



Food Assistance Convention

FOOD ASSISTANCE CONVENTION 2019 ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

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ACRONYMS

ADC	Australian Development Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CAR	Central African Republic
CALP	Cash Learning Partnership
CBPF	Country Based Pooled Funds
CBT	Cash-Based Transfers
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CH	Cadre Harmonisé
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EFSN	Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FAC	Food Assistance Convention
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FbF	Forecast-based Financing
FSIN	Food Security Information Network
GB	Grand Bargain
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GFNC	Global Network against Food Crises
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GRFC	Global Report on Food Crises
HDP	Humanitarian-development-peace nexus
HEB	High-energy Biscuits
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICSP	Interim Country Strategic Plan
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
RbA	Rome-based Agencies
ROK	Republic of Korea
RUF	Ready to Use Foods
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global emergency hunger remained at its highest level in 2019. Almost 135 million people in 55 countries, or 16% of the population analysed, were classified in crisis condition or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above)¹. This marks the highest number in the four years since the Global Report on Food Crises was launched. The persistence of food crises was due in large part to multiple ongoing humanitarian crises linked to protracted conflicts, often in combination with exacerbating elements such as climate shocks, economic instability, and widespread poverty. The complexity and protracted nature of these food crises calls for the commitment and determination of the international community to respond through a holistic manner, working across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, and intervening with the necessary assistance in a timely and efficient manner, in alignment with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

The continuous increase of people affected by food insecurity emphasizes the ongoing relevance of the Food Assistance Convention (FAC). The FAC represents a continued commitment by its Parties² to contribute to global food security and to improve the ability of the international community to respond to emergency food crises, to save and change lives, to reduce hunger, to improve levels of nutrition, to create livelihoods, and to strengthen the resilience and self-sufficiency of the most vulnerable populations. Parties of the FAC commits themselves to be part of the solution to these challenges by pledging an annual contribution targeted at the improvement of food security. Parties of the FAC prepare an annual financial and narrative report, describing and highlighting their individual contributions to food security in the world. These reports, which are summarized and consolidated in the annual Food Assistance Convention Report, helps to improve data sharing and transparency among Parties and relevant actors.

In 2019, all Parties fulfilled or substantially exceeded their commitments and contributed with a total of almost six billion US dollars to the improvement of worldwide food security. Key responses were carried out in collaboration with various agencies and programmes of the United Nations, national governments in the developing world, and civil-society organisations. Geographically, food assistance was provided in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific region. At an interventional level, food assistance was provided as in-kind food distribution, cash-based transfers, food vouchers, fortified food programmes, school feeding programmes, work-for-food programmes, nutrition-targeted interventions, and much more.

¹ GRFC, 2020, p. 20.

² Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Japan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States of America.

GENERAL CONTEXT

Global Food and Nutrition Situation in 2019

In 2019, almost 135 million people in 55 countries faced crisis level of hunger (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above), thus increasing the total number of people by 22 million from 2018³. Conflicts, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Burkina Faso, and Niger, combined with drought and economic shocks in Guatemala, Haiti, Pakistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe, resulted in a large increase of people living in food insecurity.

Geographically, Africa remains the greatest challenge in 2019, with a total of 73 million acutely food-insecure people. Substantial challenges also exist in the Middle East and Asia, with a total of 43 million people, followed by 18.5 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Europe, half a million people live in food security, predominately as a result of conflict.

For the second year in a row, three conflict-affected countries – Yemen, DRC, and Afghanistan – had the largest populations of food insecure people, representing 32% of the world's total. Ten countries – Yemen, DRC, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria, the Sudan, Nigeria and Haiti constituted the worst food crises and accounted for 88 million (65%) of the total world population in IPC/CH 3 or above. Conflict and insecurity remained the primary driver of food crises in 2019, although the largest increase of food insecurity was a result of economic shocks, particularly in Venezuela, Haiti, and Zimbabwe. The second largest increase of food insecurity was a result of adverse weather extremes, particularly in Central America, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia.

