Council should uphold its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and promote the resolution of conflicts through political and diplomatic means so as to relieve civilians of the sufferings of war, including hunger.

We urge all relevant parties to actively support and act on the appeal by the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. All actions should be taken by parties concerned to ensure unhindered humanitarian access, including with regard to food supply. The international community should pay greater attention to issues in Africa and support the good offices and mediation efforts of the African Union and other regional organizations.

Secondly, it is essential to promote and place core emphasis on inclusive and balanced development. It is difficult to achieve development without peace and hard to realize sustainable peace without development. Development is fundamental to solving various global issues. It is especially important to support the efforts of Africa and other regions to eradicate poverty and advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Greater attention and input should be given to reconstructing conflict areas and to promoting political, economic, peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes in parallel, while increasing the fundamental development capacity of countries concerned to prevent food crises and other humanitarian disasters.

Thirdly, it is critical to strengthen international cooperation and set favourable conditions to promote global food security. The international community should jointly take urgent actions to ensure an unobstructed global food-supply chain and maintain food supply and price stability. We must support FAO and WFP in playing their unique coordinating role in providing humanitarian assistance to countries concerned to prevent large-scale famine.

Unilateral sanctions must be lifted as soon as possible. Member States should stabilize industrial supply chains, reduce tariff barriers, facilitate trade and ensure the uninterrupted global supply of food and agricultural products.

Humanitarian operations should be conducted in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant humanitarian guiding principles, while respecting the sovereignty of countries concerned.

China, as a large agricultural nation, attaches great importance to food security. With a view to achieving food self-sufficiency, China is always actively engaged in international cooperation in agriculture and food. We have provided assistance to other developing countries within our capacity, among other means, by carrying out projects, together with FAO, in the framework of South-South cooperation, and sending experts and technicians to regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 and the Asian-African locust plague, China has provided active support to other countries in combating the epidemic. In active response to the FAO initiative and the requests of the relevant countries, China has sent locust control teams to share experience and help the affected countries. Positive results have been achieved.

China is ready to strengthen cooperation with all parties to safeguard global food security and work together to create a world free from hunger and poverty. We are ready to provide solid support for all peoples in their quest for greater development, and to make greater contributions to building a world of lasting peace and common prosperity and a better future shared by all humankind.

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**Annex VII****Statement by Mr. Sven Jürgenson, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations**

I would like to thank all briefers for their overviews.

Almost two years ago, in May 2018, the Council adopted resolution 2417 (2018), recognizing the link between armed conflict, violence, conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine. It also strongly condemned the use of the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

We know that the need for humanitarian aid is rising. Today, the relevance of conflict-induced hunger has not decreased; on the contrary, especially now, due to the outbreak of the pandemic, it is even more relevant. The pandemic has already had a massive impact in every possible way on our everyday lives. The impact has been felt more profoundly, especially by the most vulnerable, in conflict situations, where resources have always been scarce. According to the latest analysis by the World Food Programme (WFP), due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) an additional 130 million people could be pushed to the brink of starvation by the end of 2020.

Most of the food-insecure people in the world live in countries affected by armed conflicts, which have devastating humanitarian consequences, hindering an effective humanitarian response. Sometimes humanitarian aid is all that people have. One can only think what might happen to these people when we are not able to carry out an effective humanitarian response. We again fully support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. As the conflicts are put to a halt, there is a higher chance for the civilians to avoid food shortages.

We cannot ignore the impact of climate change, which plays a major role here. Climate change has reduced livelihood options in many countries and caused migration. It has also left significant parts of the population in a vulnerable condition. Climate-related security risks contribute to grievances and increase inequality and fragility, which in turn pose challenges to the implementation of United Nations missions everywhere. Conflict-driven food crises can be aggravated in countries where severe extreme weather phenomena are becoming more frequent. We cannot turn away from the impact of climate on food security; on the contrary, urgent action is needed to protect the most vulnerable communities.

We also underline that women are key actors contributing to food security during conflict. Women are often hardest hit and have fewer alternative livelihoods than men when crops are lost. Ensuring women's equal rights, including to household resources and land, as well as their participation in decision-making, strengthens communities' ability to manage the challenges related to food insecurity.

The importance of safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in armed conflicts can never be underlined enough. We call on all parties to armed conflict to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.



## Annex VIII

### **Statement by Mrs. Anne Gueguen, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations**

First, I wish to join others in thanking the Dominican Republic and Minister Vargas for organizing this meeting. I also wish to thank Mr. Qu, Mr. Beasley and Mr. Egeland for their insightful briefings, as well as, through them, their teams helping people on the ground.

The link between international peace and security and famine is well documented. We have seen it in recent years in Yemen, South Sudan, Syria and the Sahel region. There is no doubt that the Security Council shall deal with this issue, and all the more as we are on the brink of a hunger pandemic, as Mr. Beasley pointed out. This is the reason why France took the initiative to organize an Arria Formula meeting on this topic in 2017. We welcome the progress made since then, with the adoption of resolution 2417 (2018) in 2018 and the negotiation of a draft presidential statement, on which agreement will hopefully be reached very soon.

