



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Intervention of

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to the United Nations

**Open VTC at the Security Council on
Food Security Risks**

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Mr. President,
Distinguished briefers,
Dear colleagues,

First and foremost, Belgium wants to commend OCHA, WFP, FAO and their partners for their continued dedication in the field. We are also grateful for alerting us over the deteriorating food security situation in the four countries discussed today, as requested by resolution 2417.

Our distinguished briefers have just warned us about the drama unfolding in these four countries: the level of needs, the risks of famine and the large funding gaps for humanitarian actors. In **the DRC** alone, more than 21 million people are at crisis levels of acute food insecurity. This is almost a quarter of the Congolese population. In **Northeast Nigeria** non-state armed groups and extremists deliberately obstruct access to more than 1.2 million people and kill humanitarian workers. The situation in **South-Sudan** is fueled by escalating violence and insecurity, compounded by severe flooding. Aid workers are being attacked there as well. **Yemen** will slide into famine if the disruptions to the food supply continue. The country's intensifying conflict and lack of access undermine attempts to control desert locusts, further driving food insecurity.

These countries are of our highest concern. Moreover, let's not forget that worldwide, 135 million people are suffering from acute hunger, a number that could double if we don't take action to curb the economic impact of COVID-19.

Once again, we witness conflict driving hunger and intensifying the economic decline. We witness climate shocks such as floods and droughts forcing displacement and pushing millions of people to their limits. They endure not only all of these shocks at the same time – conflict, violence, climate events, displacement, economic crisis, COVID-19 – but are now even facing the threat of extreme food insecurity and possibly famine.

Distinguished briefers, we hear your call for preventive action and implementation of resolution 2417. I agree that the Security Council and member states should take action to prevent that conflicts further cause or aggravate hunger:

- States should **respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law**, by encouraging Member States to ensure accountability through national investigations. If national jurisdictions fail to take

action, the Security Council has the tools to trigger a range of **international investigation and accountability mechanisms**.

- **Humanitarian access** to the most vulnerable is key. The Council should continue to sanction individuals or entities obstructing humanitarian access.
- We continue to support the **Secretary General's call for a global ceasefire** to ensure adequate response to the pandemic and remind the conflicting parties of resolution 2532. We also recall that **COVID-19** does not exempt governments from their obligations under international, human rights and humanitarian law, and call on all Member States to avoid that COVID-related restrictions would curtail the ability of humanitarian actors to provide assistance.
- You have called for scaling up **support for humanitarian operations to meet the needs**. Belgium is convinced that flexible funding is the best way to give this support (therefore most of our total humanitarian support of 197MEUR is allocated in a flexible manner). This year, Belgium has supported the CERF (Central Emergency Response Fund) and the Country-based Pooled Funds with a total of 69 M EUR, including 5 million EUR to the CBPF's of Nigeria , 5 million EUR to Yemen, 8,5 million EUR to the DRC and 2 million EUR to South Sudan. We have been a loyal and reliable donor for over a decade to the Immediate Response Account Fund of WFP's funding facility and the FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA). In addition, Belgium has been supported innovation programs (of WFP among others), such as drone programs or block chain-driven refugee responses. Belgium has pledged a total of 22 MEUR additional funding to the COVID-response and we are trying to do more.

We thank the Secretary-General for living up to the task given to him by resolution 2417, to alert the Security Council when the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in the context of armed conflict occurs. Distinguished briefers, you have raised the alarm, we cannot and should not ignore it.

I thank you.