

SE27: No famine on our watch: a new approach in a changing world

Organized by: Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC) – EU, FAO, IFAD, UNHCR, UNICEF, USAID, WB and WFP

Summary of the side event

The side event was convened to gather high-level perspectives on the persistent failure to prevent famine and on the measures required to turn the tide on famine and worsening food crises. Drawing on the membership of the Global Network Against Food Crises, as well as other partners, the event brought together a range of actors from the UN system, civil society, NGOs, IFIs and the EU to build on previous efforts to develop an effective approach to preventing famine.

The event was moderated by **Rebecca Richards (Head of the WFP GNAFC unit)** who first introduced the event and the panelists. **Rania Dagash Kamara (WFP AED for Partnerships)** gave a keynote speech to open the event. She underscored her own experience growing up in Sudan and facing reoccurring famine in her region and emphasized that, despite having sufficient evidence to understand food crises and to anticipate famine, we have still been unable to stop famine and address its root causes. Instead, she asserted that we must improve our response, which entails better coordination and strong leadership and political will at local, national, regional, and global levels.

Following this, the moderator opened the panel discussion. The panelists discussed our efforts to anticipate and prevent famine from a range of perspectives, highlighting the challenges faced and discussing solutions to improve our collective efforts in the future. **Leonard Mizzi (Head of Unit Sustainable Agri-Food systems and Fisheries, INTPA)** underscored that donors were facing very limited resources and pointed to the need to derisk investments, further explore innovative financing and to find the right instruments for financial institutions to do scalable investments in nutrition, in food fortification and in smarter food systems to make progress on preventing famine. **Nimo Hassan, Director at Somalia NGO Consortium**, noted the immense challenges for countries like Somalia, who are in a protracted crisis, to break the reoccurring cycle of famine, as well as the importance of localization in our response. **Habib Mayar (Deputy General Secretary g7+)** also gave examples of localized solutions to preventing famine and underlined the need

to advocate for peace to combat famine. **Manuel Sanchez-Montero (Advocacy and Institutional Relations Director at Action Contre la Faim)** asserted that we must view food security as human security and push for early, decisive political action to address conflict, including through humanitarian diplomacy and implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2417. Finally, **Sarah Simons (Program Manager, Partnerships & Quality Team, Agriculture and Food Global Practice, World Bank)**, detailed the World Bank's preparedness plans for food and nutrition security crisis as one solution to address and prevent famine.

Some common points by the panel were the need to improve coordination in our response and to ensure we are acting in a proactive and anticipatory manner, rather than only reacting when a crisis hits. It was noted that this also requires appropriate and innovative financing. Panelists emphasized that it is essential to address the root causes of famine and, in particular, to look for solutions to conflict as a primary driver of famine and acute food insecurity. Panelists also stressed the importance of localization in preventing famine, by listening to the needs of affected communities and investing and trusting in local solutions. Finally, multiple speakers pointed to the need to link current famine prevention efforts to the work of the CFS.

The floor was then opened to the audience for questions and statements. These included **Paola Termine** from the HLPE-FSN who relayed some findings from their issue paper on Conflict-induced Acute Food Crisis. **Pat McMahon** asked the panelists how we could integrate this issue of famine prevention and acute food insecurity into the CFS. **Vincent Van Halsema (WFP)** gave a statement underlining the importance of social protection in famine prevention efforts.

Rein Paulsen (Director, Office of Emergencies and Resilience Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) then delivered some concluding remarks, noting the work of the Global Network Against Food Crises on the issue of famine prevention and the need to continue to collaborate on famine prevention efforts going forward.