After a steady decline in hunger for decades, we have seen a worrying trend of rising hunger emerge again since 2015. In 2018, 11 per cent of the world's population suffered from hunger, highlighting the immense challenge of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2, "Zero hunger". Conflicts remain one of the primary drivers of food insecurity, setting in motion a vicious cycle — conflict increases food insecurity, which in turn fuels violence. Conflict also leads to the displacement of people towards places where food resources are not sufficient to feed local populations, refugees and internally displaced persons all together. We are all aware that civilians, especially women and children, are the main victims of this vicious cycle of food insecurity and armed conflict.

It is an appalling reality, but the starvation of civilians is still often used as a weapon of war. It is also used as a means of recruitment by parties to armed conflict, who deliberately limit access to food and attack humanitarian workers.

As we keep repeating, meeting after meeting, respect for international humanitarian law is a must in all situations of conflict. All parties must respect the rules of war; in particular, they must respect international humanitarian law provisions protecting civilians, including humanitarian workers. As Mr. Egeland emphasized, parties to conflict must ensure safe and unhindered access for impartial humanitarian relief to all people in need.

Using starvation as a method of warfare against civilians constitutes a war crime under international criminal law. Such crimes cannot go unpunished.

In addition, I fully concur with the representative of Germany in emphasizing the link between climate change, conflicts and food insecurity. We must take into account that many countries affected by conflicts also experience the harmful effects of climate change. The 2020 *Global Report on Food Crises*, which was released today, clearly shows that extreme weather events are becoming an increasingly important contributor to food insecurity. This is notably the case in the Sahel region and aggravates conflict-driven food insecurity. In this context, France regrets that climate change could not be explicitly mentioned in the draft presidential statement we are negotiating.

We are convinced that climate change also drives displacement, which is another source of food crises. France is currently chairing the Platform on Disaster Displacement, a group of States working together towards better protection for people displaced in the context of disaster and climate change.

I wish to underline the importance of prevention and early-warning systems in acting more effectively to prevent conflict-induced famine. The Secretary-General and Governments must provide timely information regarding food insecurity levels in order better to anticipate, prevent and mitigate the effects of a food crisis.

We are convinced that improving food security and nutrition contributes to peacekeeping and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. That is why France is increasing its financing of food aid, from about €40 million in 2019 to more than €50 million in 2020. Our food assistance this year covers regions affected by conflicts, while also taking into account the impact of the current coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis.

Indeed, that is where I would like to conclude. Today, with the propagation of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to reach lasting solutions to the conflicts that lie at the heart of these humanitarian tragedies. We reiterate our full support for the call of the Secretary-General for an immediate and global ceasefire to facilitate the response to the pandemic. We have a collective responsibility and moral obligation in this regard. The Security Council must remain mobilized. France will continue to play its full part in that regard.

**Annex IX****Statement by Mr. Jürgen Schulz, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations**

I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your timely choice of topic for your signature event today. Germany has joined you in hosting several informal meetings of the Security Council entitled “Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations”. These briefings have illustrated the link between conflict and food insecurity on the basis of evidence from several country situations. Today’s briefers made clear that conflict remains a primary driver of acute food insecurity.

In 2018, the Security Council adopted resolution 2417 (2018), condemning the use of the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare as well as the denial of humanitarian assistance in conflict situations. That landmark resolution paved the way for addressing conflict-induced hunger, underlining the clear causal link between armed conflict, food insecurity and starvation. Two years after the adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), the international community expects the Security Council to act more decisively on the interlinkages between conflict and food insecurity.

The *Global Report on Food Crises*, released today, found that in 2019 135 million people were affected by acute food insecurity — the highest number in the four years since reporting started. The report particularly highlights an increase in acute food insecurity in crises such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. That trend requires the mobilization of all actors involved in conflict prevention and resolution.

Resolution 2417 (2018) initiated an early-warning mechanism that allows the Security Council to act prior to the onset of a hunger hazard. This can safeguard lives and preserve livelihoods. But the Council needs to reinforce its preventive approach, identify any threats to food security in conflict settings early on and take early and appropriate action to preserve international peace and security.

There is still a lot of potential for this kind of early warning. We call on the Secretariat to closely monitor fragile countries and to report swiftly to the Council on risks of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in armed conflicts, if necessary also outside the usual reporting cycle.

German humanitarian assistance places great emphasis on food security as well as on promoting a paradigm shift towards a forward-looking humanitarian system that can anticipate crises and act very early on. Since 2015, Germany has supported anticipatory humanitarian action on the part of various partners with more than €30 million. Of all the humanitarian sectors, food assistance has received the largest amount of funding from Germany in past years. Given the dire needs that still exist, food security will certainly remain one of our priority areas for this year as well.

Germany would like to underline and support in particular the importance that resolution 2417 (2018) attaches to adherence to international humanitarian law and to sustaining humanitarian access. All parties to a conflict must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect civilians, so that humanitarian actors can perform their vital jobs.

