



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

**9392**<sup>nd</sup> meeting

Thursday, 3 August 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

*President:* Mr. Blinken/Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield/Mr. DeLaurentis . . (United States of America)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Ms. Fino
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. França Danese
China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Pérez Loose
France . . . . .	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Biang
Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Agyeman
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Yamada
Malta . . . . .	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Afonso
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
Switzerland . . . . .	Mr. Hauri
United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Ms. Al Kaabi
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward

## Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Famine and conflict-induced global food insecurity

Letter dated 26 July 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/560)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Maintenance of international peace and security**

#### **Famine and conflict-induced global food insecurity**

#### **Letter dated 26 July 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/560)**

**The President:** I wish to warmly welcome the Ministers and other high-level representatives. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chile, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam and Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Reena Ghelani, United Nations Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator; Mr. David Miliband, President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Rescue Committee; and Ms. Navyn Salem, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Edesia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Thibault Camelli, Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Paul Beresford-Hill, Permanent Observer of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/560, which contains the text of a letter dated 26 July 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank the Council members for their valuable contributions to this statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2023/4.

I now give the floor to Ms. Ghelani.

**Ms. Ghelani:** I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to take part in this briefing today.

The Security Council is more than aware of the multiple challenges and threats the world is facing today. But the threat of famine — people starving slowly to death — must be a red line. And yet the number of people suffering from acute food insecurity reached a quarter billion last year. That is the highest recorded in recent years. Of those people, some 376,000 were facing famine-like conditions in seven countries. Another 35 million people were on the edge. As in all crisis situations, women and children are the most impacted.

This situation has not come as a surprise. It is a man-made crisis that has been swelling for years. We are now at the tipping point.

Hunger and conflict feed off of each other. Conflict and insecurity remain key drivers of hunger and famine. Every one of the seven countries where people faced famine-like conditions last year were affected by armed conflict or extreme levels of violence. Five of those seven countries — Afghanistan, Haiti, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen — are regularly on the Council's agenda.

Armed conflict destroys food systems, shatters livelihoods and drives people from their home, leaving many extremely vulnerable and hungry. Sometimes those impacts are by-products of war, but all too often they are inflicted deliberately and unlawfully, with hunger utilized as a tactic of war.

Conflict does not spare those who are providing assistance to stave off famine. Last year, dozens of humanitarian workers were killed and many more were kidnapped or injured in situations of conflict. Humanitarian facilities and supplies also often come under attack, are looted or used for military purposes. The difficulties the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and their partners are facing in the Sudan are a stark reminder of that, and our deepest condolences go to the families of the 11 humanitarian workers killed in the Sudan in recent weeks.

Food insecurity itself also fuels instability. For example, recent research highlighted by the World Food Programme has shown how food insecurity, when coupled with pre-existing grievances; desperation too often fuelled by poverty and inequality; and governance issues cause people to choose violence over peace. It is the straw that breaks the camel's back, often resulting in conflict.

Conflict-induced hunger is compounded by a toxic mix of climate change and economic shocks.

Climate change is increasingly becoming a threat multiplier. As the stress on water and other natural resources leads to increased competition and displacement, conflicts and hunger spread. Of the 10 countries most vulnerable to climate-related risks, seven are affected by conflict, six host a United Nations peacekeeping or special political mission and four have more than 1 million people one step away from famine.

At the same time, insecurity in conflict-affected countries hinders climate adaptation efforts. That leaves already vulnerable communities even poorer, hungrier and less resilient.

The challenge may appear overwhelming, but progress has been and is again possible. So, what can we do?

First and foremost, we must redouble efforts to prevent, reduce and end conflict in all its forms. There needs to be a renewed commitment to peace though a

reinvigorated multilateral system where Governments, the United Nations and regional organizations work hand in hand.

Where peace may still take time, five things are critical to reduce suffering and prevent famine.

First, we must ensure parties to conflicts respect international humanitarian law. That includes protecting objects necessary for survival such as food stocks, water systems and other objects necessary for food production and distribution systems. It also includes facilitating unimpeded humanitarian access to all civilians in need and protecting humanitarian staff and assets. States must spare no effort in exerting their influence to ensure parties respect the rules of war.

Secondly, we must make better use of existing early warning mechanisms, such as resolution 2417 (2018), in a focused and effective manner. Too often, we have sounded the warning alarm without effective follow-up and concerted action.

Thirdly, we must be bold and creative in finding ways to mitigate the impact of war on the most vulnerable. Such solutions are possible. We have seen agreements between parties to conflict and resolutions in the Security Council agreed to for that end, but they require political courage and compromise.

Fourthly, women and girls must be at the centre of our efforts. Crises and hunger affect them disproportionately, and they also hold the key to lasting solutions. Research has shown that involving local women in peacebuilding increases the probability that violence will end by 24 per cent.

Fifthly, we also need to acknowledge that a halfway, fragmented response to the interconnected risks will not cut it. We need adequate humanitarian funding, on which the lives of millions depend. And for lasting peace and famine prevention, we must address the climate and economic crises.

The Secretary-General has prioritized the threat of famine and hunger. Among other initiatives, in 2021, he created a High-Level Task Force on Preventing Famine to lead and organize a cohesive system-wide response. Together with the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Rescue Committee, with David Miliband, we are in the process of reorientating that forum to provide dedicated support to countries. We really need Council members' support, and we count on it to make that an effective forum.

In this role, I have visited communities teetering on the brink of famine. I have sat with mothers in too many nutrition wards, in too many displaced camps, and as their small children fought for their lives, they were too weak to cry or even make a sound. That eerie silence is deafening. It never leaves one.

That silence is also a call for action. As Martin Luther King said in his Nobel Peace Prize lecture,

“famine is wholly unnecessary in the modern world... There is no deficit in human resources; the deficit is in human will.”

**The President:** I thank Ms. Ghelani for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Miliband.

**Mr. Miliband:** I thank you, Mr. President, and your team for your leadership on this issue. It is a true honour to speak today on behalf of 40,000 International Rescue Committee employees and volunteers working in 40 countries around the world. Our mission is defined by conflict and its consequences, so this debate means a lot to us and to our clients.

Every day, our staff live out a simple mantra: focus on the solutions, not the suffering. So my briefing takes the form of a plea to the Security Council: follow my colleagues and focus on the solutions not the suffering.

Five years ago, the Council recognized “the need to break the vicious cycle between armed conflict and food insecurity” in resolution 2417 (2018). Five years later, however, there is more armed conflict, more famine, more malnutrition and more and more food insecurity — the euphemism that is used for hunger and starvation. So, today our call is for action to help the 375,000 people facing famine-like conditions at the end of last year — a number that has only risen — and the 35 million on the brink.

We have more than enough analysis. There is consensus that conflict is the primary driver of food insecurity today, exacerbated by the climate crisis. There is consensus too on the line of causation from conflict to hunger. Planting is disrupted. Prices are driven up. Combatants block supplies. Food storage is targeted. Coping capacities are depleted.

We also know the countries. Every single assessment has the same list: Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Sudan, Burkina Faso, Mali and Haiti. The analysis is not in dispute. But analysis is too often followed by paralysis. We

therefore need new muscle in the international system, not the muscle of debating strategies and plans but the muscle of taking action. Today I want to present to the Council five current problems, matched by five immediate solutions.

With regard to the first problem, my colleagues in today’s debate will rightly draw attention to the impact of last year’s funding increases, which led to an increase in the number of children getting treatment for their acute malnutrition. But the year-on-year statistics show that 80 per cent of the world’s acutely malnourished children are not getting any treatment at all. I repeat: 80 per cent of acutely malnourished children have been getting no help. The reason for that is the different approaches to moderate and severe acute malnutrition. There are different treatment and diagnosis protocols, different United Nations agencies, different products and complicated measuring systems ill-suited to situations of conflict. However, the solution is staring us in the face — a simplified system, in the hands of parents and community health workers, who use a simple upper-arm circumference measuring tape to diagnose acute malnutrition and administer one or two doses of ready-to-use therapeutic food per day, depending on whether the case is severe or moderate. Our own impact evaluation shows that this approach is not a pipe dream. We tested the treatment on 27,000 children in Mal with a 92 per cent success rate and a cost saving of 30 per cent, meaning that more children can be reached for the same amount of money. That approach should be made the norm — the default form of provision — in humanitarian settings, with delivery and funding to match, and it can be done right now.

Problem two is that there is a proliferation of global initiatives on famine and food insecurity. The solution is an empowered body that can galvanize collective action and drive change. Fortunately, we do now have the High-Level Task Force on Preventing Famine, chaired by Ms. Ghelani, which has been given a new focus and mandate. But frankly, Ms. Ghelani needs support for national famine action plans in the countries most at risk, and support from the national and local authorities in developing those plans. She needs support for engagement with regional and global financial institutions in financing those plans and support in diplomacy to remove barriers on the ground to scaling up responses, as well as support in turning delivery plans into action, starting with the meetings surrounding the general debate in New York in September.

Problem three is that as has been reported by the United Nations Development Programme, the more fragile a context — in other words, the more conflict there is in that context — the less money is spent on climate adaptation. Yet our clients represent a disproportionate amount of vulnerability to climate risk. They are highly vulnerable and lack investment in resilience. The solution is to give climate finance a humanitarian face, addressing the finance gap and the delivery gap. The finance gap arises because adaptation is underfunded — it accounts for only 8 per cent of all climate finance — and because adaptation is geared to richer countries. We therefore argue that a set percentage of every adaptation fund should be directed to fragile and conflict States. We also argue that donors should increase the ratio of grants to concessional funding, because fragile and conflict States do not want to take on new loans. That could be done, for example, by trebling the World Bank's international development assistance funds, as a Group of 20 panel recommended just two weeks ago. However, there is a delivery gap as well, and the money will not be spent in fragile and conflict States unless that gap is addressed. In conflict situations, that means making it the norm — not the exception — for funding to be directed through civil society, not just Governments. That would represent real localization.

Problem four is the rise of impunity in conflict. Combatants attack civilians, deny humanitarian aid and destroy farms and food warehouses, all of which are both illegal and immoral. The solution is that the perpetrators have to be held to account. We do not need new resolutions for that. Rather, we need new resolve to uphold the existing ones. For example, the next time the Council is presented with evidence of hunger used as a weapon of war, that should trigger action. Also, all nine countries at risk of famine this year rank either high, very high or extreme for their levels of constraints on humanitarian access, which is a euphemism for stopping humanitarian aid workers from reaching people in need. We propose establishing an independent office for the protection of humanitarian access, which would ensure that when combatants deny aid, that information is reported with fear or favour to the Council, supporting efforts to drive accountability and diplomacy.

Turning to problem five, I know that non-governmental organizations usually start by asking for more money, but I will end rather than start with it. The World Food Programme is cutting its life-saving food assistance programmes today — some of them by as

much as half — because it does not have enough money to do its job. The solution to that is not complicated. The humanitarian response plans in the nine countries at risk for famine were only 58 per cent funded in 2022 on average. Yet if their response plans were funded to the same proportion as Ukraine's last year, there would be another \$5 billion in the system to address the most acute needs in those nine countries alone.

We need to address the threat of famine by looking through the windshield, not the rear-view mirror. Once famine is declared, it is too late for too many. We know that half of the people who died in the 2011 famine in Somalia died before the famine declaration was made. It is too late for too many to wait for a famine declaration. Phase 3 of the Integrated Phase Classification system — the crisis phase — is triggered when one in five families are so desperate to find their next meal that they are considering marrying off their children or sending them out to work. But anticipatory action depends on cash being available, and today it is not. I want to conclude by quoting Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, whose landmark work on famine of nearly 50 years ago starts with these words.

“Starvation is the characteristic of some people not *having* enough food to eat. It is not the characteristic of there *being* not enough food to eat”.

In other words, it is a political problem. Today, however, the world is four times richer, but there is more famine, not less. That is not fate but choice. And it is a choice that will only be changed by action. We in civil society do not lack ideas for which actions to take. What we need is the will to enable them to happen.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Miliband for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Salem.

**Ms. Salem:** The day I first met a two-year-old who weighed the same as my newborn daughter, it changed me forever. I have been face-to-face with a mother and her starving child, and I know that we do not have time to spare. I feel the urgency and I see the fear in her eyes. I have seen children take their last breaths. I have watched their hearts stop beating. When I enter a malnutrition clinic, the first thing I hear is a deafening silence. The children do not have the strength to sit up or cry. All of their energy is expended on keeping their organs from shutting down. Their mothers sit anxiously by, wishing for a miracle. We have that miracle.

Today I am representing the private sector as the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Edesia. We make the food that saves lives, a ready-to-use therapeutic food called Plumpy'Nut. It is used in the treatment of severe acute malnutrition by UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the United States Agency for International Development. It is a highly fortified peanut butter that is revolutionary in humanitarian settings because it delivers life-saving nutrition, is easy to distribute in complex humanitarian crises, allows mothers to treat their children at home and has the power to rehabilitate 92 per cent of children in just two months.