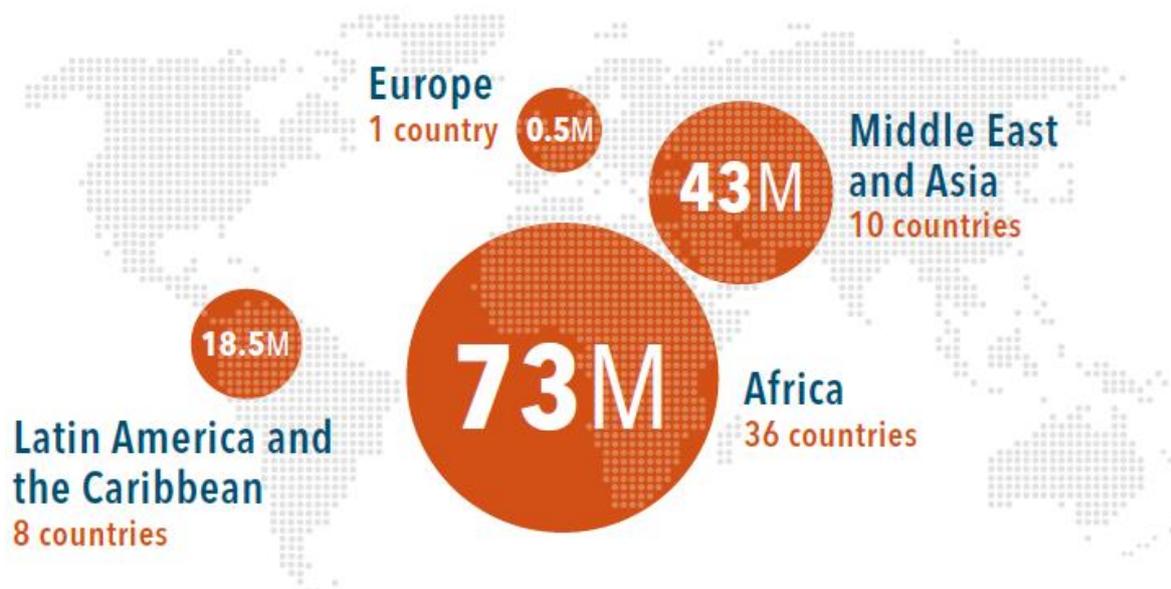


Figure 1: Numbers of acutely food-insecure people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) by region.⁴

³ The increase from 2018 to 2019 is partly a reflection of increased geographical data coverage. See GRFC 2020, p. 20.

⁴ GRFC 2020, p. 20

The Food Assistance Convention

The overall goal of the Convention is to save lives, reduce hunger, improve food security, and improve the nutritional status of the most vulnerable populations by:

- i) Addressing the food and nutritional needs of crisis-affected populations through commitments made by the Parties to provide food assistance that improves access to, and consumption of, adequate, safe and nutritious food;
- ii) Ensuring that food assistance is appropriate, timely, effective, efficient and based on needs and shared principles;
- iii) Facilitating, information sharing, cooperation, and coordination, and providing a forum for discussion in order to improve the effective, efficient, and coherent use of the Parties' resources to respond to identified needs.

The Food Assistance Convention was adopted on 25 April 2012 in London⁵, and took force in January 2013 following the deposition of instruments of ratification by the initial signatories. The FAC represents a continued commitment by the 16 Parties⁶, comprising the current signatories to contribute to global food security, and to improve the ability of the international community to respond to emergency food situations and other food needs of developing countries. It is the latest in a long series of multilateral cooperation instruments in operation since 1967, including the Food Aid Convention 1999. The 2012 Convention expanded the traditional focus of previous Food Aid Conventions that focused exclusively on commitments of in-kind food aid for direct consumption. The new Convention includes a broader range of eligible activities and food assistance products, including cash, vouchers and products intended for protecting livelihoods, a greater focus on nutrition, as well as a commitment to improved transparency and accountability. Under the FAC, the Parties make minimum annual commitments (in monetary value) that provide a predictable and secured response which is an important signal to partners, namely the United Nations (UN), International and National Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and others, and more importantly, a manifestation to people affected by crises that the international community stands with them.

