

**CDA Hunter's Remarks at
Committee on World Food Security 51st Session
October 23, 2023**

Thank you, Chair.

The SOFI Report makes clear that the world continues to face unprecedented global food security challenges, a “perfect storm,” as noted by a colleague a few moments ago.

Commodity shocks, natural disasters and climate change, conflicts, supply chain issues, and rising energy and input costs have driven up the cost of feeding people around the globe.

Two data points stand out from this year's SOFI Report. In 2022, nearly two and a half a billion individuals, largely women and people in rural areas, did not have consistent access to nutritious, safe, and sufficient food. And more than 100 million more people faced hunger compared to 2019.

We cannot address the world's needs in the same manner that we have done over the past 20 years. Business as usual will not help us meet the unprecedented needs that the world is facing, nor will it help us achieve the sustainable development goal of zero hunger by 2030.

Innovation holds the promise of a food secure future. Through new and innovative approaches and collaboration with farmers, the private sector, and other countries, we can improve agricultural productivity to nourish people and the planet.

Gender equity and equality are also essential in agri-food systems. Women make up 43 percent of the agricultural work force in the world, and agriculture is a major source of income for women.

Investing in women isn't just the right thing to do, but it is also the smart thing to do.

The CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment provide valuable guidance on how to advance gender equity in agriculture, and we look forward to their endorsement by this Plenary later this week.

The United States strongly encourages member states to increase their food security related contributions to the UN Agencies. We are proud to be the leading contributor to improving global food security and reducing hunger.

The United States provided over \$13.5 billion in food security assistance in the past year, with more than \$7 billion going to support FAO, WFP, and IFAD initiatives.

This year alone...

- The United States co-launched the **Agricultural Innovation Mission for Climate** – an international call to increase investment in climate-smart agriculture and food systems innovation, to mitigate climate change and adapt agriculture for the future.
- We partnered with the African Union and FAO to launch the **Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils** – or VACS. As part of USAID's Feed the Future initiative, VACS seeks to improve agricultural productivity and nutrition by developing diverse, climate-resilient crop varieties and building healthy soils.
- Last month on the margins of the UN General Assembly, the United States and Norway launched the **Financing for Agricultural Small-and-Medium Enterprises in Africa** fund - a first-loss fund

that will make investing in these businesses less risky, and thus draw in the private-sector investment we need to build more resilient food systems.

Chair, as recognized across the UN system, the SOFI Report rightly highlights how the devastating effects of Russia's illegal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine – now in its 20th month – continue to exacerbate global food insecurity and our collective ability to address these numbers and stem growing global hunger.

Russia must end this war, and it should do so immediately.

Additionally, we call on Russia to rejoin the Black Sea Grain Initiative and allow grain and food to reach people in need around the world. Russia's unilateral suspension of the initiative has disrupted food shipments, raised grain prices for those that can least afford it, and increased food insecurity. If Russia does not rejoin the agreement, it is responsible for increasing food prices, food scarcity, and hunger.

Finally chair, the challenge of global food insecurity —and let me repeat, global food insecurity, precisely what we are here to discuss today—is daunting but never hopeless.

As our colleagues have so eloquently said today: we must work together.

- Working together, we can provide farmers, ranchers, foresters, and fishers the tools to become productive, more resilient, and more sustainable producers.
- Working together to share knowledge and build coalitions, we can enhance global food and nutrition security.
- Working together, we can create more resilient, inclusive, and productive food systems which are critical to making progress

toward the Sustainable Development Goals and realizing the
ambition of the 2030 Agenda.

Thank you.

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IF NEEDED: Text Additions

- Chair, the United States is not in a position to join consensus on any substantive additions that go beyond what was agreed to in the Bureau. We encourage countries that wish for their views to be known to make their statements during the discussion for inclusion in the verbatim transcripts.

IF NEEDED: Sanctions

- I would also like to briefly address one misperception: U.S. sanctions imposed on Russia because of its aggressive war are not blocking Russia from bringing its grain to world markets. U.S. sanctions allow for the export of food and agricultural commodities, including fertilizer, from Russia. It is Russia that continues to destabilize global food and agricultural markets – not just through its war against Ukraine but also the Kremlin’s own self-imposed restrictions on agricultural and fertilizer exports. These restrictions have contributed to rising food costs for everyone, potentially pushing another 40 million people into poverty and hunger.

IF NEEDED: Topline Countering UCM Language

- *Economic pressure measures, including sanctions are a legitimate, important, appropriate, and effective tool for responding to harmful activity and addressing threats to peace and security. The United States is not alone in that view or practice.*
- *In cases where the United States has applied sanctions, we have done so in accordance with international law and with specific objectives in mind, including as a means to promote a return to rule of law or democratic systems, respect for human rights and*

fundamental freedoms, or to respond to threats to international security.

- *The United States has taken concrete actions to minimize unintended consequences of sanctions, including advancing, along with Ireland, the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 2664, adopted in December 2022, which created a carveout for humanitarian efforts in all UN sanctions regimes.*
- *This historic initiative eased the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need while helping ensure the aid is not diverted or abused by malicious actors. Most importantly, this effort makes it easier for humanitarian actors to provide urgent assistance.*
- *For health-related issues: These humanitarian carve-outs have permitted COVID-19 and health-related transactions and activities, ensuring sanctions do not impede the provision of goods and services to meet health needs and attain our shared global health goals.*
- *Those who suggest sanctions are inherently unjustified or problematic advance a false narrative, and we cannot support this language.*

IF NEEDED: UCM Language is Verbatim from the 2030 Agenda

- *We support reaffirming our commitment to full implementation of the 2030 Agenda but should not cherry-pick language out of the 2030 Agenda to highlight certain provisions over others. That approach is unnecessarily duplicative and leaves out other key elements in the 2030 Agenda that would also need to be highlighted.*

- *Member States have discussed this issue extensively across UN agencies, including the April 2023 Financing for Development Forum, where consensus was reached to not include such language in the outcome document. We should follow that precedent to ensure consensus.*