Edesia is part of a community of factories around the world. We work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to produce enough of those miracle foods, but every day the needs grow. All of us have been adding shifts and equipment, yet more is needed. We manufacture here in the United States and have a partner in France, but our other eight partners are in the global South. Conflicts threaten to close the doors of those incredibly important businesses that are set up in malnutrition hotspots to deliver those life-saving foods using locally grown raw materials. Just a few months ago, when the conflict in the Sudan began, I was deeply saddened to see that our partner factory in Khartoum was bombed. Everything was destroyed, including thousands of boxes of Plumpy'Nut waiting to be deployed to children in the Sudan. And now, as of this past week, a coup is threatening our partner factory in Niger. In Haiti, violence persists at ever increasing levels, forcing us to construct new security walls. In Ethiopia, Nigeria and Burkina Faso, instability and uncertainty are ever present. That ecosystem is a critical part of the supply chain that United Nations agencies and children depend on, and they must be protected.

The two biggest contributing factors to hunger and malnutrition are climate change and conflict. We here today have the easier problem to solve. Even with all the efforts that are going into addressing climate change, it requires work that will still take many decades. The good news is that that is not true of conflict. We, right here in this room, control the conflicts. Just as we can decide to wage war, we can decide to end it. Right now, we have two choices. We can feed all the severely malnourished children in the world or we can stop the conflicts. Annually, \$1.7 billion is needed to feed 17 million severely malnourished children. Until we end those conflicts, we have the responsibility to take

action. Just \$1.7 billion can save the lives of 17 million children. A mere \$100 per child covers the cost of a box of Plumpy'Nut, distribution and access to community health care.

But with conflicts increasing, our partners have to make tough choices every day. They are struggling with critical funding shortfalls and can meet only 50 per cent of the need. They are faced with an impossible decision — which half of the malnourished children in the world can live and which half will be sentenced to death. Every day they have to decide which countries will receive funding and which programmes will be cut or halved. A year ago, the world took notice of increasing conflict-induced food insecurity, and the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Ireland and private philanthropies made a historic commitment of \$500 million to combating malnutrition. The global momentum proved that we could double the available supply of Plumpy'Nut in a matter of months. The number of children's lives saved doubled as well, with 7.3 million children treated in 2022. That incredible effort should be recognized and celebrated.

Doctors described that intervention as nothing short of a miracle, but I want to stop producing that miracle. I do not want to grow this business, add shifts or build more warehouses. We should not be waiting until children are days away from death to treat them with life-saving food. Rather, the long-term goal should be a shift towards prevention. Early-childhood development depends on healthy food systems, a diverse diet and the essential macronutrients and micronutrients that the body and brain require. Early interventions ensure that children will not only survive but thrive and reach their full potential. I sit here today representing the thousands of community-based health-care workers and the millions of malnourished children who are desperately asking for our help and partnership. After all, we are responsible for their circumstances. I hope that history will look at those of us sitting around this table here today as people who stood up for humankind, understood the power of our collective leadership here in this Chamber and said, "Stop. Just stop these conflicts, for the sake of our children". There are many problems in this world that we cannot solve, but malnutrition is not one of them.

**The President:** I thank Ms. Salem for her briefing. Indeed, I thank all three of our briefers for

their compelling and important contributions to our discussion this morning.

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States of America.

Once again, I thank our briefers for keeping our focus on what is really at stake here, that is, the human element in our discussions. It is easy to get caught up in numbers, statistics and big concepts, but ultimately it comes down to people and it comes down to children. I therefore thank them for that focus and for their focus on practical solutions to the problems before us. All three of them have powerfully illustrated the challenge before us, but even more important, they have given us very good ideas for how to actually address that challenge.

Last September, President Biden told the General Assembly, "In every country in the world ... if parents cannot feed their children, nothing else matters" (*A/77/PV.6, p.22*). In some ways, it is as simple and as stark as that. Too many families are experiencing the overwhelming urgency, the consequence of an unprecedented global food crisis that, as we have heard, has been fuelled by climate and the coronavirus disease, as well as by conflict, as we have discussed today.

Hunger and conflict are inextricably linked, with scarce resources and heightened tensions affecting communities and nations. Warring parties weaponize food to subjugate local populations. Indeed, conflict is the largest single driver of food insecurity, with violence and unrest pushing 117 million people into extreme deprivation last year. In the Sudan, fighting has disrupted the summer planting season and driven up the cost of food. In Myanmar, where one in five people — one in five — are severely undernourished, the military regime is making the problem worse in order to tighten its grip, including by blocking aid convoys. The deteriorating conditions have prevented the safe return of the nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees who have fled their homeland and now live in Bangladesh on rations that are down to about 27 cents per day. In Yemen, some families have reported resorting to boiling leaves to stay alive. They call it famine food.

Unless the world acts, Burkina Faso, South Sudan and Somalia could all experience famine next year. Again, I ask all of us to pause for a moment and think about what that actually means, and to imagine, just for a minute, that these are their children, their sons, their daughters. We have heard the compelling descriptions of what that is actually all about, and I hope that if nothing else, having that image in our minds and tying it to our own life experiences will give us some added motivation to act.

Since January 2021, the United States has provided more than \$17.5 billion to address famine and food insecurity. In 2021 and 2022 (see S/PV.9036), we convened the Council to focus on the intersection between hunger and conflict. We chaired last year's ministerial meeting on food security, where we joined more than three dozen countries in issuing a global road map, committing to getting food to those in need and to building greater resilience in the future. To date, more than 100 countries have signed that pledge and begun to take concrete steps to actually implement it. Nevertheless, as this crisis ramps up, so must our efforts. The Council is charged with maintaining international peace and security, and we simply cannot preserve peace and security without strengthening food security. Each of us has a responsibility to act. This morning, for the first time in three years, the Council has unanimously put conflict, hunger and famine, as well as climate change, at the centre of its agenda. That is a noteworthy and welcome step. Let us now harness that momentum to further combat food insecurity and famine around the world and turn what we are talking about into concrete action.

Five years ago (see S/PV.8267), as we have heard, the Council adopted resolution 2417 (2018), emphasizing that the intentional starvation of civilians may constitute a war crime. Today we can build on those efforts. Nearly 90 countries, including the United States, have already signed a new joint communiqué that we drafted and circulated, committing to ending the use of famine, starvation and food as weapons of war. Hunger must not be weaponized. I urge all Member States to sign the communiqué.

We must also significantly increase aid to tackle extreme hunger and avert famine. Last year, Governments and private donors made record contributions, providing direct relief, equipping farmers with fertilizer and using satellite imagery to maximize yields. Donations to the World Food

Programme jumped by 48 per cent. The United States alone provided more than \$7.2 billion, funding roughly half of the World Food Programme's budget. Those and other efforts helped the world to narrowly avoid famine last year. But this year, as we have heard, the World Food Programme estimates that it will have to spend \$25 billion to deliver relief to 171 million people. To date, countries have funded only \$4.5 billion — in other words, a mere 18 per cent of what is required. The cost of that shortfall will be measured in growth stunted and in lives lost. While we welcome smaller countries punching above their weight, the world's largest economies should be the world's largest donors. For Member States that consider themselves global leaders, this is a chance to prove it. All of us can dig deeper.

But of course we know that while it is necessary, it is not sufficient to meet immediate needs. We must also increase agricultural productivity. We have got to invest in adaptation. We have to build greater resilience to future shocks, especially in regions that are affected by conflict. Around the world, farmers are confronting soaring temperatures, eroding soil and disappearing groundwater. That reduces yields and makes crops less nutritious. By 2050, climate change could cut output by as much as 30 per cent, even as global food demand increases by more than 50 per cent. We have a planet that is heading in the coming decades towards a population of as many as 10 billion people, with demand going up accordingly. Yet supply is actually declining, not increasing. As challenging and as urgent as the situation is now, we can therefore also see what is coming if we do not take the necessary steps to address it.

Mitigating climate impacts is central to the United States' Feed the Future initiative, a public-private partnership for strengthening food systems, expanding social safety nets and enhancing nutrition in 40 countries around the world. We have devoted more than \$1 billion every year to that effort. Last year we expanded the programme to eight more target countries in Africa. To build on that work, in February, alongside the African Union and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, we launched what we call our Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils. Through the programme, we are identifying the most nutritious indigenous African crops, assessing how climate change will likely affect them and investing in breeding the most climate-resilient varieties and improving the soil that they grow in. That focus on the quality of seeds and soil can have a powerful impact on sustainable agricultural productivity throughout Africa.

Today I am also announcing another \$362 million for tackling the drivers of food and security and enhancing resilience in Haiti and 11 African countries, including by getting nutritious food to pregnant women and helping farmers grow hardier and more diverse crops. But while the United States will continue to do its part, this is by definition a global challenge that demands global resources. We will be looking to Governments, companies and philanthropies to help us continue to improve nutrition and invest in sustainable and resilient food systems.

Finally, we must address Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the resulting assault on the global food system. During the past year, the Black Sea Grain Initiative, negotiated by the United Nations and Türkiye, delivered more than 32 million tons of Ukrainian foodstuffs to the world. The wheat exports alone were the equivalent of 18 billion loaves of bread. We should keep in mind that the Initiative never should have been necessary in the first place. That was only because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its blockade of Ukrainian ports. But the Initiative produced concrete, demonstrable and powerful results, making sure that those food products could continue to reach world markets and those who needed them.

Let us be very clear about who benefited from the Initiative. More than half of the food products exported through the effort, and two thirds of the wheat, went to developing countries. The shipments helped to lower global food prices for everyone by roughly a quarter after Russia's full-scale invasion. Since 17 July, when Russia pulled out of the arrangement, ignoring the world's appeals, grain prices have risen by more than 8 per cent around the globe. Kenya's Foreign Ministry called Russia's move "a stab in the back". The Kremlin claims that it tore up the deal because international sanctions were restricting its agricultural exports. In reality, sanctions explicitly exclude food and fertilizer. In fact, at the time it abandoned the Initiative, Russia was exporting more grain at higher prices than ever before.

What has Russia's response been to the world's distress and outrage? It has bombed Ukrainian granaries, mined port entrances and threatened to attack any vessel in the Black Sea whatever its flag or cargo. Those actions are consistent with Russia's decision last month (see S/PV.9371) to block the reauthorization of critical cross-border humanitarian assistance to Syria — a country where after February's devastating



earthquake, 12 million people do not have enough to eat. The United States is prepared to renew the efforts to mandate that vital lifeline if the United Nations and Syria cannot find a way forward. We also very much appreciate the work that Türkiye and others are doing to try to reinstate the grain deal. Every member of the Council and every State Member of the United Nations should tell Moscow that enough is enough. Enough of using the Black Sea as blackmail, enough of treating the world's most vulnerable people as leverage and enough of its unjustified, unconscionable war.

Strengthening food security is essential to realizing the vision of the Charter of the United Nations for saving generations from the scourge of war and reaffirming the dignity and worth of every single human being. That hope is embodied in one of the statues outside this building, which is a figure fulfilling the biblical directive to beat swords into ploughshares. Those words of Scripture are not yet in reach, but we can at least commit to not using our swords to destroy others' ploughs. We can deliver life-saving aid to those in urgent need. We can ensure that people around the globe are fed, now and for years to come. If we do that — if we build a healthier, more stable, more peaceful world for all — we will at least have begun to live up to the responsibility entrusted to us, to the Council and to this institution.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

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

**Ms. Al Kaabi** (United Arab Emirates): I thank Secretary Blinken for convening this important meeting today and our briefers for bringing their valuable perspectives to our discussion.

We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Oman on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

More than 700 million people are going hungry around the world, while access to food for a third of the world's population — almost 2.5 billion people — was restricted last year. As we have heard from our briefers, there is no single reason for global food insecurity. Although the reasons for it are complex, the human cost is plain to see. A total of 45 million children under the age of five suffer from acute malnutrition. Millions of people are driven to undertake dangerous irregular

migration journeys. There is increased sexual and gender-based violence. We know that food insecurity contributes to conflict and instability, while the reverse is also true. As intricately linked as they are, we cannot afford not to act within the Council and globally.

I would like to make three points today to that effect.

First, food insecurity is preventable. Preventing food insecurity and famine is a political choice. Bringing food insecurity to an end is a collective endeavour. No one should experience famine. In conflict, international humanitarian law is clear. Parties to armed conflict must take constant care to spare the objects necessary to produce food and drinking water, and they must never target civilian objects. There is not only a moral, but a legal, duty to uphold those norms, and we call on all parties to conflict to strictly adhere to their responsibilities. It is also important that those in a position to support and facilitate life-saving humanitarian efforts do so. For its part, the United Arab Emirates has contributed more than \$1.4 billion in assistance over the past five years to address food insecurity. Conflicts, such as the one in Ukraine, can contribute to global food insecurity. Its knock-on effects in world markets mean that those living far beyond any battlefield often struggle to feed their families, especially in the Middle East and parts of Africa, where countries rely heavily on grain imports. In such instances, we must support national strategies and develop innovative approaches and partnerships that meet the scale of the challenge.