The Food Assistance Committee governs the FAC. It is a forum for member states to share information and best practices on food assistance. It meets twice a year in June and November. The sessions of the Committee are scheduled either before or after the World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Board (EB) Meetings. The International Grains Council (IGC) has been designated as the Secretariat of the FAC, to assist the FAC Chair⁷ with the associated tasks. In 2019, Switzerland successfully completed its term as chair at the 11th Session of the Committee, and handed over to Denmark. Unfortunately, the increase in serious and large-scale crises that occurred simultaneously in 2019 emphasizes the continued relevance of the FAC.

Reporting on Food Assistance Operations

Following each calendar year, Parties provide a financial and a narrative report on food assistance operations, detailing how their respective commitments were fulfilled. The standardized financial and narrative reporting template helps to improve the quality of the data and transparency of the commitments and contributions of the reporting Parties. For the year

⁵ https://treaties.un.org/doc/source/signature/2012/CTC_XIX-48.pdf

⁶ Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Japan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States of America

⁷ Per date of accession: Denmark took over from Switzerland in January 2020, with Canada as Vice-Chair.

2019, the minimum annual financial commitments and actual total contributions of the 16 Parties who have ratified, accepted, and/or approved the FAC are set out in the following overview:

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Commitment in 2019 in US\$ (million)</i>	<i>Contribution in 2019 in US \$ (million)⁸</i>
Australia	55.6	70.9
Austria	1.7	1.7
Canada	187.5	272.5
Denmark	32.6	82.8
European Union	391.9	566.8
Finland	6.7	18.8
France	43.6	43.6
Japan	91.7	206.2
Republic of Korea	40.8	40.8
Luxembourg	4.5	11.8
Russia	15	45
Slovenia	0.03	0.1
Sweden	21.1	314.7
Switzerland	34.3	85.5
United States	3,500	4,200
Total	4,427.03	5,961.20

Table 1: Overview of commitments and contributions⁹

In 2019, the total assistance amounted to **USD 5,961.20 million**. All reporting members fulfilled their obligations, with several Parties substantially exceeding their commitments in 2019. All members increased or maintained their grants and thus, in line with the principles of the FAC, remained steadfast in their commitments to contribute to global food security, and to improve the ability of the international community to respond to emergency food situations in as timely a manner as possible.

In 2019 cash-based transfer programming (CBT) continued to receive increased attention and acceptance as an adopted transfer modality for multi-purpose assistance by FAC Parties. In-kind donations were reported by five parties, namely the European Union, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States of America (USA).

A substantial part of the financial commitments reported by the Parties consisted of earmarked or lightly earmarked contributions, predominately at either country or activity level. The vast majority of total contributions were provided fully in grant form. Multi-year funding and un-earmarked contributions was predominately provided to WFP, and to a lesser extent through the CERF and country-based pooled funds (CBPF's).

Humanitarian and developmental partners varies across Parties, although organisations such as WFP, FAO, OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, UNRWA, and ICRC were common reoccurrences. Civil society organisations were also, although to a lesser extent, included in the FAC 2019 reports.

⁸ All currency conversions into USD were made using a table provided by the FAC Secretariat

⁹ Data gathered through the FAC annual financial reports 2019 provided by members

In 2019, the FAC members responded to a range of food crises around the globe, predominately in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, but also in South Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific region. Reoccurring country or region-specific interventions were reported for Bangladesh/Myanmar, Burkina Faso, DRC, the Sahel, South Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, and to a lesser extent in the Bahamas, CAR, Haiti, Malawi, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe, among others.

Committee Meetings

During 2019 FAC members met at the 12th Session of the Food Assistance Committee, which was held on Friday 15 November 2019 in London, UK. The previous day's seminar titled "*The Contribution of Food Assistance to Peace*" had included presentations from the ACF, Canadian Food Grains Bank, FAO, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Oxfam, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the WFP. The seminar addressed the current challenges of protecting the populations affected by the crises from hunger and malnutrition and discussed how delivery of food assistance could be leveraged for preventing conflicts and building peace.

