



**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member
States 172nd session of the FAO Council
(24-28 April 2023)**

Item 5 – Global food security challenges and its drivers: conflicts and wars in Ukraine and other countries, slowdowns and downturns, and climate change

Mr. Chair,

- 1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.**
- 2. [The following FAO Members align themselves with this statement: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, the Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino and Ukraine].**
- 3. Let me start by underlining the close connection of item 5 on our agenda to item 6, which is based on a decision adopted by the Council at its 171st session in December 2022, highlighting the Council’s strong concerns about the impact of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine in terms of increased world food insecurity and malnutrition. While noting the interrelated nature of items 5 and 6, in order to avoid repetition, we will focus our intervention under this agenda item on the wider global food security challenges and its drivers and more specifically address the impact of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine on global food security under item 6.**
- 4. Before addressing this agenda item in more detail, let me express our strong concern regarding the current situation in Sudan. We urge for an immediate cease-fire and the protection of civilians. In the context of this Council, let me mention particularly the humanitarian needs and implications for short and long-term food security of the people of Sudan.**

5. **The alarming increase in the prevalence of severe food insecurity is a matter of great concern to us all. We appreciate, and stress the importance of, FAO's work in monitoring and reporting on the situation, including through this update and its contributions to the SOFI report and the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC).**
6. **The major drivers of food insecurity are already well known: conflicts, climate extremes and economic shocks, combined with growing inequality and compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, all of which are affecting vulnerable countries the most. In addition, the update provided by FAO in document CL172/5 again confirms that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has severely aggravated the crisis.**
7. **The European Union and its Member States take note of the actions proposed by FAO in response to the crisis and agree with the importance of resilient and sustainable food systems as well as the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and innovative solutions.**
8. **We trust that FAO will make full use of its strategies on Climate Change, Biodiversity, Nutrition and Science and Innovation to identify targeted and timely action in the current situation.**
9. **The sharp increase in total number of conflicts in recent decades and their damaging effect on food security and nutrition is alarming, as evidenced by conflict and insecurity being critical drivers of acute food insecurity in all of the ten largest food crises - in Afghanistan, the DRC, Ethiopia, Haiti, northern Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen as identified in document CL 172/5.**
10. **Regarding the need for urgent humanitarian assistance, we urge FAO to work closely with WFP and other relevant UN organisations in its emergency and resilience programming to ensure complementarity, avoid duplication and contribute to the humanitarian- development-peace nexus based on comparative advantages.**

- 11. We agree that improving the transparency of global agricultural commodities markets, in particular prices and stocks, and promoting an open and predictable trade environment remain critically important to stabilise markets. We therefore appreciate FAO's support for initiatives such as the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS).**
- 12. We underline the importance of existing initiatives and multilateral solutions to address the food security crisis such as the UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, the Global Alliance on Food Security (GAFS), the Global Network against Food Crises (GNAFC) and the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM). We call on FAO to intensify cooperation with other UN agencies, particularly Rome-based agencies (RBA's) to mitigate the current crisis and avert future ones. We reaffirm our full support to the Grain from Ukraine initiative, which has already benefited to Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya.**
- 13. We again reaffirm our strong support for the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports" known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Keeping the Black Sea maritime route open is crucial for bringing grain and fertiliser to the world and avoid that vulnerable import-dependent countries are pushed deeper into hunger. As stressed by the UN secretary general, the Initiative has already had noticeable positive effect on world food security by bringing the price of food commodities down and allowing WFP to resume its supply of grain from Ukraine for its humanitarian operations. Therefore, the Black Sea Grain Initiative must continue to be fully implemented in all its provisions and prolonged for as long as necessary, without limitations nor conditions. We underline the importance to increase the availability of ports and route coverage. We call on Russia to fully cooperate on the timely implementation of the initiative, without impeding or creating delays in the inspection of vessels.**
- 14. The EU and its Member States remain fully committed to addressing global food security challenges and are running a comprehensive Team Europe Global Food Security Response which covers humanitarian aid, short term, and longer-term responses, and of which FAO is a key implementing partner. Most of the support goes to countries in Africa and the Middle East. Concretely this support enables vulnerable and food-import dependent countries to assist their populations, despite**

price increases and currency devaluations, as well as to increase their resilience and reduce their food import dependency in the longer term.

- 15. [Lastly, we would like to thank the US for having put forward the Proposals for decision for the conclusions of Items 5 and 6 (set out in CL 172/INF/7), which we fully support for adoption en bloc.]**
- 16. [We oppose the Russian draft decisions. They present factually incorrect information and aim to divert Russia's responsibility from the current food crisis.]**

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
