



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**  
United Nations Security Council  
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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**DURING**

**THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE**

**ON**

**MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY:  
CONFLICT AND FOOD SECURITY**

**MAY 19<sup>TH</sup> 2022 at 11:00AM**

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**Thank you Mr President for giving me the floor.**

1. I congratulate you, Honourable Secretary of State, for the United States' able stewardship of the Security Council this month.
2. And I thank you for your invitation to this important open debate. And also express the gratitude of our delegation to you for leading insightful conversation on this important subject of food security over the last two days.
3. I also thank the Secretary-General and the other distinguished briefers for their insightful remarks.

**Mr. President,**

4. Throughout history, sharp and rapid rises in food prices have often been a root cause of social unrest, political instability and violent conflict.
5. Even today, the price of bread in many countries is a reliable indicator of rising political tensions.

6. The fact that we are having this discussion in the Security Council is proof that the recent rise in food insecurity may lead to heightened threats to international peace and security.
7. The facts, to say the least, are alarming. In the Horn of Africa, an extreme drought could cause up to 20 million people to go hungry this year, and many of those people will be women and children.
8. This emergency is making it more difficult to pursue and sustain peace. It is making entire populations dependent on food aid, and is becoming a part of conflict dynamics in our region as militants and belligerents exploit the emergency to entrench their control and access to financing.
9. There is a strong connection between the food shortages in Yemen, Afghanistan, the Sahel and parts of the Horn of Africa and conflict-related instabilities.

10. In Somalia, Al-Shabaab — an Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist group — last year alone displaced nearly 30,000 people from 42 villages. Its imposed blockades in various towns in the Bakool region leading to shortages of food and essential commodities since early 2021.
11. This weaponization of food is a matter that should be of concern to all of us at the United Nations Security Council.

**Mr. President,**

12. More recently, the war in Ukraine is causing unprecedented global food and energy supply disruptions. With Ukraine and Russia as major global suppliers of wheat, sunflower oil, barley as well as fertiliser, the conflict-induced disruptions have driven food prices sharply higher.
13. We commiserate with the people of Ukraine and we understand their suffering which is real and regrettable. But we also wish to note that this war is leading to many more victims around the world.

14. Against this backdrop, Kenya appreciates the Secretary General's initiative in establishing the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance.
15. Its recommendations offer us a useful starting point in the immediate actions we need to take in response to the immediate pressures we are facing, particularly in Africa and in the developing countries.
16. However, colleagues, we must do more than take short term actions in the hope of a return to the status quo. That status quo, even before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, was filled with expanding and protracted famines. The status quo must be unacceptable to all of us. We must address it with alacrity, through cooperation and through a new kind of multilateralism. A multilateralism that uplifts and a multilateralism that focuses on the weakest of our peoples.
17. We need to learn from COVID-19 and the pandemic that it has spawned throughout the world. That we need to learn that manufacturing capability and production must spread into different regions of the world.

18. In the same way that the pandemic invites us to seek fundamental change, this food crisis calls for us to reach for bolder solutions.
19. One of the least appreciated but most consequential changes underway should inform this conversation. That is the impact of population growth in Africa and in the developed world.
20. There is increasing certainty in the projection that Africa's population may reach 2.5 billion by 2050 and this population will move from the rural areas to urban settings, leaving Africa with fewer farmers and fewer hands to produce food.
21. The ability to provide this enormous population with affordable food, decent jobs, security and other public goods, means that Africa must have competent states. States able to deliver value for their people. And therefore as we tackle food security, let us tackle the capacity challenges in Africa. Let us build strong states with strong capabilities.

22. Recognising this, H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta made food security one of his Big Four Agenda items in his second term. This has led to higher investment in the agricultural sector; subsidies for fertiliser for small-scale farmers; and a focus on increasing the incomes of farmers through improved market linkages based on ICT platforms.
23. There is a lot more that we need to do in Kenya, and that is the case worldwide, particularly in Africa to ensure that food insecurity does not become an existential threat for all of us.
24. Lack of ambition, innovation, and a lack of courage will be the only impediment to finding solutions for the multiple crises that are beginning to grow throughout the world.
25. It is for this reason that we look forward to welcoming all of you to the Second UN Ocean Conference that Kenya will co-host with Portugal from June 27<sup>th</sup> to July 1<sup>st</sup> this year in Lisbon. This conference will give us the opportunity to harness and integrate the dividends of the oceans into a sustainable and equitable food future. We

must use all the food available to mankind, we must use our oceans and we must use our lands to increase productivity for our people.

26. Allow me therefore to share some proposals on how we can act together in a spirit of change, in a spirit of multilateralism and in a spirit of cooperation so that we can be that generation that answered a historic call to action at a time such as this.

27. **First:** let us shift Africa's place in the global trading system. We cannot no longer solely be the source of raw minerals and cash crops while importing food to feed the fastest growing population in the world.

28. We have to modernise our agricultural systems not only for large scale farmers but also for small poor rural farmers. Africa must move beyond rain-fed agriculture. We need to build more fertilizer factories, seed factories, pesticide factories, we need research institutions and we need to provide our farmers with the data, the know-how and the will to invest in agriculture.

29. A big part of that is ensuring that in addition to feeding domestic demand, agricultural markets in Europe and other wealthier regions must also open their doors to African food products. The end of unnecessary tariffs must go.
30. The countries with the largest shareholding in the international financial institutions need to insist on a fundamental shift in the financing and enabling agricultural and food systems transformation. This must include climate change financing with an emphasis on adaptation to assist those who suffer from climate shocks perpetually.
31. Opening up the fiscal envelope to enable investment in food systems can be achieved through a series of measures by the IFIs, the G7, and UN agencies and funds.
32. **Second:** It is essential to build a bridge between humanitarian assistance, development and peacebuilding. Long-term food assistance should actively integrate peacebuilding approaches by prioritising a

humanitarian–development–peace nexus. If we are to improve food security needs, greater cooperation and coordination between actors in humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding is fundamental.

33. Added to this, the Security Council must demand that all parties to armed conflict comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law by taking constant care to spare civilian objects, including objects necessary for food production and also unlocking embargoes and blockades that prevent the movement of food.
34. **Third:** Local response mechanisms and capacities to food crises and conflict need to be better understood and integrated into relief operations as well as national response strategies.
35. **Fourth:** The international community must unite in upholding the values of market openness with the understanding that food security is a transnational problem.

36. **Fifth and even more crucially:** to establish crucial to establish and build on existing global emergency mechanisms that include debt restructuring, debt delay and food aid given that traditional approaches must not only respond adequately to extreme global food shocks, but they must also build and strengthen nations.

**Mr. President,**

37. Breaking the link between conflict and hunger, and harnessing the potential of food security to contribute to peace demands our collective action and objective collaboration. We must therefore strive to uphold Resolution 2417 because our aspirations for development, security, and human progress rest on achieving food security for all.

**I thank you.**