

Roundtable Session 1

Recurrent crises and sustainable solutions: building resilience and addressing rising food insecurity

20 June 2022, 10:00-13:00

PBC Chair's remarks

As we find ourselves in serious food security challenges across the world, more so in vulnerable countries, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this timely roundtable to share the Commission's experience in helping to address emerging and compounded challenges, vulnerabilities, and instability.

In the last few years, the PBC has been working with concerned countries in providing support for durable solutions, as sought by them, grounded in the notion that peace, security, human rights, and development are all interlinked. This includes support for strengthening local, national, and regional capacities to better withstand, adapt, and quickly recover from stresses and shocks. The PBC has also been working in partnerships with the Peacebuilding Fund, which has provided \$903 million in assistance to projects and initiatives in 65 countries between 2017 and 2021.

Allow me to share a few observations and suggestions from these PBC engagements, including past joint engagements with ECOSOC.

First, we need to act fast to ensure that food insecurity, which has been exacerbated in many parts of the world by a rise in food prices, does not result in increased violent conflict. In 2022, about 180 million people globally may be facing acute food crisis or worse conditions.¹ 49 million people are one step away from famine. If the current reduction in food exports, restricted access to fertilizers, rising food, energy and delivery costs, and financial distress continues,² combined with deficits in international cooperation and governance challenges, an additional 19 million people are expected to face chronic undernourishment by 2023.³ Food insecurity is deepest in conflict-affected countries. Sixty percent of the world's undernourished people live in areas affected by conflict while 75% of people with acute hunger globally live in countries that are exposed to compounded challenges and face humanitarian emergencies.⁴ The more prolonged the crisis, the worse the food security outcomes, forced displacements, and may contribute to relapse into conflict,⁵ disproportionately impacting women, children, persons with

¹ See Global Network Against Food Crises Report "[2022 Global Report on Food Crises](http://www.fightfoodcrises.net/fileadmin/user_upload/fightfoodcrises/doc/resources/GRFC_2022_FINAL_REPORT.pdf)."

² The FAO food price index is at near-record levels and 20.8 per cent higher than at this time last year. For details, see <https://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/en/>.

³ Forthcoming State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 Report.

⁴ Global Network Against Food Crises, "[2022 Global Report on Food Crises](http://www.fightfoodcrises.net/fileadmin/user_upload/fightfoodcrises/doc/resources/GRFC_2022_FINAL_REPORT.pdf)."

⁵ [i4348e.pdf \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/en/).

disabilities, and those in vulnerable situations. The Commission wishes to underscore the need to act early to avoid acute food insecurity and famine risk, and to ensure the proper functioning of food systems and markets as a critical element in addressing the root causes of conflict and poverty and building sustainable recovery. It is also vital that International Humanitarian Law is fully respected, including full humanitarian access and protection of civilian infrastructure.

Second, we must continue to pay attention to persistent regional inequalities. During the Commission's separate deliberations in support of peacebuilding in Central Africa, West Africa and the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, and the Great Lakes region, local representatives and experts sought support from the international community in addressing food insecurity. In the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin sub-regions, climate change and environmental degradation have exacerbated the root causes of food insecurity. We must also note that after Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean has the highest number of countries facing the triple crises of food, energy and finance, that the Secretary General has highlighted. Moreover, in this region, the lingering economic effects of COVID-19, weather extremes and insecurity continue to drive high levels of humanitarian food assistance needs. The Commission wishes to echo its past calls for targeted approaches to address the root causes of food insecurity and humanitarian emergencies to tackle, where relevant, the adverse effects of climate change, including by strengthening adaptive capacities including those of communities and to ensure effective mechanisms governing access to natural resources. The Commission takes note of the recommendations that have been brought to its attention by local actors in these contexts, including for increased financing for women and youth-led initiatives and calls for stronger alliances with regional and international financial institutions for more integrated and sustainable efforts, including addressing the issue of over consumption to effectively respond to climate change.

Third, the Commission takes note of the continuing demand for Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) support in areas where displaced/returnee populations and host communities experience tensions or conflicts related to access to land/arable land. Between 2017 and 2021, the Peacebuilding Fund supported countries, at their request, tackle challenges relating to transborder farmer-herder conflicts, land tenure, scarcity of natural resources, and to support climate change adaptation strategies with full participation of women and youth. The Commission stresses the need to continue identifying creative peacebuilding financing and non-financial contributions, such as capacity building and technical cooperation, for lasting peace and sustainable development, including through regional and South-South and triangular cooperation.

Fourth, as the devastating effects of conflicts, challenging recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have pushed the most affected countries further off track from meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 2 (zero hunger), national

ownership and collective international collaboration is the key to successfully advancing the SDGs. It is important to ensure that communities are able to absorb the effects of crisis, overcome disruptions and adapt, which leads to long-term sustainability. National and local briefers who have briefed the Commission called for additional support, including capacity building, responsive, effective and accountable governance.

Allow me to conclude with a call for reinvigorated multilateral action. Building on the joint ECOSOC-PBC efforts to promote global solidarity, peer-learning, and partnerships, I wish to underscore the need for coherent international action and effective financing mechanisms in support of nationally-owned and -led and inclusive efforts to support food security and peacebuilding.

Thank you.