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Debates on Food Security, Infrastructure, and Humanitarian Aid

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the EU has taken different steps and measures to support Ukraine but also to tackle the growing issue of food insecurity. On 16 May 2022, [four EP committees](#) exchanged views with various representatives of the [FAO](#), the Ukrainian Parliament, NGOs, and the Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine Oleksandr Kubrakov. This marks the beginning of a worrisome period.

With regards to the global food market, the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee debated the impact of the war in Ukraine and the situation of the global food markets with Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN ([FAO](#)). Members of the Ukrainian Parliament participated in exchanging their views.

Looking at the humanitarian situation, the Petitions Committee listened to different proposals, suggesting a humanitarian corridor, supranational visas for refugees, and the call for a Human Rights Body within the EU.

The Transport and Tourism Committee discussed with Ukraine's Minister of Infrastructure Oleksandr Kubrakov the latest situation on the ground, the transport sectors needs

and the EU's role in helping to alleviate the consequences of the invasion. The minister pointed out that 30% of civilian and military infrastructure in Ukraine has been destroyed and many ports at the Black Sea are closed or blocked, which resulted in a major blow for the Ukrainian economy but also increased food insecurity and raised inflation globally. The goal is therefore to scale up cargo transport to avoid a world food crisis and strengthen the Ukrainian economy.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

European Commission monitoring of the agricultural markets

On 19 May 2022, the European Commission implemented **Regulation (EU) 2022/791** to receive regular notifications on the levels of stocks of cereals, oilseeds, and rice.

In order to have a better understanding and overview, but also to anticipate possible market disruptions and prepare accordingly, the information gathered on levels of stocks of the main commodities of cereals (like wheat, maize or barley), oilseeds (like rapeseed, sunflower, soya bean), and rice is vital.

Member States will have to update the European Commission on a monthly basis on their stocks of the grains and derived products as well as the quantities held by producers, wholesalers, and operators. The regulation enters into force immediately and the first notifications are expected at the end of July.

For transparency reasons, these will be published by the European Commission.

Being part of the **Communication** on “Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems” these actions aim at enhancing global food security but also at supporting farmers and consumers in the EU.

In this way, the Commission is planning to foster and contribute to global food security as net food exporter and top agri-food producer to assist countries dependent on these exports, like Ukraine and the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa).





2022 Global Report on Food Crises

The 2022 Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC 2022) highlights the alarming deterioration of acute food insecurity in 2021 in numerous food-crisis countries/territories. Nearly 193 million people were in crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent in 53 countries/territories where comparable data were available in 2021 – as a result of intensified conflict, significant economic shocks, and some of the most severe weather extremes in recent years, or a combination of these drivers. (Source: 2022 Global Report on Food Crises)

The event on 4 May 2022 was hosted by the [FAO](#) and [Global Network Against Food Crises](#) in order to launch the [2022 Global Report on Food Crises](#) and introduced and moderated by Rein Paulsen and David Kaatrud. Opening remarks were offered by [FAO](#) Director General Qu Dongyu, [WFP](#) Executive Director David Beasley, and [UNICEF](#) Executive Director Catherine Russell, and finalised with a video message by the European Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen.

Qu Dongyu opened the session with one of the findings of the report, namely that the situation deteriorated and more people in rural and developing areas will increasingly face hunger again. He urged all participants to work together to stop the rising of acute hunger. David Beasley then added to this with reference to Ukraine as “breadbasket” of the world and that the war will have devastating consequences and impacts on a global scale. More people will struggle from acute food insecurity if “we” as international community do not get ahead of this development. Catherine Russell highlighted how this development also disproportionately affects children who will suffer from the worst form of acute malnutrition, also known as child-wasting. She called for more protection of the food markets and early detection of malnutrition and prevention. But she also added that it should not take a food crisis to protect children. This was then closed with a video message from Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen, calling for international collaboration in tackling the crisis. This was followed by the key findings of the report presented by Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist at the [FAO](#), and Arif Husain, Chief Economist at the [WFP](#).

Subsequent to this a panel discussion including different actors ranging from government representatives to civil society took place. All participants, with their respective knowledge and insight offered different views on how to tackle the crisis but also emphasised that more cooperation is needed on all levels of society and that funding from governments or international organisations needs to be more accessible, flexible, and long-term to have a lasting effect in confronting this crisis.

Closing remarks were given by Susanna Moorehead, Chair of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the [OECD](#), who once again motivated all the participants to act collectively and responsibly. She also called for a reform of the international humanitarian system and to put pressure on governments.



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WORLD BANK GROUP / Brief

Food Security Update | Rising Food Insecurity in 2022

Many countries are facing increasing levels of food insecurity, reversing years of development gains. The impact of the war in Ukraine adds risk to global food security, with food prices likely to remain high for the foreseeable future and expected to push millions of additional people into acute food insecurity. In the [brief](#) published by the [World Food Bank](#), the issue of rising food insecurity is being discussed.

While the outlook for global food supplies remains optimistic, food prices increased sharply due to elevated input prices which, combined with high transport costs and trade disruptions due to the war in Ukraine, are raising import bills. That affects poor and developing countries the most, because they are heavily dependent on food imports. Maize and wheat prices are 27% and 37% higher, respectively, compared to January 2022, while rice prices are about 17% lower. Domestic price inflation continues to rise around the world—with 94% of low-income, 89% of lower-middle-income, 83% of upper-middle-income, and 70% of high-income countries experiencing high food price inflation (greater than 5%) and many seeing double-digit inflation. In most countries, food price inflation exceeded overall inflation. According to the World Bank's April 2022 Commodity Markets Outlook, the war in Ukraine has altered global patterns of trade, production, and consumption of commodities in ways that will keep prices at historically high levels through the end of 2024 exacerbating food insecurity and inflation.

