



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-seventh Session
"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

8-11 February 2021

**STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD
FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)**

Pre-recording for 47th session of the Committee on World Food Security

Monday, February 8, 2021 – opening session

The 47th session of the Committee on World Food Security is meeting at a time of unprecedented challenges to global food security.

The combined effects of conflict, climate extremes, and now COVID-19, mean that almost one billion people on the planet do not have enough to eat.

The Committee can, and must, play a vital role in rallying the support and the resources needed to address this global humanitarian crisis. That's why supporting your critical work is a shared priority for all three Rome-Based Agencies.

2021 is going to be another extremely challenging year, there's no doubt about it, so we all have to work together if we're going to get life-saving help to the many millions who need it.

And let me tell you, there are so many people on the edge who just can't wait any longer – they need help today.

Tragically, famine is once again knocking at humanity's door in 2021. In Burkina Faso, South Sudan and Yemen, there are already people living in famine conditions. And we believe 30 million people in 36 countries are in grave danger of starvation.

In the short-term, we need to go all-out to reach those at greatest risk. We can still pull desperate communities back from the brink – as long as we act now.

WFP is ready to play its part. Our deep field presence and global footprint means we can mobilize fast – as long as we get the resources we need.

But in the longer term, we need to transform our global food systems so they become more resilient and sustainable. The report being discussed by the Committee today underlines the urgency of this task.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and exposed the fragility of our food systems, too many people didn't have access to healthy, nutritious food. And that's not because there isn't enough to go around – it's because the systems which move our food from farm to fork don't function properly.

At WFP, we're working to strengthen food systems so they deliver for everyone – especially the most vulnerable communities.

We run post-harvest losses programs, giving farmers storage facilities to ensure their crops don't spoil before they can be sold.

We work with farmers' cooperatives, helping them access the agricultural tools and techniques they need to grow food commercially.

And we use our firepower as a major food buyer to create and support local markets. In 2020, we spent nearly \$700 million on local and regional procurement, buying over 1.2 million metric tons of food commodities.

WFP is fully committed to the success of the Food Systems Summit planned for 2021, and we're playing an active role laying the groundwork for its success.

WFP is the lead UN agency for Action Track 5 of the Summit – “Building resilience to shocks and stress” – and we're collaborating with a wide range of partners to come up with effective solutions. We're also working closely with the other Rome-based agencies to coordinate our efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen: the humanitarian crisis we face today is a stark reminder of how global food systems are failing millions of the most vulnerable families.

Even as we work to get help where it's needed most today, we have to make sure we plant the seeds for more resilient, more sustainable food systems tomorrow.

This is the best way – the only way – we can achieve our shared ambition of a future free from hunger.

Thank you.