Secondly, ensuring global food security requires all hands on deck. We must deepen international partnerships and make the most of multilateral forums at both the international and regional levels. We saw the potential of multilateral efforts to reduce food insecurity through the establishment of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The rise in wheat prices since the agreement came to an end is telling of the global importance of such initiatives. Let me reiterate that the United Arab Emirates is deeply saddened by that development. A spirit of ambition and global collaboration is also needed to tackle a growing driver of food insecurity — climate change. July was the hottest month on record. As such, we must seek unity of purpose at the highest levels to reverse the disturbing trend by taking tangible measures in order to prevent the rise of temperatures above 1.5°C degrees and ensuring climate adaptation and mitigation measures are firmly in place, particularly in fragile areas. All hands on deck truly means all hands,

and all voices. Those disproportionately affected by food insecurity and climate change, in particular women and youth, must be front and centre when designing responses. Recognizing that disparity is not enough. We must encourage their full, equal and meaningful participation.

Thirdly and finally, we need novel approaches to overcoming this challenge. We commend the dedicated efforts of Governments, international and regional organizations, private sector actors, humanitarian groups and their significant achievements in the area. Yet food insecurity continues to rise. If we limit ourselves to the same approaches, we will not turn the tide. It is therefore time to expand our approaches. Public-private partnerships are vital to tackling the huge challenge. The United Arab Emirates is actively engaged in public-private partnerships, such as the annual 1 Billion Meals Endowment campaign of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives. In 2021, the United Arab Emirates and the United States launched the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate to catalyse innovation and climate-smart agriculture. It is now working with more than 50 Government partners, the private sector and civil society and has raised more than \$13 billion to accelerate transformational change.

The world cannot maintain peace and security without one of the most basic needs of humankind. The trend that we are witnessing is a testament to the need to redouble our efforts. It is my hope that we seize the opportunity provided by this meeting to take greater concerted action globally to overcome this challenge.

**Mr. Yamada** (Japan): First of all, Japan welcomes the issuance of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2023/4) and commends all the tireless work of you, Mr. President, and your United States team, as well as all the constructive efforts made by each fellow Member State. It is critical that the Security Council speak as one voice on its commitment to address conflict-induced food insecurity.

Japan is seriously concerned that a huge number of people are facing famine and other forms of food insecurity caused by conflict and climate change. Food is a basic human need. Therefore, it should never be weaponized at any time. Every day, we hear the voices of those affected by food insecurity caused by man-made conflict. Japan deeply regrets Russia's decision to unilaterally terminate its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which had allowed grain exports from

Ukraine and contributed to global food security. Russia has wasted tremendous amounts of grain by attacking grain storage facilities and loading terminals in Odesa and along the Danube. Meanwhile, Russia has announced that it will replace Ukraine in supplying grains to African countries. We should not accept Russia's attempt to weaponize food and destroy grain in Ukraine, while it increases its own exports. Japan strongly urges Russia to return to the international framework associated with the United Nations to resume grain exports from Ukraine in order to relieve food insecurity in the world. Japan also continues to support the European Union-led solidarity lanes, which work to ensure that Ukraine can export grain.

The United Nations and the Council should play their role in addressing food security issues, while exerting their influence and solidarity. Addressing famine and conflict-induced food insecurity requires not only short-term efforts, such as emergency food assistance, but also medium- and long-term actions based on the concept of human security, such as strengthening the resilience of food systems. Efforts to prevent conflicts, which are root causes of food insecurity, are also important. In this context, Japan believes that it would be beneficial to reduce future humanitarian needs by addressing them in a comprehensive way through a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. In conflict, it is crucial to protect vulnerable people, such as women and children. In order to ensure the provision of life-saving assistance for those vulnerable people, the parties to conflict must comply with international humanitarian law.

Food security and humanitarian assistance have been top priorities for Japan. We have a long history of providing various forms of assistance and international cooperation, including humanitarian aid, necessary for those suffering from famine and conflict-induced food insecurity. Japan has also spoken out about the necessity of humanitarian passage on the Black Sea to ship grain from Ukraine immediately following Russia's aggression. Japan is proud to have issued the Hiroshima Action Statement for Resilient Global Food Security in May, together with countries representing various regions around the world. It can serve as a comprehensive guideline for responding to the current food security crisis and for establishing resilient agriculture and food systems in the medium- and long-term.

Before I conclude, allow me to touch on the issue of famine and food insecurity in East Asia and beyond. It is reported that many people in North Korea are suffering

from severe hunger. On the other hand, North Korea is spending vast resources on unlawful nuclear and missile development, diverting critically needed resources away from its people at tremendous cost. In violation of multiple Security Council resolutions, North Korea has continued to repeatedly launch ballistic missiles and threaten peace and stability in East Asia to this day. It is extremely regrettable that the Security Council has been unable to take tangible action on the matter. The Council must overcome its prolonged silence, speak with one voice and take meaningful steps. We ask sincerely for everyone's understanding and support.

**Ms. Fino** (Albania): Let me begin by thanking the United States presidency for convening today's timely debate and by welcoming you to the Council, Mr. President. We are grateful to the United States for its coherence and continued action in keeping the focus on this issue, which is of paramount importance to all of us, especially the people all over the world who continue to struggle to make ends meet. In that respect, we welcome the presidential statement (S/PRST/2023/4) proposed by the United States and adopted earlier as a timely reminder of our collective duty to put everything in place to ensure proper responses addressing conflict-induced food insecurity, including malnutrition and famine. I also thank all three briefers for their insightful briefings and for presenting the very real needs worldwide.

Food insecurity is a pressing global challenge, and a range of colliding factors, such as conflicts, climate change, underdevelopment and macroeconomic shocks, are threatening global food security worldwide more than ever before. The number of people facing acute food insecurity increased from 193 million in 2021 to 258 million in 2022. More than a quarter of a billion people faced acute hunger in 58 countries and territories last year. In 19 countries, approximately 117 million people are suffering from high levels of acute food insecurity due to conflict and insecurity. That has taken a heavy toll on the efforts of humanitarian intervention and food assistance to meet the growing needs. Furthermore, acute hunger, which is just one step away from famine, is increasingly alarming and constitutes a threat not only to the communities and populations concerned but to peace and security in many regions of the world. That is happening now in Afghanistan, Haiti, the Sahel, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen, where the populations face starvation and a lack of urgent humanitarian intervention.

That is also what is happening in Syria. Russia's veto of the reauthorization of cross-border assistance at Bab Al-Hawa (see S/PV.9371) has endangered life-saving aid and food security for more than 4 million people in north-western Syria, leaving them at the mercy of a ruthless regime notorious for its brutality. Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative confirms its adherence to a policy of weaponizing food and using famine as a bargaining chip for achieving political gains. But it has not stopped there. With its daily bombardment of seaports targeting grain export facilities and civilian infrastructure, Russia is committing crimes and playing on the anxiety of the millions who are uncertain as to whether they will have food in the coming days and weeks. Moscow's promises to several African countries of modest amounts of free grain supplies, which are ridiculous compared to the actual needs, are part of its efforts to capitalize on the collapse of the Initiative and gain support on the African continent. But they should beware. That kind of humanitarian charity comes at a bitter price. Without urgent action, more and more people in Africa, the Middle East and beyond will slip into hunger.

The biggest challenge in every conflict is protecting civilians. At the same time, it is a solemn collective commitment. Resolution 2417 (2018) was a breakthrough moment, because it represented the Security Council's acknowledgement for the first time of the link between armed conflict and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine. Using starvation as a weapon and a tactic of warfare is wrong and criminal. It is prohibited by international humanitarian law, and we should never tolerate any unlawful denial of humanitarian access to civilians or deprive them of something essential to their survival. We must never tolerate impunity for violations of international humanitarian law that target civilian infrastructure and food-related services. Albania commends the efforts and actions of Member States, the United Nations, its implementing partners, civil society and the private sector in addressing immediate humanitarian needs and ensuring food security and resilience for populations in need. But the best and most effective way of preventing famine is to prevent conflict, stop wars, tackle the root causes of insecurity at an early stage and invest in peace and development in order to secure sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems, in line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Let me conclude by saying that the world has enough food, and no one needs to go hungry. But if we really want to ensure food security, we should act to prevent and stop conflicts by choosing peace and development, engaging in inclusive peace processes leading to sustainable political solutions and building resilience and working together in favour of life with rights and dignity. That can be done by saying no, strongly and resolutely, to wars and conflicts and their devastating consequences. It requires vision, leadership, political will and decisive action.

**Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate the United Kingdom on its presidency of the Council in July and to wish you, Mr. President, and your team every success in our work this month. You can count on Switzerland's support. I would also like to thank you for organizing today's timely debate and the briefers for their contributions. And we welcome the presence of the high-level representatives at today's meeting.

War breeds hunger and hunger breeds war. The global food crisis is unprecedented and destabilizes countries and regions, as was also highlighted during the debate on the protection of civilians held in May under the Swiss presidency (see S/PV.9327). The problem continues to worsen in Somalia, the Sudan, including Darfur, South Sudan, the Sahel, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria and elsewhere in the world. We therefore deplore Russia's decision to stop implementing the Black Sea Grain Initiative, and condemn the recent attacks on Ukrainian ports, which risk making the global situation deteriorate further.

Through its adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), the Council recognized the need to put an end to the vicious circle of armed conflict and food insecurity. It pledged to pay full attention to the issue so as to better prevent famine. The Council's role in crisis prevention is also at the heart of the New Agenda for Peace. Switzerland calls for the full implementation of the prevention mechanisms provided for in resolution 2417 (2018) and welcomed the Security Council's recent informal meeting on food security in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso and Haiti. With a view to better preventing food crises, including famine, my country calls for strengthening the following three areas.

First, respect from all parties concerned for international humanitarian law and human rights is imperative if we are to reduce the impact of armed

conflict on the food situation. Civilians' access to essential goods and services must be preserved. Essentials for civilian survival, such as food, water installations and other infrastructure needed for food production and supply, must not be attacked and must be protected, as required by international humanitarian law. We call on the parties concerned to guarantee the rapid, safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to all in need. We deplore the fact that humanitarian actors such as the International Committee of the Red Cross are not always able to carry out their operations, as is currently the case in the Lachin corridor in the South Caucasus. We also recall the importance of implementing resolution 2664 (2022), which facilitates humanitarian operations in some of the most difficult environments.

Secondly, in many fragile contexts, it is often women and girls who eat last and eat least. That is even truer in situations of conflict, where women and girls also seek solutions. As pointed out by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, we must not underestimate the fact that food insecurity increases the risk of exposure to sexual violence. That is why we need to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into measures to improve food security.

Thirdly, impunity, particularly for those who deliberately starve civilians as a method of warfare, must be resolutely combated. All too often, the civilian population is deliberately deprived of its means of subsistence, causing immense suffering and further destabilizing conflict zones. In 2019, thanks to a Swiss initiative, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was amended so that this crime can also be prosecuted in situations of internal conflict. We call on all States Parties to ratify that amendment.

"You cannot build peace on empty stomachs", as the American agronomist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Norman Borlaug reminds us. That makes it all the more important to tackle the root causes of food insecurity. Armed conflict and violence are the main drivers, compounded by the growing pressure exerted by economic crises and climate change. Political solutions to conflict must be part of our global approach to eliminating hunger, ensuring access to sufficient and adequate food for all and promoting resilient, inclusive and sustainable food systems.

**Mr. França Danese** (Brazil): I thank the briefers for their compelling presentations. As focal points for this issue at the Council, together with Switzerland, we thank the United States for providing this opportunity to advance our fight against conflict-induced food insecurity and malnutrition. We also congratulate the United States on the initiative and the Council on the adoption of the presidential statement on conflict-induced food insecurity (S/PRST/2023/4).

According to the 2023 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report, it is projected that almost 600 million people will still be facing hunger by 2030. In 2022 alone, 2.4 billion people lacked access to adequate, nutritious, safe and sufficient food. The combination of impacts from the pandemic, climate shocks, high interest rates, high food and energy prices and conflicts has put global food security and nutrition in dire straits, with armed conflict figuring as a prominent driver of hunger.

Brazil believes that the best way to prevent hunger and malnutrition in the long term is to ensure that countries have the capacity to build resilient agrifood systems and markets. We must take into account structural causes of hunger, including inequalities between and within countries, barriers to food trade, unilateral sanctions and weak or absent social-protection and poverty-alleviation policies.