We call on all relevant actors to provide safe, rapid and unimpeded access to all people in need. We as Security Council members should help create the conditions that allow humanitarian workers to deliver principled humanitarian assistance and bring relief to those most in need. That is also the purpose of the Humanitarian Call for Action, which Germany initiated together with France in April 2019 and which has been endorsed by 44 States Members of the United Nations.

Many conflict-affected countries are also experiencing the adverse effects of climate change first-hand, including drought, water scarcity, desertification, land degradation, erratic rainfall, flooding and other climate-related disasters. There is growing evidence that conflict and climate change, followed by economic shocks, are the two main drivers of acute food insecurity in the world. The interaction between conflict, climate change and food insecurity in an already vulnerable context has devastating impacts on civilians and poses a serious threat to the achievement of sustainable development.

In the Sahel region, we see the tangible repercussions of the link between climate change, security and food insecurity, as conflicts are flaring up between herders and farmers owing to competition over scarce resources of water and land, which serve as their livelihoods and means of food production. To secure and sustain peace in some of the world's most fragile contexts, such as the Sahel, support for agricultural livelihoods should be considered as one part of a holistic response.

Climate change and food insecurity have serious effects on the maintenance of international peace and security with respect to the crises already on our agenda, and they threaten to cause and aggravate conflicts elsewhere. That is why the Council has to deal with these issues.

In view of the fact that approximately 183 million people are at risk of slipping into acute food insecurity if confronted by an additional shock or stressor, as underlined by the *Global Report on Food Crises* released today, we are concerned about the impact of pandemics on food security. Today's raging coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic makes us aware that, although a virus spreads indiscriminately, those hit hardest are those who were at greatest risk before the pandemic.

Unfortunately, the pandemic disproportionately affects those people that already belong to the most vulnerable groups, among them women, who are often on the front lines in the fight against the pandemic, and children, for whom, in too many cases worldwide, skipping school also means skipping lunch.

In the words of Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed,

“The risks faced by people everywhere go far beyond the virus itself. The pandemic, and the measures taken to mitigate it, are already having very serious social and economic consequences, including on our food systems.”  
(see DSG/SM/1401)

At the moment, sufficient amounts of food are available, but the threat of supply-chain disruptions due to work, travel and trade restrictions is obvious. To avoid rising hunger levels due to COVID-19, not only does unimpeded access to means of production have to be maintained but workers in agriculture, logistics, processing and distribution also have to remain available, and therefore need to be adequately protected.

Therefore, we expect that large-scale humanitarian assistance will be required to prevent and cope with the consequences of the disease for food security and to deliver support to millions of people, especially to the most exposed and vulnerable groups.

We call on all relevant actors to take measures to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance despite border closures, travel bans, quarantine orders and difficulties in procurement processes.

**Annex X****Statement by Mr. Dian Triansyah Djani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations**

At the outset, Indonesia thanks the presidency for having convened this briefing today. I welcome the presence of the Dominican Republic's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, at this meeting. I also thank the briefers, Mr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme; and Mr. Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

The protection of civilians will remain Indonesia's top priority. Last year, under Indonesia's presidency of the Council, we were proud to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Council's adoption of the protection of civilians as an item on its agenda. I have said it before, and I will say it again: we are here to save lives. Protecting civilians, including from conflict-induced hunger, should always be the core aim of the Security Council. The implementation of resolution 2417 (2018) is becoming ever more pertinent, particularly at this time of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Allow me to focus on the following points.

First, starvation should never be used as a method of warfare. The parties to a conflict should respect international law, including international humanitarian law, and the resolutions of the Security Council. However, actors in most conflicts today are continuing to perpetrate violations in that respect. Attacks against humanitarian workers, medical missions and civilian assets persist, as does the deliberate disruption of humanitarian access. The Council should explore innovative ways to secure respect for global norms against the harming of civilians.

We continue to support the work of the Secretary-General in pursuing avenues to prevent and end armed conflicts. To that end, it is now more important than ever for us to adhere to the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire and provide access for humanitarian assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Violence is never the solution. We should continue to promote dialogue, political negotiations and other peaceful means. At the same time, we need to continue to enhance coordination among humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. We also call for unimpeded humanitarian access for humanitarian actors to provide relief, including food assistance, to those who are in need.

Secondly, international cooperation is vital in protecting civilians. Indeed, the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with each country, yet we often find that there is a gap between such responsibility and a country's capacity to fulfil it. International support, including through technical and financial assistance, is truly vital to enable such capacity-building.

The promotion of a culture of peace, with a rights-based approach and the requisite laws, is equally important. Lessons learned and best practices should be shared. It is also important to open borders, safeguard the global supply chain and ensure that there is no disruption of trade. We as the Council must be able to facilitate measures to strengthen countries' capacities to protect civilians as well as sustain peace and ensure the continuity of economic activities and the availability of food.

Thirdly, the imperative to protect civilians must be embedded throughout the peace continuum, from conflict prevention and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and sustainable development. The synergy is clear: for peace to flourish, sustainable development is required. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the

United Nations peacebuilding architecture are the tools we dispose of to achieve this goal. Let us utilize them.

