

20 June 2025

FOOD ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE PRESS RELEASE

The 21st Session of the Food Assistance Committee was held in London on Friday 20 June 2025 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Max Lamesch, Director of Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Europe, Luxembourg.

Parties of the Convention, namely, Australia, Austria, Canada, European Union, France, Japan, Luxembourg, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United States of America participated in the session.

Algeria attended the Session as an observer.

The Committee reviewed the global situation regarding hunger and malnutrition and current food emergencies against the backdrop of recent developments including the outlook for world markets for grains, rice, oilseeds and pulses.

The IGC Secretariat, provided an update on the latest situation in grains, oilseeds, rice and pulses markets, including prices, trade, shipping freight and some macro-economic developments. The Secretariat also gave an overview of the IGC's projections for the 2025/26 marketing year, when world grains production is projected reaching a fresh peak of 2,375m t, a 3% increase on the prior season. After three successive drawdowns, carryovers may recover to 585m t (581m), including 146m (131m) in the major exporters. Amid generally favourable weather prospects, rice output is also seen expanding to a new high of 541m t. Population growth is expected to underpin gains in rice consumption, while trade is projected to expand on rising African requirements. Stocks are also set to see further growth, led by larger inventories in the major exporters. The Secretariat also gave an update on pulses production prospects, where increased outturns of broad beans and dry peas will more than offset a mild decline in chickpeas.

Members also provided information on responses to food emergencies in the most vulnerable regions and on planned operations and recent policy developments, with particular emphasis on food security. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) provided written statements for the session.

The Chair updated members on the draft 2024 Narrative report. The final report will again highlight the contributions of all Parties to the Convention, with a particular emphasis on Innovation and new technologies to optimise Food assistance.

A seminar titled *"The role of emerging technologies, including AI, in enhancing food assistance"* was held in conjunction with the session. The seminar highlighted the role that innovative and digital technologies play in the current humanitarian landscape and presented three projects demonstrating how innovation can drive progress on food security initiatives. Among the projects presented, two are currently supported by Luxembourg. The first focuses on innovative financial instruments—such as Catastrophe Bonds—that aim to transfer the risk of severe drought-induced food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa from public actors to private investors. The second project features a strategic partnership between the World Food Programme (WFP), the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), and the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST), with the objective of harnessing artificial intelligence to address challenges linked to food insecurity and acute hunger. To conclude, NASA Harvest presented the RAAPID initiative, which uses remote sensing and AI to deliver timely and actionable insights on food system shocks, especially in areas with limited ground access or urgent assessment needs.

Speakers from NASA Harvest and Geoglam, and the WFP Innovation Accelerator contributed to the seminar.

PR(FAC June 2025)