To ensure stability and continuity in food production, international attention must be given to supporting sustainable agricultural practices, developing disaster-resilient infrastructure and promoting diversified agrifood systems. Ensuring the proper functioning of agrifood systems and markets is essential to sustain food security in conflict situations, as recognized in resolution 2417 (2018).

Facilitating the transfer and access to efficient and productive technologies is central to ensuring diversified, resilient and sustainable food systems. In line with the Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All initiative, the international community must support dedicated capacity-building in developing countries in order to allow us to be better prepared for shocks on the availability and accessibility of food.

To reach that goal, cash-transfer programmes should be prioritized to sustain both local supply and demand. Additionally, tools such as the Food Shock Window of the International Monetary Fund or the Global Food Import Financing Facility, proposed by the Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), should be further explored to bridge financing needs, while avoiding market distortions and disruptions.

The reform of multilateral agricultural trade rules is also essential to prevent global food insecurity. Many countries affected by conflicts had their agricultural development restricted by trade and price-distorting subsidies that negatively affect their production capacities.

An important element of this open debate refers to the collaboration between the Security Council, the United Nations system and other actors to catalyse global efforts, ensure delivery of humanitarian assistance and minimize the effects of conflict-induced food insecurity. Member States must fully incorporate in their work the tools already in place in the United Nations system to fight conflict-induced hunger.

Bodies such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme and the FAO diligently inform on risks of acute food insecurity in countries with conflict situations through different reports, including the white notes mandated by resolution 2417 (2018), to which the Council must dedicate its full attention. An efficient response to conflict-induced famine must encompass the appropriate use of this information and timely and decisive action in response to it.

International humanitarian law strictly prohibits starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and grants special protection to objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, including food crops, livestock and other essential resources necessary for food production.

However, even when parties to a conflict comply with international humanitarian law, food systems can be disrupted by the secondary impacts of conflict. Humanitarian exemptions, essential to the survival of the civilian population, also need to be systematically included in sanctions regimes and counter-terrorism measures. Otherwise, humanitarian actors have to overcome complex legal, financial and logistical roadblocks to ensure that those in need get appropriate assistance.

Humanitarian needs play a central role, but they can be better supported if coupled with development-oriented measures, such as dedicated agricultural, technical and subsistence support. Generous, sustained

and result-oriented international cooperation, in its many forms, is essential to achieve that goal. Brazil has been active in promoting such cooperation with fellow developing countries, especially in Africa and Latin America, and we pledge to do more.

Each situation of conflict presents different challenges for agrifood systems and the affected populations. For instance, as recently reported by the FAO, in many cases women are still more vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity, as they continue to face additional risks, barriers and disadvantages due to their gender.

Our response to conflict-induced food insecurity must involve the three pillars of the United Nations. Humanitarian needs must be met, and humanitarian aid delivery allowed in an unimpeded and impartial manner. The Council must use its political capacity to push for solutions to conflicts that can alleviate challenges related to food accessibility.

We will remain fully engaged in all these fronts and continue to be a firm advocate of the right of every person to sufficient, nutritious and adequate food. I reaffirm that eliminating hunger in all situations and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 by 2030 are top priorities for the Brazilian Government.

The only assured way to end conflict-induced hunger is peace.

**Mr. Biang** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I congratulate the United States of America on its presidency of the Council and on the initiative of convening this important debate, which highlights the link between food insecurity and armed conflict.

I would like to thank Ms. Reena Ghelani, United Nations Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator, for her valuable contribution. I listened carefully to the poignant briefings of Ms. Navyn Salem and Mr. David Miliband.

Our debate is taking place a week after the United Nations Food Systems Summit, which raised universal awareness of the alarming scope of global famine and hammered home the urgent need to tackle it. Above all, our meeting comes at a time when international security is generating more questions than answers.

By adopting the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, the nations of the world have clearly and unanimously enshrined in their social

contract that war has rules and that belligerence is absolutely not a legal vacuum in which all cruelties and atrocities are permitted.

That framework of war connects us to our humanity even in the most troubled times. We cannot and must not lose sight, at any point, of the fact that famine is shameful and a serious affront to human dignity. It is even more unbearable when it is planned or maintained, given that resources are not lacking, as noted by Ms. Ghelani.

Unfortunately, in many battlefields and hotbeds of tension around the world, famine is used as a weapon of war. Through senseless calculations, access to food is often impeded. The resulting shortages very often generate famine and the diseases inherent in malnutrition and contribute to unravelling the social fabric of entire swathes of humankind. Civilians, in particular women and children, are the most exposed to its impacts.

When it is not used as a weapon of war, famine is very often a source of conflict and instability in fragile States. As Africans, we know of what we speak. On the African continent, over 80 per cent of people facing food insecurity live in conflict-affected areas. The recent United Nations report on food security and nutrition in the world clearly highlights the impact of famine on armed conflict, for which it acts as a catalyst, as it does for other threats to international peace and security, including climate change.

At the same time, armed conflicts trigger and exacerbate humanitarian crises, poverty and famine. Those factors interact and reinforce each other, creating a vicious cycle of unsustainable suffering.

Resolution 2417 (2018), adopted by the Council on 24 May 2018, recognizes the close link between armed conflict and food insecurity. The persistence of hunger challenges not only our humanity but also reduces to a fiction the international community's efforts to end armed conflict.

In many parts of the world, notably in the Sahel, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, armed and terrorist groups are deliberately destroying food stores, burning fields, preventing farmers from cultivating their land and destroying food production infrastructure and food transport and distribution systems. In those regions of chronic instability, skeletal children are dying of hunger and are at the mercy of birds of prey. This situation is morally unbearable.

We must respond as the Security Council to which the peoples of the world have entrusted the fate of their security and dignity. Our response must go beyond superficial statements and must be commensurate with the challenge. We must mobilize a global effort to address the effects of armed conflict on global food security and, ultimately, prevent the emergence of new hotbeds of famine.

First, we must make a greater commitment to financing adaptation to climate change and invest more in sustainable agriculture and long-term food security. That involves supporting small farmers, improving agricultural infrastructure and promoting environmentally friendly farming practices. The call to action by Secretary-General António Guterres to accelerate the transformation of food systems must be welcomed and supported by all of us.

Secondly, we must strengthen emergency response mechanisms to deal with acute food crises by reinforcing early warning systems, providing emergency food aid and coordinating efforts among humanitarian agencies and Member States.

We must safeguard emergency food stocks, in particular by consolidating existing mechanisms for post-conflict prevention, resolution and consolidation and integrate them absolutely into food crisis management, in line with the provisions of resolutions 2217 (2015) on hunger and security, resolution 2573 (2021) on the protection of essential civilian infrastructure in times of conflict and resolution 2417 (2018) which calls on parties to conflict not to obstruct the proper functioning of food systems and markets in conflict situations, on the one hand, and, on the other, offers technical assistance to fragile countries both in the areas of stockpiling reserves and in appropriate technologies.

It is clear that food insecurity is a threat to global peace and security and exacerbates humanitarian crises. Food insecurity is a reflection of the crisis of solidarity that challenges us as representatives of the peoples of the world and as human beings. We must respond to it more effectively and in a concerted way without further delay.

Now more than ever, it is time to tackle the root causes of conflict. It is also essential to promote dialogue, mediation and diplomacy to resolve the disputes and tensions that lead to armed conflict. Conflict prevention is a key factor in guaranteeing food security and stopping the indignity of famine.

**Mr. Agyeman (Ghana):** I acknowledge the United States' leadership on the important issue of global food insecurity, which thrice in its successive presidencies has found expression in the Council's work. I assure you, Madam President, of Ghana's support and cooperation during your presidency this month and congratulate Ambassador Barbara Woodward and the United Kingdom delegation for effectively leading the Council during the month of July.

We also thank Ms. Reena Ghelani, Mr. David Miliband and Ms. Navyn Salem for their briefings which underscored the magnitude of famine globally and the severity of conflict-induced food insecurity, including for vulnerable countries and populations in Africa.

The stark reality of food insecurity across the world is alarming: 828 million people are reported to be suffering from hunger and some 50 million people are on the brink of starvation. Those numbers reflect the lives of real people and tell a harrowing story of our collective failure to address that most basic of human needs.

Five years since the adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), conflict has remained a primary driver of acute food insecurity. However, food insecurity is not only a consequence of violent conflict. Combined with other factors, it can be a driver of violent conflict and a contributory factor for their emergence and length.

In several places across the world, rising food and fuel prices have led to widespread unrest and instability and, on the African continent, where the fragilities are deep, sharp rises in food prices have often correlated with political dissatisfaction, protests and agitations that have affected political stability.

Today, as a result of the impact of the war on Ukraine, we see the disruptive influence of food insecurity in every country and on everyone. We are bound in our experience by the strong headwinds that the aggression against Ukraine has created in our socioeconomic circumstances.

While we therefore welcome the recent announcement by the Russia Federation at the second Russia-Africa summit to provide grain shipments to six African countries at no cost, we are concerned and deeply disappointed that the Black Sea Grain Initiative has not been renewed. A renewal of the Initiative, accompanied by a resolution of the challenges related to

the export of Russian ammonia, agricultural products and fertilizers to global markets, represents a more durable way to prevent speculative spikes in global food prices and strengthen global food security while also mitigating their knock-on effects. We therefore call on all the parties to work constructively to ensure the renewal of the Initiative.

As we reflect on the implementation of resolution 2417 (2018) and the important contribution it has made over the past five years, Ghana believes that we must continue to focus on the important task of breaking the destructive link between armed conflict and hunger by ensuring that the associated positive effects of food systems can promote peace and the supply of safe and nutritious food to civilians. In that regard, we continue to urge the international community to implement a series of emergency measures and simultaneously pursue long-term investments aimed at breaking the vicious circle of hunger and conflict.

With respect to immediate measures, Ghana urges for scaling up urgent action to respond to the acute food insecurity and nutrition needs of the millions of vulnerable people in conflict situations around the world, especially in Africa, which is the hardest hit region of all. We call on the international community and donor agencies to prioritize the underfunded humanitarian response plans for African countries, and the implementation of those plans for countries in West Africa and the Sahel, by helping to meet the \$3.5 billion target required to tackle the growing needs. We also urge for strengthening prepositioned assets at global and regional humanitarian hubs in order to ensure that their food stocks meet people's needs quickly and effectively. We encourage making every possible effort to reverse the rapid and dramatic deterioration in food security observed in conflict-affected settings and urge the international community to unite in demanding that the parties to conflicts comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We emphasize the need for long-term investment, especially in countries where food insecurity and conflict are acutely linked. In relation to that, I would like to make three brief additional points.

First, our actions must continue to emphasize the preservation of peace, the prevention of conflicts and the rapid deployment of peaceful means for resolving disputes before they lead to violence between States or within a State.

Secondly, we must focus on building resilience in economies and food systems. Besides acknowledging the effects that climate change has on food insecurity and conflicts, we should work together to support efforts for adaptation measures in developing countries and agricultural initiatives such as the African Common Position for Sustainable Food Systems, the further implementation of the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and its results framework, regional food security facilities such as the Economic Community of West African States Regional Food Security Reserve and the effective implementation of the African Development Bank's facility, with a view to boosting food security, nutrition and resilience on the continent.

Thirdly, we need to bridge the gap between needs and supplies, especially for regions that may be experiencing drought and where the impact of climate-change-induced situations could aggravate conflicts. In that regard, we urge support for the accelerated implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement to help avert future disruptions of food supply chains on the African continent.

In conclusion, Ghana welcomes the issuance of today's presidential statement (S/PRST/2023/4) and would like to underscore the need to act with urgency, at scale, and in concert in order to respond to the food security and nutrition needs of the millions of vulnerable people around the world whose situations have been worsened by conflict. We must also be resolved to provide immediate humanitarian assistance, build the resilience of the most vulnerable and strengthen sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems, in line with the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): Allow me to thank you, Madam President, for organizing today's important debate, and to wish you and your team every success during your presidency of the Security Council. Let me also thank the United Kingdom for presiding over the Council for the month of July. I thank today's briefers for their powerful testimony, analysis and direct calls to action. Malta welcomes the issuance of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2023/4) for today's meeting.

Today the world is experiencing an acute, alarming rise in food insecurity. It threatens not only the lives of millions, but the societal fabric in myriad countries across the globe, representing a grave threat to international



peace and security. Arresting the crisis will require a response commensurate with the catastrophe itself, with more than 258 million people globally requiring urgent and sustained aid. From Afghanistan to Haiti and the Sudan, populations are already at crisis levels, with leading famine, food and agriculture and humanitarian organizations projecting that the world is likely to reach peak levels of global hunger this December. And as we know, this crisis is not gender-neutral. Food insecurity and gender inequality are interlinked, because women and girls often have less access to and less control over land, smallholder agricultural market support and humanitarian assistance.