We concur with the statement made by the Minister on the imperative of combining efforts to strengthen the pillars of peace, security, development, environment and humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

We will continue to support the central role of the United Nations on this matter and endure in our determination to, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. That is our collective effort, and everyone should be committed to that noble cause. No civilian should be left behind or unprotected; no one should be left hungry.

**Annex XI****Statement by Mr. Abdou Abarry, Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations**

I would like to start by quoting the Secretary-General, who said that the most effective way to protect civilians is to prevent conflict. To that end, and in pursuit of that goal, the protection of civilians has become one of the core issues on the Council's agenda. I would therefore like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this open debate on this very subject, with the participation of your Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Allow me to take this opportunity to also thank our briefers, Mr. Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme; and Mr. Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Conflict is now the leading cause of acute hunger around the world. In the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, where much of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood and where climate change is already exacerbating tensions, an acute food crisis has been precipitated by the ongoing conflict and intensifying insurgent activities. Indeed, 3.5 million people are projected to face acute to severe food insecurity in the Lake Chad basin. To that number we can add another 3.3 million people in need of immediate assistance in the Central Sahel. I fully agree with what was said by Mr. Egeland in that regard.

As noted by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, populations find themselves having to flee and leave their fields, livestock and other food sources behind. This escalates food insecurity for both forcibly displaced persons and their host communities, which are often providers of last resort despite their already scarce resources.

Recent years have seen progress made regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict through the implementation of a comprehensive protection framework based on international humanitarian law and Security Council practices. However, more remains to be done. In places such as the Lake Chad basin, dramatically affected by climate change and where Boko Haram is active, or Yemen, where restrictions on land and sea routes are commonplace, and many other conflict zones, thousands of people are trapped without life-saving humanitarian assistance. We hold the strong belief that all people deserve full access to humanitarian aid. This is why my delegation would like to join its voice to those of other members of the Council in strongly condemning the use of the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and the unlawful denial of access to humanitarian assistance and humanitarian personnel to the civilian population in armed conflict. We would also like to remind all parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law and the need to bring the perpetrators of violations and abuses to justice.

Repeated attacks on the human dignity of populations and the enjoyment of their rights as a result of acts of intercommunal violence or by non-State armed groups in the Sahel further exacerbate the fragility of those populations. Women and children are the primary victims of such violence and suffer significant trauma. We would like to stress the need for humanitarian assistance to be gender- and age-sensitive, and to be inclusive of those groups in the process of building more resilient and sustainable communities.

Every major outbreak in recent memory, be it Ebola, severe acute respiratory syndrome or Middle East respiratory syndrome, has had both direct and indirect negative impacts on food security, but the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



may prove especially deadly for people living in conflict zones and suffering from acute hunger.

Various factors related to the pandemic are exacerbating the challenges in regions already facing major humanitarian crises. Labour shortages are undermining crop production and processing. Disruptions due to transport blockages and quarantine measures will prevent farmers from accessing markets, and confinement measures could hinder the delivery of humanitarian aid, and thus the distribution of much-needed food to refugees and internally displaced persons.

The Niger has put in place a response plan in favour of the population estimated at nearly \$500 million in food. The forecast support plan provides for the mobilization of 81,500 tons of cereals for sale at moderate prices and 56,000 tons of free food for distribution to the most vulnerable.

As the Council may also know, thanks to a bold policy implemented by President Issoufou — the Nigeriens Feed Nigeriens initiative, which has made it possible to ensure food self-sufficiency — it has been proven that drought is no longer inevitable and is not synonymous with famine. However, in the face of COVID-19, that momentum must be supported at the national, regional and international levels.

That brings me to my other point. As I quoted at the beginning of my statement, the most effective way to protect civilians is to prevent conflict. Prevention includes acknowledging and addressing the deep-seated chronic and acute vulnerabilities affecting countries. It also requires concerted action by Governments, the humanitarian community and development actors to tackle the structural root causes of vulnerabilities, as well as strengthening the resilience of the affected communities. One such approach is a better use of scientific advances, including the peaceful application of nuclear research for agrometeorological and development purposes.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the Council that, in May 2018, it unanimously adopted resolution 2417 (2018). We hope that resolution will continue to guide our actions in order to break the cycle of conflict-related hunger sooner rather than later.

**Annex XII****Statement by Mr. Dmitry Polyanskiy, First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations**

At the outset, let me thank our briefers — Mr. Qu Dongyu, Mr. David Beasley and Mr. Jan Egeland. We are also very much honored by the intervention by Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

Today's meeting tackles the critical issue of conflict-induced hunger. Its importance cannot be overstated. We appreciate the efforts of the Dominican presidency to coordinate the views of Council members and to reflect those views in a presidential statement. It is certainly not an easy task, and we still have a way to go in order to come to a sustainable consensus.

Having said that, we have to repeat our fundamental position that the Security Council is not the right platform to sustainably embrace and address all the socioeconomic and other factors related to armed conflict. We have to be honest with each other and do our best to deal with issues of peace and security here. That is the well-known distribution of labour within the United Nations system — as defined in the Charter of the United Nations — that we all need to respect. Discussion or non-discussion of an issue in the Council should not be a gauge of its importance.

