



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Fiftieth Session

"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

10-13 October 2022

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

Excellences,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security is meeting as our planet faces a food crisis of unprecedented magnitude, with the threat of mass starvation and famine growing by the day.

At the start of 2022, we were already facing a perfect storm, caused by an upsurge in conflict, Covid's economic ripple-effects and climate change. And then, just when you think it can't get any worse – Ukraine happens.

Since the start of this conflict, food, fuel and fertilizer prices have skyrocketed around the world – plunging millions more into hunger. What was a wave of hunger is now a tsunami of hunger.

Today, 345 million people are marching toward starvation – more than 2.5 times the number before the pandemic.

Within this group, 50 million people in 45 countries are right on the edge of famine and risk being tipped over the edge without immediate and substantial humanitarian support.

We have a critical choice to make: act now to save lives and invest in solutions that build stability and peace, or see famines, mass migration, and more unrest and conflict in the months ahead.

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

But we need to work together and work fast to stop the situation from spinning out of control.

WFP is mobilizing all available resources to get help wherever it's needed the most. We have scaled up direct food and nutrition assistance to prevent famine. And this year we aim to reach 153 million hungry people – the highest number in our 60-year history.

But, tragically, our focus on staving off famine comes at a cost. As needs far outstrip resources, we are being forced to take food from the hungry to feed the starving.

All over the world, we're having to cut food rations and cash assistance to prioritize those in gravest danger – in Afghanistan, Chad, DRC, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen...the list goes on.

A coordinated effort across governments, financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society is the only way to avoid an even more deadly global hunger crisis in 2023.

We are at a critical crossroads. We will only be able to overcome this crisis if we work together. At WFP, we are ready to play our full part, and we are counting on the Committee and its members to rally the support and the resources needed to address the looming catastrophe.

But we have no more time to lose. The hungry people of the world are counting on us – and we must not let them down.