

HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE FAO COUNCIL

8 APRIL 2022

STATEMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Item 3: Impact of the Ukraine-Russia conflict on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr. Chair,

1. The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement of France delivered on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. In addition thereto, the Czech Republic makes the following statement.
2. The Czech Republic expresses full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The Czech Republic condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal act of aggression against Ukraine, with an active involvement of Belarus. Russia grossly violates international law and the UN Charter, and seriously undermines international security and stability.
3. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has triggered unprecedented humanitarian crisis with massive number of casualties and injuries to civilians and resulted in more than 4.1 million Ukrainian citizens seeking refuge to the neighbouring countries, including the Czech Republic, and further 6.48 million internally displaced people so far. In total, 13 million people are estimated to be in urgent need of humanitarian assistance across Ukraine.
4. The Czech Republic demands that Russia immediately cease its military actions, withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders and abide by UN General Assembly resolution titled "Aggression against Ukraine" supported by 141 states at the 11th Emergency Special Session. The Czech Republic resolutely supports Ukraine's inherent right of self-defence and the Ukrainian armed forces' efforts to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity and population in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. At all times Russia must respect its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and including respect to the protection of civilians, women and children. Russia also needs to stop its disinformation campaign and cyber-attacks.
5. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has direct damaging consequences for the overall Ukrainian economy including its agricultural and food sector and the situation is deteriorating every day as Russia continues in its aggression against Ukraine. Along with

an unprecedented worldwide surge in food, fertilizer and energy prices at the levels never seen before, combined with the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has far-reaching consequences not only for Ukraine facing food crisis but also for the world food security, nutrition and agricultural systems with potential substantial shortages of exports of some essential agricultural commodities such as grain and oilseed as illustrated in the FAO's preliminary assessment reports.

6. The Czech Republic asks FAO to inform Council on the latest figures from the Food Price Index that are to be released just today. This Council needs to be fully informed and consider it in its deliberations.
7. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has also negative global humanitarian impacts, as Ukraine is a major grain supplier to the WFP and to the countries in several regions of the world, which have been already facing severe food insecurity.
8. The imminent threat is to the Ukrainian agricultural production in the upcoming season. This dramatic situation is the direct consequence of Russia's aggression against Ukraine where Russian army targets farmers, fields, machinery, food production and storage capacities as well as transport and export infrastructure including ports and ships in the Black Sea, in contravention to the Additional Protocols of the Geneva Conventions and the Resolution No 2417 (2018) of the UN Security Council.
9. As regards sanctions against Russia, they have only one purpose – to target ability of Russia to finance the aggression. They are primarily directed at the Russian government, the financial sector and the economic elites. They do not target the Russian agricultural sector. Any negative impact on agricultural production in Ukraine, and therefore on global food security, is a result of the destabilising effects of Russia's aggression.
10. The main purpose of this Special Session of the FAO Council is to address the implications on Ukraine and world food security, nutrition and agriculture arising from Russia's aggression against Ukraine.
11. The Czech Republic therefore requests that the FAO Council:
 - Affirm that Russia's aggression against Ukraine, with the involvement of Belarus, is in violation of the object and purpose of the FAO as enshrined in the Preamble of its Constitution, and therefore in violation of Russia's and Belarus' obligations under the same Constitution;

- Call for immediate withdrawal of the Russian army from Ukraine as demanded in resolutions adopted recently by the UN General Assembly as well as stated in resolutions of other UN organizations;
- Endorse *en block* a draft decision as circulated in the document CL 169/4. The Czech Republic fully supports all the actions requested in the aforementioned draft decision.

It will give the FAO a mandate to take more swiftly comprehensive immediate, mid- and long-term actions to both provide necessary support and help to Ukraine and to address world food security, nutrition and agriculture issues arising from the Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

12. Finally yet importantly, it is vital that the FAO continues to accelerate the scale up of its staff and resources to address the consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine on global food security, nutrition and agriculture. Specifically in Ukraine, the Czech Republic requests that the FAO swiftly extend the scope of its support and actions to other regions of Ukraine in addition to those where it has been already present. The Czech Republic also requests that the FAO regularly include in its reports and briefings assessments of the damage done to Ukraine's agriculture and food sector and related infrastructure.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.