We also believe that such a discussion — wherever it takes place — will not be successful if we ignore the root causes and try to pretend that the symptoms are more important than the disease itself. The food security problem of countries in armed conflict is indeed complex and multifaceted, but one of the key root causes that is often omitted by some of our colleagues is foreign interference in the internal affairs of States. Such interference provokes conflicts and poses risks to national food security. We can all see vivid evidence of it every day in the examples of Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen. All of them have become arenas for foreign interference, or even for settling scores between external players. That must be stopped if we do not want to see a further increase in humanitarian assistance requests, most of which are just to ensure the basic food requirements of civilians. The medical consequences of a lack of balanced food, especially at a young age, may irreversibly affect the health of those future grown-ups. The generation of children living through hunger wars is growing in plain view and that is extremely alarming.

Yemen is the largest humanitarian catastrophe of our times, where two thirds of the population are in need of humanitarian assistance. Half of them are children.

In Syria more than 11 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Despite having all the internal resources necessary to ensure the independent development of and a normal life for their citizens, this country is forced to rely on international humanitarian assistance, particularly for food. That humanitarian aid comes with discriminatory terms and preconditions, often regime change. The role of the cross-border mechanism is being artificially exaggerated at the expense of existing feasible alternatives offered by the Syrian Government. We have heard examples of that during this very meeting.

Iraq and Libya are also in a very difficult situation, as they struggle to achieve normalcy after unlawful foreign interventions.

We understand that climate change is very trendy now, and there is always a temptation to insert it into every discussion. But we need to be frank with ourselves and not to exaggerate its significance in every crisis. Otherwise, we risk never finding the right solution to the issues we face.

The discussion of experts on the drafting of the presidential statement revealed that discrepancies on this issue will not bring us to sustainable remedies of the problems of hunger if we continue to ignore the abovementioned root causes. Important things that have to be integral part of solutions are very often left outside of the scope of our discussions.

Creating opportunities and capacities for local production, stabilizing global commodities markets, liberalizing trade and mitigating the consequences of natural disasters can reanimate economies ruined by armed conflict. One of the most important and obvious ways to address the root causes is to remove unilateral restrictive measures and lift unilateral sanctions. That is a laborious process, but until we do so, humanitarian needs will only grow. Using medical terminology, humanitarian assistance can only alleviate symptoms, not cure the disease. We urge our colleagues to embrace these vital ideas, which will help us make the text of the draft presidential statement acceptable to everybody.

The Russian Federation pays great attention to the provision of food assistance to countries in situations of armed conflict. Our country regularly provides humanitarian assistance to such States through both bilateral channels and the World Food Programme (WFP). Every year, we spend more than \$40 million dollars to those ends. The WFP's logistics delivery network allows us to be sure that assistance reaches the most vulnerable. Other specialized United Nations agencies and platforms continue to play a crucial role in addressing various socioeconomic issues, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, where, as members of the governing boards, we work to ensure the most effective decision-making processes. We are also convinced that we have to explore the potential of holding discussions on these issues under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

**Annex XIII****Statement by Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations**

I would like to thank Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, for his statement. I commend the President for convening this very important meeting on protecting civilians from conflict-induced hunger. I also thank the briefers for their insightful, but very solemn, remarks.

Today human civilization stands at an important crossroads as we face the greatest challenges of our lifetime — some of which will inevitably have repercussions for generations to come. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the likes of which we have not seen for over a century, continues to wreak havoc on our societies and economies, while the ever-growing climate crisis casts a precarious shadow over our lives and livelihoods. In addition to the immense challenges posed by those emerging threats to international peace and security, our fight against hunger persists and the number of people affected by acute food insecurity continues to rise. We can and must do better to protect the most vulnerable.

In the struggle for lasting peace and prosperity, we can claim no easy victories. Yet, it is in our darkest hour, when our struggles seem insurmountable, that we must work together — not in spite of our distinct interests, perspectives and priorities, but precisely because these demand constructive forms of engagement that yield creative and people-centred solutions. Let us remember that our entire multilateral system was designed by our forebears to serve the interests of people. While our individual nation-States remain the primary medium through which our geographically dispersed societies interact, those constructs are merely products of human progress.

To finance the eradication of hunger in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, our Government has worked with various partners and donors to implement a mechanism called the Zero Hunger Trust Fund. That initiative combines a number of social programmes that span education and training, health and wellness, housing, employment and productivity to create a social safety net for the most vulnerable groups, and has significantly reduced levels of undernourishment in our Vincentian society. Our delegation proposes that a similar trust fund be designed and implemented, under the auspices of the World Food Programme (WFP), to cover budgetary shortfalls that stymie the assistance offered to conflict-affected and food-insecure populations. The recent announcement by the WFP to reduce by half food aid to Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen due to reductions in donor support is an absolute tragedy. We must work swiftly and resolutely to ensure that all vulnerable populations in Yemen and elsewhere are afforded that much-needed support.

We must be mindful, however, that, while conflict is a primary driver of acute food insecurity in some contexts, the hazards of climate change — including erratic precipitation, floods, drought and sea level rise — also serve to undermine agricultural productivity and create food insecurity. In addition, economic recessions and disruptions in supply chains lead to food crises for many vulnerable groups across the world.

