

50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security
Statement by Canada

The 2022 SOFI report draws a somber picture. Global hunger was already on a rapid rise due to climate change, conflict and COVID-19, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine is an additional, massive shock to a strained global food system. The current hunger levels are unprecedented: 811 million people are hungry; 345 million people are acutely food insecure; 50 million people are now at the brink of famine.

We have seen some improvements in the past weeks, with progress through the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the EU Solidarity Lanes to help export grains from Ukraine. This has helped consecutive monthly declines of the FAO price index, relieving pressure and uncertainty in global markets. Nevertheless, prices remain historically high, and we recognize that this has a major impact on countries already under financial strain. Meanwhile, the impacts of climate change on agricultural production are ever more clear. We are extremely concerned that the current food access crisis is set to become a food availability crisis, at a time when the most recent joint WFP-FAO Hunger Hotspots report already shows acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate further in 19 areas.

These facts show that Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine, including bombing civilian infrastructure and agricultural lands, and theft of agricultural goods and machinery, has led to a fall in food exports, put additional pressure on food prices, fuel and agriculture inputs such as fertilizer, and has resulted in the greatest shock to global food systems in years. The consequences of Russia's actions extend well beyond Ukraine's borders, making it a direct concern to every CFS member.

Russia's disinformation tactics try to suggest that the problem is sanctions. Let's be clear. The sanctions imposed on Russia are intended to stop the war, and are not the cause of agricultural disruption or the food crisis. Putin's aggression in Ukraine is. The decision to impose sanctions is not one that Canada takes lightly. We underscore that our measures against Russia do not, and will not, target essential exports of food and agricultural inputs to third countries, including fertilizer. We continue working hard to mitigate potential indirect effects on third countries by including relevant exceptions and clarifications in our sanctions legislation.

In the short term, we call on all partners to respond in coordinated manner coherently to the immediate crisis. This entails keeping trade open, including by sustaining the vital Black Sea Grain Initiative, and focusing on the specific challenges of fertilizer. At the same time, continued concrete responses to the climate crisis are essential, considering both mitigation, and increasingly, adaptation to build resilience. In these actions, we must remain inclusive and embrace gender equality and women's empowerment as an essential ingredient for transforming food systems.

Canada has made significant new commitments to humanitarian food and nutrition assistance, including a record \$615.5M allocated in 2022, providing short-term relief with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. We will continue working with our partners from developing countries to develop longer-term solutions with an emphasis on climate-smart agriculture, fertilizers, sustainable value-chains, inclusive food system governance, and food and nutrition safety nets. Canada stands ready to tackle this crisis together, multilaterally, and by playing our part in supporting the poorest and most vulnerable among us.

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