The conflict in the Sudan has severely disrupted the production of crops throughout the country, with estimates that 40 per cent of the population — 19 million people — are already facing alarming levels of hunger. As the conflict has disrupted farming, it has also disrupted sowing and harvesting. With access to seeds and fertilizers limited, next season's yields are in major doubt. Unless urgently addressed, that will compound the hunger and guarantee human-induced famine in the months ahead, with disastrous consequences for the Sudan and the region, where agriculture is a principal source of income and livelihoods for a majority of the population.

Just as conflict is a driver of hunger, violence can drive out humanitarian operations in areas of extreme danger. It often constrains access for medical and humanitarian organizations, leading them to work where they can rather than where they are most needed. We see instances of that today in Haiti, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burkina Faso. In civil conflict, humanitarian access can be denied through arbitrary and bureaucratic measures, and the Security Council should never accept such attempts to instrumentalize international law or to shield such actions from its scrutiny. We urge the United Nations to continue detailing such impediments to access in its reports to the Council and in the white notes mandated by resolution 2417 (2018). When coordinating with host States on the development of such documents, the United Nations must always assert its operational independence. Only in that way can we collectively act in a timely manner.

Furthermore, the Council must take seriously its obligation to ensure accountability for those who order the destruction of civilian infrastructure critical to food production, participate in that destruction or

prevent infrastructure from functioning. Impunity only begets further violations. Whether committed at the rank of general or local commander, violations must be met with consequences. In that regard, we also call on the United Nations to work more closely with warring parties, especially States, to ensure that there is adequate de-confliction of such infrastructure in times of armed conflict.

Malta regrets the Russian Federation's termination of its involvement in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which ensured the safe passage of more than 32 million metric tons of food commodities from Ukrainian ports, relieving hunger in some of the hardest-hit corners of the world. We urge the Russian Federation to re-engage with the good offices of the Secretary-General and to reconsider the tragic effects that its action will have.

In conclusion, without urgent, coordinated humanitarian and emergency agricultural intervention, our inaction could condemn millions to starvation. From painful past experiences, we have learned that efforts to avert famine are effective when the international community works together in a goal-oriented manner. Greater resourcing for climate resilience, agricultural innovation, anticipatory action programmes and, crucially, early agricultural interventions is now paramount to stave off the worst of the coming global hunger crisis. Alleviating acute hunger is the first step on the road to peacebuilding.

**Mr. Afonso** (Mozambique): Madam President, Mozambique congratulates Your Excellency and the United States Government for assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We pledge to cooperate fully with you and the United States team in the Security Council. We highly commend the United States for placing the topic of famine and conflict-induced global food insecurity on the Council's agenda for three consecutive years. In that connection, we welcome the presidential statement just adopted this morning (S/PRST/2023/4). We wish to pay tribute to Her Excellency Ambassador Barbara Woodward and the United Kingdom team as a whole for their excellent presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. We thank the distinguished briefers for their important insights on this important topic.

"End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" is one of the stated goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One of the major obstacles

to achieving that noble goal is the growing incidence in the world of armed conflicts, terrorism and other related factors. They affect food security where fighting takes place and beyond. Conflicts disrupt and destroy food systems, decrease farming populations, destroy infrastructure, reduce resilience and increase vulnerabilities. According to the Global Report on Food Crises, armed conflicts and other threats to security pushed 139 million people into acute food insecurity in 2021, amounting to an increase of almost 40 million people over the previous year. In 2022, the situation deteriorated further, as the impacts of armed conflicts were felt across the globe. The 2023 Report suggests that conflicts pushed more than 117 million people into acute food insecurity in the first half of the year alone, in addition to other negative factors, such as economic shocks and extreme weather conditions.

We come from Africa, a region in which our Heads of State and Government have committed themselves to a collective policy of silencing the guns and promoting development for the peace and prosperity of our nations. We are therefore aware of this vicious link between insecurity and armed conflicts. Many countries in Africa and Asia are the focus of the attention of famine reports. Those are countries in which the spectre of food insecurity could be dramatic, if urgent and consistent humanitarian action is not taken.

We believe that cooperation and understanding between States or warring parties to extend humanitarian aid and safeguard human dignity would contribute immensely to minimizing the suffering of those populations who live the tragedy of war on a daily basis. Mozambique stands in solidarity with all populations that, in the aftermath of various conflicts, including those motivated by transnational terrorism, are forced to leave their production areas, thereby increasing the pressure for humanitarian aid. We champion the creation of conditions for access to humanitarian aid without hindrance, in full compliance with international humanitarian law.

Countering the prevailing bleak situation requires, among other things, an in-depth knowledge of the evolving threats and challenges with which we are confronted. It also requires the ability to reach the affected segments of the population, provide them with individualized and well-timed support in response to their needs and strengthen their positive coping mechanisms. Such work is best done through partnerships and collaboration that reinforce existing

support structures and leverage the comparative advantages of the many organizations and entities present in any humanitarian crisis, while taking into account local, national and regional realities. To that end, Mozambique encourages the adoption of an integrated and inclusive humanitarian approach based on intersectoral coordination at all levels between local, national, regional and international partners. The public and private sectors should be included in order to ensure sustainable food and nutritional security for needy populations, with a view to creating sustainable food systems.

Based on our own experience in Mozambique, we are of the view that food security at the national or international level comes with peace and the normalization of people's lives. It comes with the will and strength to negotiate and peacefully settle disputes wherever they arise. In the meantime, to mitigate dire humanitarian situations, certain actions must be taken, individually or collectively, by States, donors and organizations. Those actions include, first, strengthening the productive capacity of concerned countries by facilitating access to production technologies, including adequate funding for the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors in order to prevent conflicts. Secondly, all constraints and barriers to the distribution chain of fertilizers and inputs must be lifted and protectionist measures rescinded.

Thirdly, strict compliance with obligations under international humanitarian law should be encouraged and all the parties to conflicts reminded that objects indispensable to the survival of civilians are to be respected and safeguarded.

Fourthly, it is essential to include and provide technical assistance to the groups most vulnerable to conflict in food-system value chains. They include women, young people and individuals with disabilities.

Mozambique calls on the Security Council to do everything in its power to achieve a cessation of hostilities in all conflicts that continue to claim human lives around the world. It is our duty under the Charter of the United Nations to free innocent civilians from the scourge of war and from continued situations of hunger and famine. We urge Member States to channel all possible means and resources into attaining peace, security and stability. In our view those are solid foundations for promoting and building global food security worldwide.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Ghelani, Mr. Miliband and Ms. Salem for their briefings.

The issue of food, which affects people's livelihoods and security, is complex and sensitive. With its extensive dependence on supply and production chains, it represents one of the most long-standing recurrent global challenges. The Security Council attaches great importance to the issue and has taken positive action on it from various angles, including through its adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), which sets out clear requirements for protecting civilians, safeguarding agricultural facilities and improving humanitarian access in armed conflict. The international community should work together to promote the effective implementation of the relevant Council requirements, adhere to the political settlement of disputes and break the vicious cycle of conflict and famine.

The current global food security situation is worsening. The data in United Nations reports and the situations illustrated by today's briefers are shocking and worrying. China supports United Nations agencies in utilizing their professional expertise and coordinating roles to mobilize the international community, especially developed countries, to increase humanitarian assistance and bridge the funding gap in the global humanitarian response so as to alleviate the urgent needs of people in the countries concerned. In addressing these urgent issues and with a view to thoroughly resolving the food crisis, it is essential to focus on the root causes and conduct systematic reviews. Without exception, the primary victims of the food crisis are the populations of developing countries. Food insecurity is essentially a result of insufficient and unbalanced development on a global scale and a concrete manifestation of the development gap between the North and the South. It is closely related to the long-standing unjust and unreasonable systems of food production and trade and international governance.

The international community should seize the opportunity of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit in September and the Summit of the Future next year to address both the symptoms and root causes, improve rules and regulations and take comprehensive measures to achieve Goal 2 — zero hunger by 2030 — on schedule. In that connection, I would like to make the following points.

First, we should firmly establish the concept of common security, as the causes of the food crisis are complex and intertwined with other traditional and non-traditional security issues. Without efforts to ensure the common security of the international community, it will be difficult to achieve sustainable food security. We should uphold common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable concepts of security, remain committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes, advocate for dialogue and respond to challenges such as food insecurity in a spirit of unity and a win-win mindset. We must firmly oppose unilateral sanctions and actions that affect international food security and global cooperation, such as decoupling and breaking supply chains, disrupting the market order and suppressing enterprises from other countries. China urges the countries concerned to immediately cease such practices, which lack legal foundation and are contrary to a spirit of fairness and justice.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative and the memorandum of understanding on Russia's grain and fertilizer exports have had a positive impact on maintaining global food security, and the window of opportunity for resuming the package agreement still remains open. China hopes that the relevant parties will intensify their dialogue and consultations and meet each other halfway as they strive to find a balanced solution to the legitimate concerns of all the parties and restore the export of food and fertilizers from Russia and Ukraine as soon as possible. China supports the Secretary-General and other stakeholders in their continued efforts to that end.

Secondly, the development gap between North and South must be swiftly bridged. Sustainable development is the most fundamental guarantee of the achievement of common food security. The international community should address the issue of food insecurity in the context of sustainable development and take advantage of the upcoming opportunities in 2023 for taking stock, such as the SDG Summit and the United Nations Food Systems Summit. The international community should heed the voices of developing countries, seek to strengthen North-South dialogue and coordination and mobilize greater development resources to build greater development synergies. We should make diligent efforts to assist developing countries in need in solving problems in agriculture, rural areas and farming so as to enhance resilience to climate change and natural disasters and increase food production and self-sufficiency.

Developed countries should end unreasonable agricultural subsidies and adopt responsible monetary policies to reduce the impacts of imported inflation and exchange-rate fluctuations, among other factors, on food security in developing countries, while working earnestly to fulfil their official development assistance commitments. They should also refrain from technology lockdowns and so-called small-yard, high-fence practices. We should rather accelerate technology transfers and the application and sharing of knowledge in areas such as biology, the digital world and outer space in order to create better conditions for developing countries to strengthen capacity-building and achieve sustainable development.

Thirdly, it is essential to improve the global food and agriculture governance system. The international grain market has long faced problems such as the monopolization of pricing power by major grain merchants, structural imbalances in production and supply chains and the financialization of agricultural commodities. Some countries have indiscriminately implemented unilateral coercive measures, creating serious obstacles to the agricultural and economic development of the countries targeted. The international community should focus on these types of persistent problems, which undermine global food security, and work hard to resolve them. In the preparatory processes for the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future, it will be vital to comprehensively consider how to improve the global governance of food and agriculture at the institutional and rule-making levels, with a focus on increasing the representation and decision-making power of developing countries. Efforts should be made to remove restrictions and unilateral sanctions on food production and exports and combat speculative capital and price gouging, in order to build a safe, stable, efficient, open, inclusive and mutually beneficial supply-chain system, as well as a fairer and more reasonable international food trade order.

Actions speak louder than words. China has contributed to maintaining global food security by taking proactive measures. China has proposed global development initiatives and an international food security cooperation initiative advocating for enhanced practical food cooperation. We have been providing assistance to developing countries in the form of funding, technology and access to markets to improve their food production, storage and loss-reduction capabilities. China has cooperated in the

area of agriculture with more than 140 countries and regions, has provided more than 1,000 types of agricultural technology to developing countries and has trained more than 14,000 professionals in hybrid rice technology for more than 80 developing countries. We have also provided emergency food aid to countries in need. We stand ready to work with other countries to contribute further to global food security through enhanced exchanges and cooperation.

**Mrs. Broadhurst Estival** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, and thank the United States for convening this open debate on such an important subject, which expands upon that of the meeting convened by the United Kingdom presidency on 17 July (see S/PV.9380), in which the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France participated. I also thank each one of the briefers for their informative briefings.

The year 2022 has been a bleak year for food security. And, following Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, we can expect our worst fears to come true in the coming months. That acute crisis is affecting the whole world. But it especially hurting the most vulnerable and poorest countries.

I would like to begin by highlighting the following point. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to exacerbate an already extremely worrisome situation caused by the proliferation of armed conflicts, the impacts of climate change, the erosion of biodiversity and the coronavirus disease pandemic. Russia is directly responsible for the exacerbation of this multifactor crisis. In ignoring the efforts of the Secretary-General and Türkiye, Russia has unilaterally and brutally terminated the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which had enabled the transport of grain to 45 countries and vulnerable populations, including through humanitarian aid from the World Food Programme, to stabilize world prices and avoid shortages. In preventing world markets' access to Ukrainian grain and blocking shipping in the Black Sea, Russia is posing a direct threat to global food security and food supply to the countries most affected. In that way, it is seeking to destroy Ukrainian production and export capacities, including by bombing port infrastructure and grain depots, in flagrant violation of international law.