If we are to end hunger by 2030, a whole-of-system approach is required to tackle food insecurity both within and beyond situations of conflict. That means that the Security Council must make a greater effort to work alongside the Peacebuilding Commission and other entities such as the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the WFP to tackle the root causes of insecurity across the peace, security, development and humanitarian nexus.

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**Annex XIV****Statement by Mr. Jerry Matjila, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations**

At the outset, South Africa wishes to thank the Dominican Republic for convening this meeting to address the link between hunger and conflict. We thank Mr. Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, Mr. Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, and Mr. Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, for their detailed and factual briefings.

Hunger is both a cause and effect of war and conflict. The link between hunger and conflict is a persistent issue. It therefore comes as no surprise that 60 per cent of people suffering from food insecurity worldwide live in countries affected by conflict.

Armed conflict disrupts food systems, causes mass displacement of people, destroys livelihoods and triggers food insecurity. Food insecurity and competition for natural resources have in turn resulted in many current conflicts that we deal with today. Those factors set the stage for multiple years of food shortages, especially where such conflicts are exacerbated by natural disasters, including the impact of climate change. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is exacerbating the already difficult situation in those countries, since it has led to food shortages, destructive competition for limited resources and the manipulation of food provisions.

Civilians, particularly women, children, the elderly and the disabled, are the primary victims of these vicious cycles of food insecurity and armed conflict. Civilian and essential infrastructure, aid convoys and humanitarian workers are also targeted during conflict situations.

In that regard, we emphasize the plight of internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants, who are subjected to difficult living conditions during conflict situations and, more often than not, have limited access to humanitarian assistance, including food. We therefore underscore the importance and urgency of ensuring that all vulnerable groups have unimpeded access to food aid and humanitarian assistance.

At the same time, we are witnessing an increase in parties to conflict using hunger as a weapon of war, which constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law and potentially a war crime. Violations of international humanitarian law must not be condoned, and the perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions.

In order to do more to minimize and prevent conflict-induced hunger, the Council should consider making more effective use of prevention and early-warning systems, such as integrating indicators on alarming food insecurity levels and the restriction of humanitarian access to populations in peacekeeping operations and country reports submitted to the Security Council. It could also require coordinated and multifaceted responses, as well as close cooperation between humanitarian relief and development efforts as part of the humanitarian-development nexus. The Council could also promote gender- and age-sensitive humanitarian assistance that remain responsive to the different needs of the population, thereby ensuring that those needs are integrated into the humanitarian response, and could make the provision of adequate health services in conflict areas as part of a strategy to eradicate hunger.

In addition, the Council could take into consideration the impact of economic sanctions imposed on a country in conflict, which may inadvertently also give rise to conflict-related hunger, as civilians could have less access to nutrition and medicine

and could face higher prices for foodstuffs. Finally, the Council could ensure that all parties to a conflict fully comply with relevant international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as hold accountable those who violate such laws.

Let me conclude by underscoring that peace and food security go hand in hand. In order to end hunger, as the Security Council, we need to address the root causes of conflicts and end all wars, in the spirit of the Silencing the Guns initiative.

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**Annex XV****Statement by Mr. Tarek Ladeb, Deputy Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations**

At the outset, I would like to thank the briefers for their valuable briefings and extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic. I would like to thank the Dominican Republic for convening this timely meeting and for choosing the important topic of protecting civilians from conflict-induced hunger, which represents an essential priority in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Conflicts are currently on the rise and are characterized by widespread destruction, devastating impacts on civilian populations, increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced people, and severe hunger and food insecurity. Hunger and malnutrition tied to conflicts are induced through many direct actions by belligerents, such as targeted attacks on food resources and related basic infrastructure, blockades or sieges, impediments to and restrictions on delivery of humanitarian relief, and the targeting of humanitarian actors and operations.

In the long term, such impacts from conflict as economic recession, inflation, unemployment and disruption of essential services also contribute to food insecurity. Some countries in conflict are more vulnerable than others, owing to the deadly combination of poverty, violence, hunger and climate change, which can reach high, indeed life-threatening, levels, especially among women and children.

Unfortunately, in many conflict zones, civilians are barred from access to food. Worse, conflict-induced food insecurity and starvation are used as a method of warfare and a means of applying pressure to achieve political ends. We condemn these practices, as they are an outrageous attack upon the personal dignity and inalienable rights of the targeted populations and a grave violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Accordingly, we support all measures that lead to the full implementation of resolution 2417 (2018), particularly in terms of prevention, response, promotion of compliance and accountability. Furthermore, we appreciate and support all efforts of the United Nations and the World Food Programme undertaken in response to worsening food crises in conflict zones in order to alleviate the suffering of civilians.

In conclusion, we reiterate the urgent need to continue and multiply international efforts aimed at addressing the factors that undermine food security and nutrition. In this regard, measures to support resilient livelihoods and the achievement of sustainable development must be combined with peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts. In current situations on the ground, it is vital that an end be put to all forms of the use of starvation as a method of warfare and to the unlawful denial of humanitarian access. The devastating impacts of these abuses on civilian populations, and on children in particular, can affect their lives and last for decades, even after the political settlement of the conflicts that give rise to the abuses.



