



Council of the
European Union

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FAO 8
AGRI 103
DEVGEN 50
RELEX 369
FOOD 18
SUSTDEV 61
CONUN 65

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Draft letter requesting the FAO Director-General to hold a special
emergency session of the FAO Council

March 18, 2022

His Excellency Dr. Qu Dongyu
Director-General
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome

The Honorable Hans Hoogeveen
Independent Chair of Council
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome

Dear Mr. Director-General, Mr. Independent Chair of Council:

We, the undersigned FAO Council members, numbering ##, pursuant to FAO General Rules, Rule XXV, paragraph 1, hereby request the urgent convening of a one-day Special Session of the FAO Council to address one main substantive agenda item: the Implications on World Food Security and Agriculture arising from the Aggression by the Russian Federation Against Ukraine.

We also request that the proposal in annex to this letter, containing an explanatory memorandum and a draft decision, be circulated as documentation together with the provisional agenda of the emergency special session, under the item as proposed above.

On March 14, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for an immediate cessation of the war “to avert a hurricane of hunger and a meltdown of the global food system.” He added, while millions of people in Ukraine “face hunger and dwindling supplies of water and medicine” and the UN – including FAO and the Rome-based Agencies – is rushing critical food, cash, and lifesaving aid into the country, “this war goes far beyond Ukraine. It is also an assault on the world’s most vulnerable people and countries...Now their breadbasket is being bombed... food, fuel, and fertilizer prices are skyrocketing, supply chains are being disrupted... and this is hitting the poorest the hardest.”

FAO is the lead UN agency for global food security and agriculture, as underscored by the Secretary-General. As FAO knows well from its work to build back better and help members recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, developing countries were struggling even before this war with record food price inflation and other burdens caused by conflict and climate change. FAO’s analysis dated March 11 (*Information Note: The Importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for Global Agricultural Markets and the Risks Associated with the Current Conflict*) examines significant impacts of the crisis on Ukrainian and Russian agriculture, commodities and other input

markets, and skyrocketing global food prices all affecting the food security of millions in dozens of countries worldwide.

This Special Session is therefore necessary in order for the Council, as part of its functions under FAO General Rules, Rule XXIV, paragraph 1 (b), to advise on any issues pertaining to the world food and agriculture situation, specially any such issues of an urgent nature which would call for action by the Conference, Regional Conferences, the Committees referred to in Article V, paragraph 6 of the Constitution, or the Director-General.

We request this Special Session of Council be convened no later than April 8, respecting the minimum two-week notice.

Sincerely,

Enclosures.

Cc: Chief of Cabinet Godfrey Magwenzi
Secretary-General Rakesh Mukhtoo

Provisional Agenda

Special FAO Council

1. Implications on World Food Security and Agriculture arising from the Aggression by the Russian Federation Against Ukraine

Annex

[#]th Emergency Special Session of the FAO Council

[Rome, XX April 2022]

Proposal of Actions by FAO in Relation to the Implications on World Food Security and Agriculture Arising from the Aggression by the Russian Federation Against Ukraine.

Executive Summary / Explanatory Memorandum

As noted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution adopted on 2 March 2022 at its 11th emergency special session, the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine is having an impact on increased food insecurity globally, as Ukraine and the region are one of the world's most important areas for grain and agricultural exports, when millions of people are facing famine, the immediate risk of famine, or are experiencing severe food insecurity in several

regions of the world.

Ukraine is the fifth largest wheat exporter in the world, with a global market share of 10 percent between the periods of 2016/17 and 2020/21. Ukraine's maize export share over the same period was even more significant, averaging 15 percent and conferring it the spot of the world's fourth largest maize exporter.

The conflict is having a major impact on member states – especially developing countries - in North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, specifically, which import large quantities of food from Ukraine and the region.

The Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine will thus negatively affect the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of reaching Zero Hunger by 2030, for which FAO is the custodial lead agency, as well as negatively affect other SDGs for which FAO is a custodian or contributing agency.

The UN Secretary General has called on the international community to “do everything possible to avert a hurricane of hunger and a meltdown of the global food system.” He also stressed that the war is hitting the poorest the hardest around the globe.

Urgent and decisive action by the FAO is therefore needed.

Across the UN system, the UN General Assembly, the UN Security Council, the Human Rights Council and other specialized agencies, such as UNESCO, IAEA,

IMO, ITU, ICAO and UNWTO, have held or are holding special, emergency or dedicated sessions of their Governing Bodies to consider the matter. Other international or regional organizations (*inter alia* OSCE, OECD, Council of the Baltic Sea States, African Union) have reacted as a matter of urgency.

Suggested action by Council

The Council is invited to adopt the following decision:

“The Council,

Endorsed and reaffirmed the Resolution adopted on 2 March 2022 by the United Nations General Assembly at its 11th emergency special session (A/RES/ES-11/1);

Expressed the gravest concern about the impact of the conflict on increased food insecurity globally, as Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and the region are one of the world’s most important areas for grain, oilseed, and other agriculture exports, when millions of people are already facing hunger or the immediate risk of hunger or are experiencing severe food insecurity in several regions of the world;

Affirmed that the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation, [enabled by Belarus], is in violation of the objectives and purposes of the Organization as set out in the Preamble of the Constitution and of the obligations accepted by the Russian Federation [and Belarus] as Member[s] of the Organization;

Demanded that the Russian Federation immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine, including the targeting of Ukraine's food supply, infrastructure, distribution, and food and agricultural product storage facilities, and refrain from further aggravating the world food security and agriculture situation;

Stressed the role of FAO, in coordination with other United Nations entities and relevant bodies, to address within its mandate the consequences of the conflict within Ukraine and on world food and agriculture security;

Instructed the Director-General to leverage FAO's role as a knowledge institution to closely monitor the implications on world food security and agriculture, including through the regular analysis and provision of data to members on food prices, fertilizer and other input prices, commodity markets, supply chain matters arising from the conflict, including coordinating as appropriate with other Rome-based agencies, International Financial Institutions, and agriculture and food research institutions such as the International Food Policy Research Institute,

Requested the Director-General to review and make recommendations including on the conflict's implications for FAO's implementation of its Strategic Framework (2022-2031) and Programme of Work and Budget (2022-2023), as well as develop policy advice for FAO members most impacted to establish or enhance national preparedness and response plans, [coordinated through the UN Food Systems Summit Hub].

Requested FAO to collaborate with the G20 to enhance the Agricultural Market Information System;

Requested the Organization to organize monthly briefings open to all Members with a specific focus on the implications of the conflict on the food security of specific regions at each briefing and report to the Council on the above-mentioned topics in this regard;

Decided to add at its next regular session in June 2022 an agenda item on “The effect of the aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation, on food insecurity globally, in particular the effects for the most vulnerable” and requested the Director-General to submit as a matter of urgency a report containing:

- an overview of the work of FAO in Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters,
- an immediate response plan to address to the most pressing food security needs of the Ukrainian population, including how to preserve ongoing and upcoming planting and harvest seasons in Ukraine and any means to protect and preserve the transport and export of existing food and agricultural exports from Ukraine, and a medium-term recovery assistance plan designed to restore Ukraine’s agriculture potential when the aggression has ceased and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine is restored,
- an immediate response plan to evaluate the effects of the crisis and bring assistance to the developing countries most affected by the disruption in food supplies and soaring of food prices resulting from the conflict, and
- a longer-term plan, consistent with the Strategic Framework (2022-2031), for building resilience to global shocks into food systems.