

## 50. Items relating to food and security

### A. Food aid in the context of conflict settlement: Afghanistan and other crisis areas

#### Initial proceedings

##### Deliberations of 4 April 2002 (4507th meeting)

At its 4507th meeting, on 4 April 2002, the Security Council included in its agenda the item entitled “Food aid in the context of conflict settlement: Afghanistan and other crisis areas”. The Council heard a briefing by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP).

In her briefing, the Executive Director provided a broad overview of the subject of food aid in the context of crises. Using examples from around the world, she outlined a number of ways in which food aid could assist in conflict settlement by saving lives; acting as a stabilizing factor; and contributing to long-term recovery. While there would still be hunger, malnutrition and localized and sometimes severe shortages of food in the future, she noted that the international community had achieved one part of the goal set out at the World Summit for Children: ending major famines. She also raised the issue of the security of humanitarian staff, expressing disappointment over the small number of cases in which perpetrators of violence against United Nations staff had been brought to justice.<sup>1</sup>

In their statements, Council members paid tribute to the outgoing Executive Director of the World Food Programme, the first woman to hold that position, for her 10 years of service, and welcomed her successor. Most speakers agreed that the issue of food aid was relevant to the work of the Council, acknowledging that WFP delivered food to many States whose names appeared on the Council’s agenda.

Several members also touched on WFP efforts to define food security strategies in the context of conflict prevention.<sup>2</sup> In that respect, the representative of France, echoed by the representative of the Syrian Arab

Republic, saluted the development of a WFP “hunger map” as a way to better prevent crises.<sup>3</sup>

A number of speakers focused on the need for United Nations humanitarian agencies to improve coordination and hire local resources and personnel.<sup>4</sup> In that respect, the representative of the Russian Federation was convinced that a leading role in ensuring such coordination in Afghanistan should be played by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup>

Several speakers concurred with the Executive Director on the need to ensure the security of United Nations humanitarian workers.<sup>6</sup> The representative of the United Kingdom maintained that 188 unsolved cases involving the deaths of United Nations staff was a scandal.<sup>7</sup>

The representative of Mexico stated that humanitarian assistance should be granted within the context of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of States, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>8</sup> The representative of the Russian Federation similarly held that food aid should in no instance be used as a tool for interference or for influencing the course of conflicts.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> S/PV.4507, p. 6 (France); and p. 7 (Syrian Arab Republic).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 8 (Mexico); S/PV.4507 (Resumption 1), p. 2 (Bulgaria); p. 3 (Guinea); p. 4 (Mauritius); and p. 7 (Cameroon).

<sup>5</sup> S/PV.4507 (Resumption 1), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> S/PV.4507, p. 10 (United Kingdom); S/PV.4507 (Resumption 1), p. 3 (Guinea); and pp. 4-5 (Mauritius).

<sup>7</sup> S/PV.4507, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> S/PV.4507 (Resumption 1), p. 8.

<sup>1</sup> S/PV.4507, pp. 2-5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 6 (France); p. 7 (Syrian Arab Republic); and p. 9 (Norway); S/PV.4507 (Resumption 1), p. 2 (Bulgaria); and pp. 2-3 (Guinea).

The representative of the United Kingdom cautioned that one had to be careful in using food aid outside acute emergency situations, because food aid in conflict situations was highly sensitive and, if misused, could have a direct and immediate effect on the dynamics of violence. He held that systems had to be put in place to minimize food aid diversion, and the use of food aid should have a clear exit strategy. He expressed the view, echoed by the representative of the Russian Federation, that the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should work towards a

closer and more comprehensive understanding of conflict issues and how the system could deal with them more effectively.<sup>10</sup>

The representative of Bulgaria stressed the need for the international community to intervene at the right time to mobilize awareness about a crisis and believed that the Council should take appropriate measures, including targeted sanctions, when access to those who needed humanitarian aid was denied.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> S/PV.4507, pp. 10-11 (United Kingdom); S/PV.4507 (Resumption 1), pp. 7-8 (Russian Federation).

<sup>11</sup> S/PV.4507 (Resumption 1), p. 2.

## **B. Africa's food crisis as a threat to peace and security**

### **Initial proceedings**

#### **Deliberations of 3 December 2002 and 7 April 2003 (4652nd and 4736th meetings)**

At its 4652nd meeting, on 3 December 2002, the Security Council included in its agenda the item entitled "Africa's food crisis as a threat to peace and security" and heard a briefing by Mr. James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme. Statements were made by the representatives of Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, the Russian Federation, Singapore, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The Executive Director declared that the challenge for the World Food Programme was to respond to emergencies in a way that strengthened individual educational opportunities, health, nutrition, livelihoods, food security and the creation of assets. Referring to the causes of severe hunger in Africa, he pointed to bad weather in the greater Horn of Africa region that threatened to put as many as 15 million people at risk, and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa that had resulted in 11 million orphans. Civil strife, a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons, landmines, the issue of genetically modified organisms, and issues related to governance and macroeconomic policy further complicated the state of affairs. He held that stronger and more consistent funding for humanitarian aid was required in the short term, while a major opening up of economies, a strengthening of the free market and substantial investment in basic agricultural infrastructure and

nutrition were necessary in the long haul. The Executive Director stated that the focus of WFP was to feed hungry poor people, while abiding by the principles of accessibility, accountability, transparency and a zero-tolerance policy for foolishness or the inability to work throughout a country. As an example of the Programme's ability to stay away from political issues, he pointed to the fact that WFP was the only international agency that had offices outside the capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In conclusion, the Executive Director observed that 40 to 50 million children of school age in Africa were not in school but could be drawn there by a school feeding programme. He stressed that education was crucial in addressing the HIV/AIDS issue and providing children with an opportunity to think about alternative lifestyles.<sup>12</sup>

Following the briefing, most speakers expressed concern at the gravity of the situation in Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa. The representative of the United Kingdom emphasized the importance of addressing the link between conflict and food insecurity, as in his view each could cause or reinforce the other.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the representative of the Russian Federation observed that overcoming the food crisis in African countries was a comprehensive, multifaceted challenge, requiring both the resolution of armed

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<sup>12</sup> S/PV.4652, pp. 2-5.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.