**Annex XVI****Statement by Mr. Jonathan Allen, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations**

I would like to ask you, Sir, to kindly pass on our welcome and thanks to Foreign Minister Vargas Maldonado for being with us today. I also want to congratulate the Dominican Republic on its efforts aimed at ensuring that the issue before us was properly discussed and debated, thereby showing the Security Council's transparency on the issue.

Let me also thank our briefers for their briefings today and, more importantly, thank them and their teams — their vast teams, in many cases — for the actions that they are carrying out in some of the most dangerous places around the world. It is also particularly nice to see Mr. David Beasley back and well.

Our briefers today have rung an enormous alarm bell about situations across the world. They have all made it clear that as the world faces the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the issue before us presents an increasingly urgent challenge. Many people will die from the COVID-19 virus, but it is a sad reality that every year many people will also die from food insecurity caused by conflict. The risk of a further knock-on impact from the virus on the food supply was made very clear by our briefers and, put simply, those who are well fed have a better chance of survival. I would therefore urge all States Members of the United Nations to respond today and generously to existing humanitarian appeals.

While the United Kingdom is one of the largest humanitarian donors in the world, we see humanitarian aid as a last resort. It is a sign of political failing. I wish to focus today on two countries on the Council's agenda — Yemen and Syria — while recognizing the important comments made by our briefers on other situations around the world.

In Yemen, more than half of the population — a staggering 15.9 million people — are severely food insecure. We therefore urge the Yemeni political leaders, particularly the Houthis, to respond constructively to the call of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy to immediately cease hostilities, focus on reaching a negotiated settlement and do everything possible to counter a potentially disastrous outbreak of COVID-19, including facilitating unimpeded humanitarian access. Taking these actions is more important than ever if a worsening of food insecurity and the already dire humanitarian situation in the country are to be avoided. Political leaders must now show real leadership, and they must act in the interests of their people.

In north-western Syria, the United Nations reports increased rates of stunting from malnutrition. Today, three out of ten displaced children under the age of five in the Idlib region are stunted. Because the Syrian regime will not allow aid to flow from Damascus to the civilians in that area, those children, like millions of other civilians in north-west Syria, are entirely reliant on the cross-border delivery of humanitarian aid. It is therefore crucial that the Security Council renew resolution 2504 (2020) before it expires in July in order to allow the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to deliver the food, medical items and other assistance that people in north-western Syria so desperately require.

Further, beyond the north-west, we are deeply concerned about the fate of civilians all over Syria who need to see effective humanitarian access throughout the country. That concern is why the United Kingdom has given over \$4 billion to Syria and to Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries since the conflict began.

It is unacceptable, illegal and inhumane to use hunger as a weapon of war. We call on all parties to conflict to recall their obligations under international humanitarian law, protect the most vulnerable, including women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, refugees and internally displaced persons.

However, the Council's response to this challenge must include horizon-scanning for future problems. In resolution 2417 (2018), the Council asked the Secretary-General to provide it with early warning about conflict-related famine and food insecurity conditions. It is through this mechanism that the Council must consider the situations in Yemen and in South Sudan. It is our hope that the Secretary-General will consider further ways to continue responding in a timely manner to this request, and Member States should not constrain his ability to do so.

The Security Council must also be prepared to take robust action to ensure the flow of humanitarian assistance to populations in need. In resolution 2417 (2018), the Council recalled that it could consider adopting targeted sanctions — where appropriate and in line with existing practices — that would apply to individuals or entities obstructing the delivery or distribution of humanitarian assistance to people in need while ensuring that they do not negatively affect principles of humanitarian assistance. Therefore, just as it is vital that the Security Council take steps to ensure that humanitarian assistance can be received quickly and that the necessary exemptions are made from sanctions regimes to do so, as we did recently with respect to North Korea, so too must we pursue those individual actors impeding the delivery of aid to those who so desperately need it.

In 2018, following the adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), the representative of the United Kingdom concluded his statement by saying,

“The lesson is clear: humanitarian aid can only ever be a sticking plaster. The solutions are political” (*S/PV.8267, p. 3*).

That remains the case today.

**Annex XVII****Statement by Mrs. Kelly Craft, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations**

I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, for being with us today. It is of course always a great pleasure to see my friend Mr. David Beasley. I am glad that he is doing well and that he is healthy. It is absolutely great to see him. I particularly thank Director-General Qu Dongyu for his briefing and so much more. Indeed, we owe him such a tremendous debt of gratitude for his advocacy for those on the margins of society. Ensuring that every single person on the planet has enough to eat is one of the fundamental ways we meet that obligation. I also wish to commend our other briefers today for all their contributions and their particular efforts aimed at ensuring that every single person in the world does have access to food.

The United States would also like to thank the Dominican Republic for encouraging the Security Council to return to the topic of food insecurity and hunger. Today's conversation is especially important as we approach the two-year anniversary of the adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), which acknowledged the clear connection between conflict and hunger. In a perfect world, our discussion today would focus on the positive trajectories we are beginning to see in some countries, where there has been progress in the decoupling of violence and hunger.