Its goal is to suffocate the Ukrainian agricultural system, not only in order to reduce Ukraine's revenue, but also to ensure its position as a dominant player in

the markets and serve its own economic interests and those of its agricultural industry. The increase in grain prices that Russia intends to cause would be for its own benefit and to the detriment of all other countries. Following its inexcusable act of blackmail against the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, in a further demonstration of its cynicism, Russia is exploiting the global food crisis. Russia must immediately stop using hunger as a weapon of war.

Responding to food insecurity and malnutrition is everyone's responsibility. France is fully committed to that struggle and immediately took the initiative to respond to the global food crisis by launching several initiatives, including the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission and Harvest Rescue Operation. We have accordingly earmarked this year more than €900 million for emergency food aid, agricultural resilience and the development of agricultural systems in the most vulnerable countries, including €160 million for the World Food Programme, which is double the amount for 2021. At the same time, I recall that Russia halved its contribution to the World Food Programme in 2022, and that it is furthermore depriving the World Food Programme of Ukrainian wheat.

Together with our European partners, we are supporting the solidarity lanes established by the European Union, which have enabled the transport of 41 million tons of grains from Ukraine since March 2022. Currently, they represent the sole passageway for Ukrainian grains, and we intend to strengthen them. France will continue to take the initiative in the coming months and will host the first global meeting of the School Meals Coalition, in Paris, in October. The Coalition's goal is aimed at ensuring that every child is able to receive at least one healthy, nutritious meal a day, which is both a social safety net and an incentive for school attendance. France will also host the next Nutrition for Growth Summit.

At a time when food insecurity is reaching unprecedented levels, respect for international humanitarian law is imperative if aid is to be delivered to populations in need. France recalls that deliberately starving civilians is a war crime. That crime must not go unpunished. Humanitarian aid must be allowed to be delivered safely, rapidly and without hindrance to all in need. As all our briefers reminded us, access to aid is key and vital to all countries most at risk of famine.

France would also like to call today for obstacles to the flow humanitarian and food aid to the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, through the Lachin corridor, as well as obstacles to freedom of movement, to be lifted in accordance with the order of the International Court of Justice of 22 February.

At a time when humanitarian space is shrinking, France reiterates its full support for all humanitarian actors in carrying out their difficult missions. France supports and is grateful for the United States presidential statement (S/PRST/2023/4).

**Mr. Pérez Loose** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this debate and thank the briefers for their valuable presentations.

Ecuador aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the delegation of Ireland on behalf of the Group of Friends of Action on Conflict and Hunger, which we co-chair.

What did it cost the Security Council to adopt resolution 2417 (2018) on hunger and conflict? Today, it is a valuable early-warning and response tool. Last week, we held an informal interactive dialogue to discuss the warning note regarding food security risks in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti. We hope that today's meeting will serve as a sounding board for mobilizing efforts and resources from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, humanitarian actors and donors to address the crises in those countries. But what else can we do as a Security Council? We do not claim that there is a generic solution that is applicable to all States, but peace and stability are essential conditions.

In the case of Haiti, with the adoption of resolution 2692 (2023) of 14 July, we embraced OCHA's main recommendations. The Council urged all parties, including those with the ability to influence armed groups, to take measures to put an end to the blockading of roads, which are required to supply local markets, and to the damaging of sources of food, crops, livestock and medical supplies. The need for safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access was also taken into account. We welcome the adoption of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2023/4) today, which also includes those recommendations. Of course, we hope that there will be adequate support for them to be implemented on the ground. The deployment of a specialized force

to support the Haitian police will shore up efforts in Haiti. Security is essential, but it will not be enough. Therefore, at the same time, we must advance the implementation of other strategies requiring donor cooperation for Haiti in the socioeconomic sphere.

Considering that since 2022 more than 250 million people have been suffering from acute hunger in one third of United Nations Member States, it will be vital for us to focus on food security, and all the more so when a majority of those cases involve crisis scenarios and armed violence. We reiterate that all parties are under an obligation to make every effort to ensure that food systems and markets function effectively and to protect food production, storage and distribution facilities and water supplies. The Council must ensure compliance with resolution 2573 (2021), on the protection of essential goods, which Ecuador co-sponsored in 2021. We therefore emphasize the importance of the prohibition on attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless agricultural equipment and crops. We condemn the use of starvation as a tactic of war and any blockade or aggression directed at those who provide humanitarian assistance.

If we know that nearly 25,000 people die every day from hunger, how many must have died from acute hunger in the past five years? How many have died from lack of food since the Council's debates in March 2021 (see S/2021/250) or May 2022 (see S/PV.9036)? How many have died since the debate on the protection of civilians (see S/PV.9327) just three months ago, and since the start of today's meeting? However, we must also be able to ask ourselves how many lives have been saved by the United Nations and the Council, and what are we doing to prevent the risk of famine in an even greater number of countries. In April of last year, Ecuador hosted the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, because of concerns about rising hunger and food insecurity in our region and the world.

We reiterate the need for a resumption of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the establishment of other initiatives to prevent the deterioration of global food insecurity. Trade in fertilizer, seeds and agricultural inputs must not be restricted.

We must encourage all the organs and agencies of the United Nations system and Member States to intensify their efforts so that we can turn the page on

an era when military spending has reached \$2 trillion and humankind wastes a third of the food it produces while children eat dirt and mudpies.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): Let me start by welcoming you, Madam President, and your team to the presidency of the Security Council, and thanking the United States presidency for bringing the issue of food insecurity back to the Council, following resolution 2417 (2018). I also want to thank Reena Ghelani, David Miliband and Navyn Salem for bringing their expertise and, critically, their proposals for action to the Council.

As we have all heard, the number of people facing acute food insecurity has skyrocketed from 193 million in 2021 to more than a quarter of a billion today, with conflict as the main driver. Last week the Council met to discuss the United Nations warning on rapidly deteriorating food security in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti. The message was clear — we must act now to prevent further deterioration. In that spirit, I want to join others in focusing on actions and to propose three. They overlap with those that have been proposed by others during the course of our debate, and in particular with those proposed by the United Nations Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator.

First, the Council should take concerted action to tackle the drivers of conflict and invest in inclusive, sustainable peace. The Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace calls for renewed multilateral cooperation, and for putting women, who are uniquely affected by food insecurity, at the centre of peace initiatives. In Afghanistan, if they cannot bear to watch their children die, some mothers face a harrowing choice — to sell their children or starve. Congolese women in displacement camps are forced into sex work just to buy food.

Secondly, we call on the parties to conflicts to abide by international humanitarian law and allow humanitarians rapid and unimpeded access to people in need. In the Sudan and Somalia, starving communities are surrounded by fighting and humanitarians cannot reach them to bring them food. International humanitarian law is our greatest defence against hunger in armed conflict and those who violate it should be held to account.

Finally, we need to protect global food systems. The Black Sea Grain Initiative got nearly 33 million tons of grain into world markets. Russia's decision to

end the initiative has raised food prices, hitting the world's hungriest people. Russia's offer to give 50,000 tons of grain to each of six countries will not bring grain prices back down or help those facing famine in other countries. That inadequate gesture falls far short of solving the global problem that Russia has created. Let us be clear. The sanctions from the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union do not target food and fertilizer. They target Russia's war machine. As President Ramaphosa of South Africa said, the Black Sea should be open. We call on Russia to rejoin the Initiative immediately. We know what we need to do to stop the soaring levels of hunger. Let us now turn that into action.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I thank United Nations Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator Reena Ghelani for her briefing. We also listened to the representatives of non-governmental organizations who were proposed as briefers by the United States.

The topic of today's meeting — combating hunger — is unquestionably extremely important. Russia, like the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics before it, has prioritized the issue, and historically not just in relation to specific conflicts but in the broader context of the struggle for social and economic human rights. The efforts of the Soviet Union in that area are recalled with gratitude in many regions of the world. We are pleased that our Western colleagues have also begun to reflect on the issue, but regrettably, as is clear from the statements we have heard, their interest is purely opportunistic. The threat of world hunger has only recently been of concern to them and only insofar as they believe it can be exploited to vilify Russia.

Moreover, it is obvious to us that many food crises, particularly the most acute, are directly or indirectly caused by the actions of the United States and its allies or are the consequences of their long-standing policies. For example, Afghanistan, which was mentioned by our colleague from the United Kingdom, is struggling to climb out of the abyss of hunger and poverty for over 20 years now owing to the experiments of the United States-led coalition to democratize this deeply traditional country in a Western fashion. Despite the fact that our colleagues, the Western members of the Security Council, did not have the courage to honestly name the root causes of food and other crises in countries such as Iraq, Libya and Syria, we all understand too well that they are caused by illegal interventions by

Western States. In the case of Syria, which was once a breadbasket for many of its neighbours, the United States is still occupying large swathes of this country and stealing oil, grain and other natural resources.

Be that as it may, I propose to begin by addressing the root causes of threats to food security, about which our Western colleagues are bashfully silent. According to United Nations estimates, technically, there is no acute food shortage in the world. That is, the problem is not a lack of food. There is enough food produced in the world. The problem is its uneven distribution, with the West accumulating excess stocks and developing countries experiencing a deficit. The second reason is what economists call the food price environment. Simply put, it is profitable for the largest producers of agro-industrial products to maintain high prices. I am referring here to the so-called "big four" — American companies Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge and Cargill, and the Dutch Louis Dreyfus Company, which account for 75 to 90 per cent of global agro-industrial trade. In the fiscal year of 2022, the Cargill corporation alone increased sales by 23 per cent to \$165 billion, posting a record \$5 billion net income.

We should ask ourselves why, as the Western agro-industrial complex is raking in superprofits, the threat of famine is hitting developing countries with growing populations the most? Why are their economies unable to cope with it? The answer is very simple — in the past, Western colonialists deliberately tailored them to extract maximum profits for the metropole and not so that they would be able to feed their populations. Monocultural agricultural specialization was forced upon them, resulting now in exports that often consist of one or two types of goods. This economic structure makes them extremely sensitive to price fluctuations in the global food markets, whose current instability is due to the fact that, during the coronavirus disease pandemic, Western States rushed to save their economies, not caring one bit about how their rash actions in the financial, economic, energy and other sectors would hit more vulnerable actors in the global economy.

A year ago, in response to the appeals of the United Nations, we put aside our doubts and agreed to a grain deal. But here too, Western countries managed to turn everything in their favour. One of the two parts of the deal, the Black Sea Grain Initiative, very quickly turned from a humanitarian one into a commercial one. As a result, only 3 per cent of the exported grain went to countries in need, while the lion's share ended up in Western countries. Is that what we agreed to?

The duplicity of our former Western partners was even more clear in their arrogant unwillingness to fulfil the second part of the grain deal — the memorandum of understanding between Russia and the United Nations on the supply of Russian food and fertilizers to world markets. And this is despite the fact that the Russia's share of the global wheat market is 20 per cent, while Ukraine's is less than 5 per cent. That means that Russia makes a significant contribution to global food security and is a solid, responsible international supplier of agricultural products — not to mention the exceptional role of Russian fertilizers in global food security.

It would seem that, given those obvious facts, Western countries need to focus on ensuring that Russian grain and fertilizers can reach countries in need without hindrance. However, that is not part of the plans of our Western colleagues, as unambiguously confirmed by you, Madam President, the day before yesterday. So how can we talk about any kind of desire on your country's part to address international food security issues? All that drives you is the desire to punish Russia and your pipe dreams of dealing it a strategic defeat. You do not care at all about the interests of the countries of the Global South, but we do. I therefore repeat once again that if all of the problems that have been publicly raised by us, including in this Chamber, regarding the implementation of the Russia-United Nations memorandum are eliminated, we will be ready to once again take part in the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Western delegations today literally poured forth numbers detailing the humanitarian aid rendered by them to developing countries. Whether that is enough to compensate for the damage caused by centuries of cruel colonial policies of plundering natural resources and exploiting populations is not for us to judge, but rather for those States that have suffered from it.

Do Western countries help a lot or a little? It is not polite to count other people's money, but it is hard not to notice that the amount of assistance provided by the United States and its allies to the countries of the Global South cannot be compared to what the West has spent on weapons in less than two years for its proxy war with Russia to the last Ukrainian. According to the most conservative estimates, that amounts to €80 billion, while the total funds allocated to Ukraine is €165 billion. And this is despite the fact that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs requested \$55.2 billion from donors for all of its humanitarian operations for 2023, and only 24.8 per cent of that

amount has been funded to date. Imagine how much good could be done in the world if the United States and its allies spent money on development assistance as readily as they sponsor wars around the world?

