



Security Council Open Debate on Famine and Conflict-Induced Global Food Insecurity, 3 August 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations

Thank you, President, and allow me to thank you for organising today's important debate and wish you and your team every successful in your Presidency of the Council. Let me also thank the United Kingdom for presiding over the Council during the month of July.

I also thank today's briefers for their powerful and compelling testimony, analysis, and direct calls to actions.

Malta welcomes the adoption of this morning's PRST for today's meeting.

Today, the world is experiencing an acute, alarming rise in food insecurity. This threatens not only the lives of millions, but the societal fabric in a myriad of countries across the globe, representing a grave threat to international peace and security. Arresting this crisis will require a response commensurate to the catastrophe itself, in which over 258 million people globally will require urgent and sustained aid.

From Afghanistan to Haiti and Sudan, populations are already in crisis levels of hunger, with projections from leading famine, food and agriculture, and humanitarian organisations stating that peak global hunger is projected for this December. As we know, this crisis is not gender neutral. Food insecurity and gender inequality are interlinked as



women and girls often have less access and control over land, smallholder agricultural market support, and humanitarian assistance.

The conflict in Sudan has severely disrupted the production of crops throughout the country, with estimates that 40 per cent of the population, or nineteen million people, are already facing alarming levels of hunger.

As the conflict has disrupted farming, it has also disrupted sowing and harvesting. With limited access to seeds and fertilisers, the yield of the next season is in major doubt. Unless urgently addressed, this will compound hunger and guarantee human-induced famine in the months ahead. This situation would have catastrophic consequences for Sudan and the region, where agriculture is a principal source of income and livelihood for the majority of the population.

President

Just as conflict is a driver of hunger, violence can drive humanitarian operations out from areas of extreme danger. Violence often constrains access for medical and humanitarian organisations, therefore, leading organisations to work where they can rather than where they are needed most. Today we see instances of this in Haiti, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burkina Faso.

In civil conflict, humanitarian access can be denied by way of arbitrary and bureaucratic measures. This Council should never accept such



attempts to instrumentalise international law. Neither should we accept attempts at shielding such actions from this Council's scrutiny.

We urge the UN to continue detailing such access impediments in their reports to this Council and in the White Notes mandated by UNSCR 2417. While coordinating with the host state on the development of such documents, the UN must always assert its operational independence. Only by doing so can we collectively act in a timely manner.

Furthermore, this Council must take seriously its obligations to ensure accountability for those who have ordered, participated in the destruction, or prevented the functionality of civilian infrastructure critical for the production of food. Impunity only begets further violations. From General to Local Commander, consequences must follow from violations. To this end, we also call on the UN to work closer with warring parties, especially states, to ensure that adequate deconfliction of such infrastructure in times of armed conflict is conducted.

President

Malta regrets the Russian Federation's termination of its involvement in the Black Sea Grain Initiative. This Initiative had ensured the safe passage of over 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 reconsider the dramatic impacts this 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 orientated 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.

Thank you.