However, we cannot ignore the downward trends we are seeing in places like north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Cameroon. In these areas, insecurity and a lack of humanitarian assistance access are causing enormous disruption to the lives and livelihoods of millions of women, children and men. Furthermore, we cannot turn a blind eye to the horrific and continuing impact of armed conflict on millions of Syrians and Yemenis. Innocent people are suffering because they are unable to acquire or produce food. What this means, practically speaking, is that because of constant insecurity — or, as in the case of Syria, *inter alia*, the use of humanitarian aid as a weapon by a despotic regime — families and individuals cannot sustain themselves.

It is deeply troubling that in some cases States use hunger as a tactic of war; they deploy siege tactics to prevent civilians from gaining access to food and even impede and harass humanitarian actors trying to help. These types of behaviour are cruel and inexcusable under any circumstance, but they are especially so in the midst of a global health crisis. States simply cannot ignore applicable obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

As we speak, humanitarian needs are at unprecedented levels. With this in mind, it is of paramount importance that the Security Council call out those States that are failing to uphold their most basic responsibility to protect the people within their borders. We all know that international humanitarian assistance is vital, but it is only a temporary solution for meeting human needs — needs that are created, in many cases, by conflict. The only long-term solution is for States to act responsibly in the interests of all people living within their borders.

The Secretary-General has outlined a reform agenda to make immediate and long-term efforts more effective and efficient, and I want to close by taking note of two important and concrete elements of that agenda. First, we must improve coordination among humanitarian, development and peace actors. Secondly, we must prioritize the timely and reliable financing of relief aid. These two areas are ones where the Council can, should and must make greater strides towards reducing hunger and conflict-related suffering — strides that are in keeping with our responsibility to care for those on the margins.

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

I would like to thank the Dominican Republic, in its presidency of the Security Council, for organizing this timely briefing on an issue that is very pressing in many conflict situations. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Miguel Vargas Maldonado, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, for his statement. I also thank Mr. Qu Dongyu, Mr. Beasley and Mr. Egeland for their informative briefings today.

Almost two years after the adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), the link between armed conflict and violence and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine has become increasingly evident. Yet the vicious cycle between armed conflict and food insecurity remains in place. According to the 2020 *Global Report on Food Crises*, the number of people in the worst food-insecurity crises in the world has risen by tens of millions. That increase has been due to worsening situations in conflict-driven crises. A total of almost 77 million people suffering from acute food crises come from such countries. Many other recent reports also show that approximately two thirds of the worst food-security crises are in countries that are experiencing armed conflict and are on the agenda of the Security Council. Women, children, refugees, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups are suffering from the impacts of a multiplicity of threats, including conflict, hunger, malnutrition and disease, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Conflict continues to be a major driver of food insecurity, causing the displacement of people from their farming and pastoral lands and the disruption of their livelihoods, leading to devastating humanitarian consequences. At the same time, food insecurity and famine can create social tensions, exacerbate existing conflicts or breed new ones, undermine peace efforts and provide incentives for men and even children to be recruited into armed struggle. And so, the cycle continues.

It is therefore high time that we direct all our efforts at breaking the vicious cycle between armed conflict and food insecurity. In this regard, I would like to offer the following ideas as food for thought.

First, we stress the importance of ensuring the full implementation by all parties to armed conflicts of their respective obligations under international humanitarian law and resolution 2417 (2018). Civilian infrastructure that is critical to ensuring food security, as well as objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, must be protected. We join others in condemning the use of starvation as a method of warfare in a number of conflicts and in rejecting the unlawful denial of humanitarian access and all other actions in violation of international humanitarian law.

Secondly, in responding effectively to humanitarian needs in armed conflict, we need to adopt a consistent, people-centred and sustained approach by the United Nations system and the world community. We commend the untiring efforts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme in providing food to millions of people. Adequate funding and support from international donors are essential to meeting the needs of global humanitarian assistance. Assistance should be prioritized to address the worst situations, where it matters the most, and to find ways and means to navigate in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, we must work together in supporting affected countries to enhance long-term recovery, improve livelihoods, build resilience and guarantee the availability, marketability and accessibility of food, thereby averting the risk

of relapsing into food insecurity. We take this opportunity to stress the importance of the full, equal and effective participation of women in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and, particularly, in achieving food security.

Thirdly, the best way to prevent conflict-induced hunger is undoubtedly to prevent armed conflicts altogether. There is a lot of wisdom and plenty of lessons learnt around the world in preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding that we can benefit from. The Secretary-General's contextual reports on humanitarian situations and response, as well as the reports of relevant United Nations agencies on the situation of armed conflict and food security, are good reference points for the Council to closely monitor and respond to situations of conflicted-related famine and starvation.

Last but not least, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens further food insecurity in conflict situations due to disrupted production and distribution and other disease-control measures. We continue to urge all parties to armed conflicts to respond to the Secretary-General's call for humanitarian ceasefire and to facilitate the timely delivery of food and other basic humanitarian aid to affected people so that they can have equal opportunity to respond to the pandemic.

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