Now, I would like to draw attention to something else — despite all their benevolent slogans, donor assistance from Western countries is not selfless and always comes with political preconditions. A clear example of that is the situation with the cross-border humanitarian mechanism for Syria, where Western States are essentially openly blackmailing the Syrian people, seeking a change of power. Another example is the threats we are hearing now from Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles and from the leadership of the United Kingdom, France and the United States to stop helping the Niger. Did people suddenly stop starving there after the coup? In other words, it is obvious that all of this humanitarian aid is being used by the West solely as a tool of control over States that are forced to resort to it. The needs of the population are not being taken into account.

To my colleagues from developing countries, I say — make no mistake, the habits and methods of the former colonizers have not changed, only the packaging has. For every dollar allegedly spent on aid, they will demand a payment of sovereignty and political independence. Many African States have already experienced that first-hand and do not want to put up with such an approach. That makes Mr. Borrell Fontelles lose sleep in his Garden of Eden, as he suddenly decided today that by selling grain at low prices, Russia is somehow makes its buyers dependent. I will not comment on the perverted logic of the head of European Union diplomacy. I will simply say that the facts are not in his favour.

Russia has never considered Africa, Asia or Latin America as a space for extracting profit. Despite all of the obstacles put in place by the United States and its allies, we have helped, are still helping and will continue to help those in need around the world free of charge. We have built and will continue to build factories, schools, hospitals and universities so that they can use their natural resources to create goods with added value, instead of exporting raw materials, so that their young people can stay home, rather than leaving their countries en masse.

We understand the importance of the uninterrupted supply of food to African countries. That is important for socioeconomic development and for maintaining



political stability. That is why we pay special attention to shipments of wheat, barley, corn and other grains to our African friends, including through the World Food Programme.

Last year, trade in agricultural products between Russia and African countries grew by 10 per cent and amounted to \$6.7 billion, whereas from January to June, it has already increased by a record 60 per cent. Russia exported 11.5 million tons of grains to Africa in 2022, and in the first six months of this year alone, we have already exported nearly 10 million tons. I want to stress that all of this has taken place despite the illegal unilateral sanctions imposed on our exports, which seriously impede the supply of Russian food and complicate transportation, logistics, insurance and bank payments.

Moreover, as announced at the recent Russia-Africa summit, we will be able to provide Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Mali, Somalia and Zimbabwe with 25,000 to 50,000 tons of grain free of charge in the coming months, and we will ensure the free delivery of those products as well.

I also recall our readiness to donate mineral fertilizers to the poorest countries in need. Of the 262,000 tons of those fertilizers, which are currently blocked in European ports, only two shipments — 20,000 tons to Malawi and 34,000 tons to Kenya — have been sent so far. The rest remains in the hands of European States, despite the fact that we are talking about a purely humanitarian action to which no sanctions should apply in principle.

We believe that the vast majority of countries, including African countries, which are seeing an alarming trend in the area of food security, have sufficient fertile lands. In other words, there is a foundation for building food sovereignty, and it should be strengthened not through humanitarian aid, but through the implementation of projects in the area of sustainable development in general and the transfer of necessary technologies, fertilizers and weather-resistant seeds. We are convinced that, with the use of appropriate agricultural technologies and the proper organization of agricultural production, Africa will in the future not only be able to feed itself and ensure its own food security, but also become an exporter of various types of food.

For its part, Russia is ready to share its expertise in agricultural production with African States and other interested developing countries and to provide

assistance in the introduction of advanced technologies. Unlike Western neo-colonialists, we are interested in building a more equitable system of resource distribution, so that developing countries will not be forever hooked on the needle of politically conditioned Western humanitarian aid, which is nothing other than primitive blackmail, so they overcome the challenges of the transition period and form strong, sustainable and self-sufficient economies, which will help to ensure social stability and the well-being of the population — that is, they will be absolutely free to exercise their sovereignty in making all domestic and foreign policy decisions. Russia is ready to assist them with that in every possible way.

We note the work carried out by our American colleagues in the run-up to today's meeting to agree on a statement by the President of the Security Council on hunger and conflict. Although the document did not include all the provisions we proposed, we felt able to support it in a spirit of compromise. For example, the consequences of illegitimate unilateral restrictive measures and sanctions, which have a direct negative impact on food security in the world, were left out of the document. It would also have been appropriate to recall paragraph 3 of article 54 of Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, according to which the prohibitions on attacking or destroying agricultural infrastructure do not apply if such infrastructure is used as sustenance for the members of its armed forces or in direct support of military action.

During today's debate, the representative of Venezuela will speak on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations. We associate ourselves with that statement, which reflects more fully the approach to addressing the issues that are the focus of our meeting today.

In conclusion, I would like to say that since Russian food and fertilizers are so important — and this is obvious — for the socioeconomic development and food security of the countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, the choice now lies with the United States and its allies. Unless the illegitimate obstacles artificially created by the West affecting Russian economic operators in supplying agricultural products are eliminated, it will hardly be possible to restore the normal functioning of supply chains and resolve other issues related to global food security.

No matter how much the United States and its allies try to shift the blame to Russia, the facts are not in their favour. So, they must decide what is more important for them: geopolitical considerations or the desire to help the developing world. If the former, then there is no need to mislead anyone, including by initiating debates like today's or drafting beautiful joint documents. We need actions, not words.

We have been and remain ready to participate in joint efforts to strengthen international food security. Are the United States and its allies? We have serious doubts about that.

**The President:** I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than three minutes to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after three minutes.

I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

**Mr. Gevorgyan (Armenia):** I would like to express my appreciation to the United States for convening this open debate on such a pertinent topic. I thank Ms. Reena Ghelani, United Nations Famine Prevention and Response Coordinator, and the other briefers for presenting their views on the ways to prevent and address famine by strengthening food security in conflict situations.

Starvation has been repeatedly used as a method of warfare and perpetuating genocide throughout history. But today, I am not going to recall examples from the past or assess future risks of famine in the context of the conflict. Instead, I would like to bring to the attention of the Council a situation that is happening right now, a situation wherein people do not know whether today they will be able to find milk formula for their babies, a loaf of bread for their children or provide medicine to critically ill relatives.

As we meet, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh face a threat to their very existence resulting from the complete blockade imposed by Azerbaijan. For more than seven months, Azerbaijan has continued to block the Lachin corridor, a humanitarian lifeline connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with the outside world. That illegal and inhumane action is in blatant violation of the order of the International Court of Justice of 22 February and reaffirmed by a 6 July order, norms of international humanitarian law and the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020.

The complete halt of any humanitarian supplies by Azerbaijan since 15 June this year has led to a critical shortage of food, medical supplies and other essential goods, creating a full-fledged humanitarian crisis. The disruption of electricity and gas supplies has been paralysing social and health-care services and the transportation system, depriving the besieged population of their fundamental human rights.

The blockade has a particularly devastating impact on the most vulnerable segments of the population. Owing to the lack of essential foods and vitamins, approximately 2,000 pregnant women, around 30,000 children, 20,000 older persons and 9,000 persons with disabilities are struggling to survive under conditions of malnutrition, the absence of basic supplies and medicine. Moreover, Azerbaijan continuously targets civilians conducting agricultural works, augmenting its manifest intent to impose starvation on the population.

Those warning signs have already been communicated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which remains the only international humanitarian mission in Nagorno-Karabakh. In its 25 July news release, the International Committee of the Red Cross expressed concern over the growing humanitarian needs and emphasized that it is not currently able to bring humanitarian assistance to the civilian population through the Lachin corridor, while stressing that its humanitarian aid convoys are a lifeline for the population in the area. After three days of that communication, Azerbaijan arrested 68-year-old Vagif Khachatryan, a person who was being transported by ICRC from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia for medical treatment. The arrest of a person under ICRC protection whose transfer had been previously agreed with Azerbaijan is not merely a perfidious act but a well-calculated obstruction of ICRC work in Nagorno-Karabakh.

To address the life-saving needs of the most vulnerable, on 26 July, the Government of Armenia decided to deliver a consignment of around 360 tons of essential goods, mainly food and medical supplies, to Nagorno-Karabakh. We appealed to the peacekeeping forces of the Russian Federation to organize the delivery of the humanitarian assistance to those in need, which had been the established practice throughout the past months. However, so far the humanitarian cargo still remains at the entrance to the Lachin corridor due to the Azerbaijani side's obstruction and denial of its transfer.

The dire humanitarian situation on the ground and the risks of evolving hunger in Nagorno-Karabakh require an efficient and timely response on the part of the international community to ensure the full and unconditional implementation of the decisions of the International Court of Justice and full respect for international human rights and international humanitarian law. We hope that yesterday's statement by the Secretary-General, in which he expressed deep concern about the humanitarian situation and emphasized the need for implementing the Court's orders in order to ensure the unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin corridor, will be the first step towards full United Nations engagement on the ground. That engagement is needed more than ever. The cost of inaction is too high to be sustained, and the mass atrocity being perpetrated through starvation should and can be prevented and stopped.

We call on the United Nations and the Security Council to take urgent measures to ensure Azerbaijan's full compliance with its legally binding obligations under the orders of the International Court of Justice and international humanitarian law, immediately restore freedom of movement across the Lachin corridor and allow safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to Nagorno-Karabakh for United Nations agencies and the ICRC.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

**Mr. Peñalver Portal** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

At the 1996 World Food Summit, the historic leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, denounced the root causes of inequalities and hunger when he said,

“It is capitalism, neoliberalism, the laws of a savage market, external debt, underdevelopment and unequal exchange that are killing so many people in the world.”

A profoundly unjust, undemocratic and exclusionary international order continues to exist. It has provoked an exponential increase in poverty, hunger and food insecurity. The current multidimensional global crisis has contributed to widening the gap between

the increasingly wealthy North and the increasingly poor and marginalized South. Big business is leading the spread of protectionist policies and speculative practices, driving up food prices. Irrational capitalist production and consumption patterns continue to destroy the planet's ecological balance. Trillions of dollars are invested and squandered on military expenditures instead of being devoted to protecting life and contributing to sustainable development.

In that complex context, there is also an increase in unilateral coercive measures and illegal blockades, such as the one against Cuba. The United States Government has made the perpetual criminalization of millions of people a cornerstone of its foreign policy through measures aimed at strangling the economies of numerous countries in order to gain political advantage. The main obstacle to the food security of the Cuban people is the economic, commercial and financial blockade that has been imposed on the country by the Government of the United States for more than 60 years, exacerbated by its fraudulent inclusion of Cuba on its arbitrary list of States that allegedly sponsor terrorism. That cruel policy has an overwhelming impact on every sector of life in our country and hinders our economic and social development and our implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The embargo seriously, flagrantly and systematically violates the human rights of the Cuban people, including their right to food and development.

The Security Council, which consists of a limited number of members who can scarcely be said to represent the international community as a whole, should stick to its mandate and stop interfering in matters outside its competence. The General Assembly is the organ called on to lead the international efforts to achieve the goals set out in Sustainable Development Goal 2, which are ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. There is an urgent need to establish a just, democratic and equitable international order that will make it possible to eradicate the root causes of poverty and hunger and promote sustainable development for all peoples, thereby eliminating potential triggers of conflict affecting international peace and security. Greater international cooperation, solidarity and multilateralism are needed to guarantee the full and universal realization of the right to food and development. Cuba, together with the countries of the South, will continue to firmly defend those objectives.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

**Mr. Gerwel** (Poland): I would like to thank the United States for convening this important and timely debate. Poland aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

We believe that a strong focus on famine and conflict-induced global food insecurity is now of crucial importance. Hunger should not be a weapon of war. Global food supply chains must not be taken hostage by aggressors in order to achieve their military goals. As stated in the recent United Nations inter-agency report entitled *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023*, global hunger is still far above pre-pandemic levels. In that context, I would first like to address two questions posed in the excellent concept note (S/2023/560, annex) presented by the United States prior to this open debate, on the importance of anticipatory action and the role of investment in tackling the root causes of food insecurity.

The international community should focus on building the resilience of local food systems. Countries that can increase their own food production and build their own distribution systems are less vulnerable to the conflict- and climate-induced food insecurity that ultimately results in famine. Public-private-partnerships should be mobilized to build reliable transport and storage infrastructure. Such actions are being undertaken through the Global Gateway Strategy of the European Union and the Three Seas Initiative of 12 Central European nations. Poland built on those examples in initiating General Assembly resolution 77/282, which emphasizes the critical role of resilient infrastructure in safeguarding the delivery of essential goods and services.

Even if we cannot prevent all new conflicts or stop existing ones, we can start to counter the food insecurity crisis right now. It is worth considering the International Monetary Fund's recommendations in that regard. They include, first, ensuring rapid and adequate support to people vulnerable to food insecurity through humanitarian assistance from the World Food Programme and others, alongside effective domestic fiscal measures; secondly, maintaining open trade, including within regions, in order to allow food to flow from surplus areas to those in need; thirdly, increasing food production and improving distribution while increasing trade financing and reinforcing supply chains; and fourthly, investing in climate-resilient agriculture.