Numerous countries are experiencing high food price inflation at the retail level, reflecting labor shortages, a sharp rise in the price of fertilizer, currency devaluations, and other factors. Rising food prices have a greater impact on people in low- and middle-income countries since they spend a larger share of their income on food than people in high-income countries.

Food prices were already high before, and the war is driving them even higher now. Commodities that have been most affected are wheat, maize, edible oils, and fertilizers. Global

commodity markets face upside risks through the following channels: reduction in grain supplies, higher energy prices, higher fertilizer prices, and trade disruption due to shutting down of major ports. Over the coming months, a major challenge will be access to fertilizers which may impact the food production across many crops in different regions. Fertilizer prices surged in March, up nearly 20% since January 2022 and almost three times higher compared to a year ago. Russia and Belarus are major fertilizer exporters, accounting for 38% of potassic fertilizers, 17% of compound fertilizers, and 15% of nitrogenous fertilizers.

On April 13, 2022, The heads of the [World Bank Group](#), [International Monetary Fund](#), [United Nations World Food Programme](#), and [World Trade Organization](#) released a joint statement calling on the international community for urgent action to address food insecurity, to keep trade open and support vulnerable countries, including by providing financing to meet the most urgent needs. Following the start of the war in Ukraine, trade-related policies imposed by countries have surged.

Globally, hunger levels remain alarmingly high. In 2021, they surpassed all previous records as reported by the [Global Report on Food Crises 2022](#), with close to 193 million people acutely food insecure—nearly 40 million more people than during the previous high reached in 2020. Conflict and insecurity are identified as the main drivers of increased food insecurity. In addition, [WFP](#) and [FAO](#) warned that acute food insecurity could worsen in 20 countries or areas during June to September 2022. Rapid phone surveys done by the World Bank in 83 countries show a significant number of people running out of food or reducing their consumption in the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reduced calorie intake and compromised nutrition threaten gains in poverty reduction and health and could have lasting impacts on the cognitive development of young children.

Launch of The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022



On 6 July 2022, the Launch of the [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#) was part of the [ECOSOC HILPF \(High Level Political Forum\)](#). The event was opened with an introductory video highlighting the key outcomes of the SOFI report. Overall, it became clear that we are not on track to achieving zero hunger by 2030 as outlined in the SDGs. The report therefore urges governments to rethink their spending of public resources.

Different high-level speakers were then given the floor, like the Ambassador of Botswana to the UN, who congratulated the authors of the report which is a result of UN inter-agency cooperation and also stressed that the launch of the report comes at an important time. The collective pledge for a better world needs to be strengthened and the report indicates the major drivers of crises: pandemic, conflict, and climate change. It also becomes clear that recent measures are not enough to tackle the current crisis. The agri-food system needs transformation and sustainable solutions, and he urged people to rethink their policies.

This was followed by a video message of the President of the UN General Assembly. He pointed out that the driving forces of food insecurity are growing and getting more complex which has an impact on the supply chain. He explained that the SOFI report can help guide new policies and this can be only successful if everyone works together, pools resources, and fosters collaboration.

The next speaker was the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, who explained that we need a coordinated effort to resolve regional disparities and to put the focus back on achieving the SDGs by 2030. She also highlighted that women

and girls are disproportionately affected by the ongoing crises. She urged governments to do more and review their current policies on the agri-food sector. She stated that zero hunger can be achieved if the food system is transformed to be more resilient.

This was followed by the Director General of the [FAO](#) who emphasized that bolder action is needed in order to tackle the weaknesses of the current agri-food system and in order to increase its resilience. The need for a more efficient system is clear and all key players should work together.

The president of [IFAD \(International Fund for Agricultural Development\)](#) pointed out that we have to learn from the past and look to the future in order to be better prepared for the next crises. Hunger for instance, is concentrated in rural areas of developing countries, which thus need to be supported. The state of food insecurity in the world is precarious.

The next speaker was the Executive Director of [UNICEF](#), who explained that, children are suffering the most in the global nutrition crisis and [UNICEF](#) calls for more funds to be allocated to children for treatment of malnutrition.

In addition to that the Executive Director of the [WFP](#) added that the latest [WFP](#) analysis shows that many people are at the brink of starvation and that there is a need to act now and everyone should work together.

The session was concluded by the Director General of the [WHO](#) and the Chief Economist of the [FAO](#) who presented the technical aspects of the report.



FAO / Webinar



Agrifood Systems transformation for a Resilient World: Responding to Global Crises

The side event to the **High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)** was opened by Dr. Máximo Torero Cullen, the **FAO Chief Economist**, who stated that the world is facing significant challenges and the agricultural sector needs to be transformed in such a way that it creates employment and has a positive impact on the environment. He emphasized that there is a need to improve the system and at the same time increase its resilience, like for instance with the help of early warning systems to anticipate the risks and better prepare countries. In line with this it is also necessary to have a plan on how to build back better than before after facing a choke.

He then gave the floor to **FAO Director-General QU Dongyu** who explained that we cannot waste any more time and there is a need for more investment. He highlighted that challenging times lie ahead of us and the rising prices, especially for food, affect the most vulnerable of the society. He proposed three concrete solutions: first, to invest in countries that need the support the most, second, to improve policies for productivity and sustainability, and third, to use output and input in agri-food systems better and more efficient. An example he gave for the latter was the increased use of irrigation systems in urban land.

Torero Cullen then opened the round of questions for the dialogue with representatives from the different agencies, like the **Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA)**, the **Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**, **UN Women**, the **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**, Mexico, Ghana, the **Society for International Development** as well as to the **Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)**.



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