Eighteen months after the launch of Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine, there can be no doubt that food has once again become a weapon. In deliberately creating a food crisis, Russia has shown contempt for resolution 2417 (2018), which condemns starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. We denounce Moscow's decision to withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which played a stabilizing role for global food security, a move that we see as a manifestation of economic aggression against the countries of the global South and of political hypocrisy and cynicism. The recent escalation of Russian attacks on Ukrainian ports and its mining of the sea corridors used for transporting grain are yet more proof of Russia's determination to prolong its war of aggression at any cost, including to the detriment of the people who are most vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition.

Poland is ready not only to undertake emergency actions, but also to facilitate the capacity-building of more resilient production systems.

In 2022, we supported the World Food Programme to ease the food security crisis in African countries. We have engaged in food solidarity initiatives. In addition to the European Union solidarity lanes and the Black Sea Grain Initiative, we supported the Grain from Ukraine humanitarian programme and declared that we would finance shipments of grain worth €20 million.

In closing, let me emphasize that, for Poland, the protection of civilians and the promotion of compliance with international humanitarian law are long-standing priorities. We remain committed to contributing to actions aimed at protecting civilians in armed conflict and tackling global food security crises.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

**Mr. Bendjama** (Algeria): First of all, Madam President, I congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and I wish you every success in that endeavour. I also congratulate our colleague from the United Kingdom and her team for their excellent work last month.

Today's topic is crucial, as we are facing a rise in acute food insecurity worldwide. Various United Nations reports underscore that millions face starvation, while the necessary humanitarian assistance is lacking. As mentioned recently by the Secretary-General, if current trends continue, by 2030 nearly 670 million

people will suffer hunger. Moreover, the situation differs from one region to another. Africa is, by far, the most fragile region. Many of its inhabitants suffer from food insecurity, particularly in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. It is a sad reality, especially given that the African continent could become the breadbasket of the world with more investment and technology transfer. The United Nations system, but also financial institutions, should catalyse global efforts and address the root causes — namely, underdevelopment, climate change and conflict — to reverse that situation.

We concur with the concept note (S/2023/560) that the challenge of addressing food insecurity requires resilient food systems. Furthermore, to prevent the most severe forms of hunger and ensure the food security of all, it is paramount, first, to adopt a holistic and integrated approach that involves all relevant stakeholders. Such an approach will build strong and resilient food systems, as the cornerstone of food security. Secondly, efforts must be accelerated for technology transfer to and capacity-building for developing countries, in order for them to produce their own food. Achieving food security is a precondition of lasting peace and stability. Thirdly, international agreements, particularly those related to climate financing, must be fulfilled, thus enabling vulnerable countries to confront the adverse effects of climate change on their food systems. Fourthly, sustainable financing for agriculture in developing countries, in particular African countries, should be mobilized. International financial institutions should adopt and implement solutions to support developing countries, including through concessional financing and grants. Fifthly, international humanitarian law must be fully respected and Security Council resolutions, in particular, resolution 2417 (2018), must be implemented, as this is key to facilitating access to humanitarian assistance, in line with General Assembly resolution 46/182. It will reduce food insecurity and prevent famine in the context of humanitarian crises.

Algeria has spared no effort in providing assistance to its neighbours, especially in the Sahel, when they have faced the consequences of conflict and natural disasters. Achieving sustainable development, especially Sustainable Development Goal 2, is the only way to break the link between conflict and food insecurity. We therefore urge the Security Council to work closely with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to promote development solutions that leave no one behind in access to safe food.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

**Mr. Elshandawily** (Egypt): Allow me at the outset to congratulate the United States of America on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August 2023. I would also like to express our appreciation to the initiative of the United States to convene today's high-level open debate.

Egypt is fully cognizant of the severe impacts that hunger and the failure to achieve food security have on human livelihood, in addition to contributing to an increased risk of conflict, especially in economically vulnerable countries. We therefore stress the strong and deep links between food security, hunger and conflict. The world is currently witnessing an unprecedented food insecurity crisis that is a result of our failure to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 to end hunger, exacerbated by the repercussions of the coronavirus disease pandemic and by conflicts.

Failure to achieve food security and end hunger will pose a threat to the security and stability of countries and will further fuel ongoing conflicts. The challenges of achieving food security are further compounded by other factors, such as the ongoing impacts of climate, which, in turn, exacerbate risks related to energy production, food security, the availability of water and economic development. Water scarcity in several regions in the world, especially in Africa, has severe manifestations in agricultural activity and efforts to achieve food security.

In view of the foregoing, we would like to highlight the following points.

First, we underscore the importance of addressing the challenges facing countries affected by and emerging from conflict. Special attention must be paid to food security and to the provision of health care to the civilian population, based on the principles of international humanitarian law and in keeping with national sovereignty. Also, it is important to ensure that civilians in conflict areas have access to food aid and to protect them from the risk of famine, including, in that connection, by providing food to forcibly displaced persons.

Secondly, Egypt reaffirms that sustainable solutions to current global conflicts hinge on promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes; ensuring that all such efforts take into account the need to preserve

the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States; and addressing the root causes of armed conflict, which includes promoting sustainable development.

Thirdly, I would like to highlight that Egypt is the most densely populated water-scarce country in the world. Currently, water scarcity affects 2.5 billion people around the globe, and it is expected that climate change will place half of the world's population under severe water stress by 2050. Moreover, water scarcity could displace 700 million people by 2030. Those figures provide clear proof of the negative impacts of water scarcity on peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. In that context, we urge the international community to address the needs of the most vulnerable water-scarce countries and to promote transboundary cooperation, in accordance with the applicable international law.

Fourthly, food security and conflict must be addressed via a holistic and comprehensive approach that takes into consideration humanitarian and development factors. Immediate action must be taken to alleviate hunger while also implementing plans to assist developing countries, especially net food-importing developing countries, in achieving food security through sustainable agriculture. In that regard, I would like to recall the Egyptian initiative to utilize Egypt's geographic location to establish a logistics centre for grains to address the challenges facing global food supply chains, especially in developing countries.

In conclusion, we would like to stress the urgency of addressing the challenges posed by food security and its linkages to conflict through a comprehensive approach that, at its core, is aimed at achieving sustainable development for developing countries while ensuring their stability and prosperity.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

**Ms. Oehri (Liechtenstein):** Liechtenstein welcomes this open debate on conflict and food security as hunger reaches new and concerning levels.

Conflict is a primary driver of food insecurity in seven of the eight cases designated as hotspots with catastrophic conditions by the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. It has a devastating impact on every part of a food system, from planting to distribution. It often exacerbates already dangerous conditions for

food insecurity. At the same time, food insecurity is itself a driver of further violence in regions like the Sahel, renewing the cycle of conflict and hunger. We must therefore take a holistic approach that addresses the catastrophe of hunger both as a cause and a consequence of conflict.

If hunger as such is an affront to human dignity, the weaponizing of food is an outrage and a criminal act. The intentional starvation of civilians is a war crime in international and non-international armed conflicts, as reflected in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We encourage all States to join us in ratifying the amendments to the Rome Statute presented by Switzerland, which deal with the inclusion of the starvation of civilians in internal armed conflict. In addition, Liechtenstein calls on conflict parties to adhere to their obligations under international law, as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 2417 (2018) and 2573 (2021).

In Ethiopia, armed conflict, along with a devastating drought, has driven more than 20 million people into food insecurity — a crisis that has persisted even after last year's ceasefire agreement. The conflict in the Sudan, where reportedly over 40 per cent of the population is experiencing hunger, also threatens to have knock-on effects in Ethiopia and throughout the region. The humanitarian crisis in Yemen remains considerable, and we condemn the recent killing of the head of the World Food Programme's office in Yemen, as well as of its workers in the Sudan earlier this year.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine exemplifies the outsized impact that conflict can have on food security both domestically and abroad. Throughout the country, farms have been mined, water systems destroyed and grain storage sites explicitly targeted in attacks. By withdrawing from the Black Sea Grain Initiative in mid-July, Russia once again acted in direct opposition to the security of millions of people worldwide. We also deplore the Russian veto blocking cross-border humanitarian aid into Syria last month (see S/PV.9371).

The challenges the world faces today — climate disasters, conflict, displacement and food insecurity — are deeply interconnected. We encourage the international community and members of the Council in particular to address those interlinkages through a human security perspective, which acknowledges that peace and security is about people and their survival, livelihoods and

dignity. We can begin by responding to the immediate needs of food-insecure people around the world, including through increased funding for the World Food Programme and humanitarian organizations, and urging parties to armed conflict to protect food systems and infrastructure and refrain from turning access to food into a weapon of war.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

**Ms. Leendertse (Germany):** Resolution 2417 (2018) has been a real landmark decision. In 2018, all Council members condemned the starvation of civilians as a means of warfare. Five years later, a permanent member of the Security Council is using food as a weapon. Russia has unilaterally withdrawn from the Black Sea Grain Initiative and is destroying grain warehouses and port infrastructure in Ukraine with missiles. The Kremlin is doing so in order to recklessly fill its war chest. As a consequence, global food prices are rising, and access to food is getting much harder for millions in need worldwide.

Germany urges Russia to immediately stop those attacks, to stop blocking Ukrainian ports and to rejoin the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We strongly support the efforts of the United Nations and Türkiye to reinvigorate the initiative. Ultimately, Germany calls on Russia to immediately withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. That will not only allow for grain exports to resume but will also restore peace to Ukraine.

Germany is strongly committed to combating global food insecurity and malnutrition. Food security and nutrition was high on our agenda during our presidency of the Group of Seven in 2022. Germany is the second largest donor to the World Food Programme, with a contribution of €1.1 billion in 2022. We support farmers and countries worldwide to produce their own food. We will continue our efforts to export agricultural goods from Ukraine through the European Union's solidarity lanes and other alternative routes.

Our joint efforts towards sustainable solutions need to be comprehensive and creative. Allow me to touch upon a few specific issues.

First, on climate change, the global community needs to drastically lower its emissions to fight the climate crisis and its negative repercussions on food

security and malnutrition in many parts of the world. It is part of the nexus between climate change and peace and security, and we believe that the Security Council should discuss the issue systematically and on a regular basis.

Secondly, we also believe that the Peacebuilding Commission can play a more systematic role in addressing those interconnected issues. It could, for example, give advice to the Security Council on country-specific situations in which armed conflict and climate change exacerbate food insecurity.

Lastly, we need to be creative and specific and find tailored solutions. For example, locally produced green nitrogen fertilizer has a lot of potential to support food security. It can increase resilience to price volatility and supply chain disruptions, while also contributing to reducing carbon emissions from the agricultural sector. We hope to develop that technology in innovative partnerships that enable more green growth.

Conflicts are among the main contributors to humanmade global food insecurity locally but also globally. Resolution 2417 (2018) is crystal clear in its obligations for all Member States. We call upon all Member States to respect them and start by stopping the use of food as a weapon of war.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

**Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico thanks the United States for convening this open debate, which we hope will allow us to identify specific actions to strengthen food security systems around the world and prevent future famines. We are also grateful for the briefings we heard this morning.

The joint and coordinated work of United Nations agencies is essential in order to effectively address and mitigate the growing impacts of the food security crisis. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's decision to appoint Ms. Ghelani as the focal point to prevent and respond in a timely manner to any threat of famine. Early-warning mechanisms are key in avoiding humanitarian catastrophes, but even more important is a timely and effective response in the face of such events.

It is unacceptable that, in a world of plenty, the number of people living in food insecurity is steadily increasing. In May last year, we spoke in the Council about the 193 million people who were food insecure

(see S/PV.9036). Today, 258 million people are affected. That is a real tragedy. An increase of that magnitude in just one year should be cause for concern for all of us, without exception. Although the causes of food insecurity are multidimensional, armed conflicts are undeniably a decisive factor in exacerbating it. In specific cases, such as those faced by Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mali, the Sudan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan, the situations are critical, which demonstrates that protracted conflict almost inevitably leads to food insecurity.

In our region, the most serious case is, unfortunately, Haiti. Half of the country's population — 4.9 million people — requires food assistance. In Haiti, a series of varied but interconnected factors have led to that tragic situation. The economic recession, natural disasters, the harmful effects of climate change and a decline in agricultural production, which has been exacerbated by an increase in armed violence and a sustained lack of investment, have led to the country's acute food emergency.

We must acknowledge that the world's food systems are interdependent. One armed conflict is capable of disrupting the entire food system. In that regard, Mexico hopes that the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which had had a positive impact on food prices and had consequently reduced food insecurity in the poorest countries, can be reinstated.

In conclusion, Mexico once again calls on all parties to conflicts to comply fully with the provisions of resolution 2417 (2018) — that is, to refrain from taking any action that could affect food production and distribution and from attacking objects that are vital to the survival of the civilian population, and to not lose sight of the fact that starvation as a tactic of war is an international crime that will not go unpunished.

**The President:** There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

*The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m.*