At the FAC Session, IGC gave an overview of the global grains and rice markets and introduced the Secretariat's new Africa delivered rice price tool, which tracks Africa's rice import costs and can help to assess the impact of imported rice on domestic market prices in the region. The Executive Director of IGC added that if the rice tool proved useful it could be further developed to track wheat and maize import costs in the region. He reminded members of the Secretariat's cost of trade project which he had introduced at the 11th Session and invited members interested in accessing the data to contact the Secretariat.

The Committee appointed Ms. Mette Thygesen, Director, Department of Humanitarian Action, Migration and Civil Society, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Denmark) as the next FAC Chairperson. Ms. Tara Carney, Director, International Humanitarian Assistance Operations Division (Canada) was appointed Vice-Chairperson.

Denmark, as incoming Chair, stated that the FAC field mission in 2020 would be going to Ethiopia and was an opportunity for learning and for donors to see the best way to deal with the nexus in practice. Ethiopia was a good context to look at it as it was faced with both climate change challenges and with intercommunal conflicts. As donors, they also needed to be more coherent in supporting both emergency life-saving missions and more long-term development co-operation, strengthening livelihoods and building resilience and capacities.

Field Mission

As a follow up to the preliminary discussions carried out in June 2019 an option paper was developed, discussed and the destination Ethiopia was decided on at a Skype meeting on 24 September 2019. This Concept paper was discussed at the FAC meeting on 15 November 2019.

The FAC has been instrumental in promoting, among some of the World's leading donors, the shift from food aid to food assistance. The FAC promotes a needs-based approach, the use of the full toolbox of delivery options (in kind, vouchers, cash and a combination of all three), encourages local and regional purchases and takes a resilience/nexus approach. The field mission to Ethiopia was the 3rd in a series of field trips.

The main purpose of the donor mission was to discuss and experience food assistance, food security and nutrition in its different forms in the context of Ethiopia and gain an understanding of the different challenges that humanitarian and development partners, government and communities face. New approaches to food assistance and context-specific interventions were to be explored and discussed with the partners present in Ethiopia.

The EU delegation in Ethiopia, the Royal Danish Embassy in Ethiopia, WFP and numerous other partners put together a very impressive programme with a strong focus on food security and assistance in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the role of the government of Ethiopia in reaching SDG2. This included the following programme items:

- Meeting with the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and the Head of OCHA – HD nexus approach to food security in Ethiopia and in the region
- Meeting with the African Union – the role of the AU in food security in the region.
- Meeting with international and national NGOs active in emergency and development approaches to food security (US Food for Peace, Mercy Corps (market development), Relief Society, Catholic Relief Service (runs a consortium of food assistance), DanChurchAid.
- Meeting on African Risk Capacity – exploring insurance mechanisms Field trip to visit communities supported by the Productive Safety Network Programme
- Visit to WFP home-grown School Feeding operations in Dire Dawa
- Visit to FAO projects –Early Warning – Early Action in Dire Dawa

Unfortunately, the timing of the field mission collided with COVID-19 spreading and many FAC members had to cancel their attendance last minute. The mission went on with a smaller group but due to COVID-19 restrictions from several of the organizers, the mission was ended already four days after having begun.

OVERALL ASSISTANCE BY FAC MEMBER STATES

Australia

In 2019, Australia provided all food assistance as untied, cash-based support to WFP. Total contributions amounted to USD 26.42 million as core, un-earmarked funding under its multiyear partnership with WFP, which WFP allocated to country operations according to need. In addition, Australia provided USD 46.37 million to specific crises with minimal earmarking, including through multi-year funding commitments for WFP's operations in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Finally, Australia dedicated USD 1.39 million to support WFP's school feeding program in the Asia Pacific and beyond.

Throughout 2019, Australia maintained food assistance for populations affected by crises, protracted conflict, food insecurity, and displacement in countries across Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa. In Asia, Australia supported the provision of food assistance in response to; the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh and Myanmar; humanitarian needs in Afghanistan and Pakistan; and in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Timor-Leste, totalling USD 26.74 million. Assistance of USD 14.25 million targeted conflict-affected populations in the Middle East and USD 5.39 million was directed to assistance in Africa. Australia has also been a longstanding supporter of school feeding in Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Kenya - providing USD 1.39 million in 2019.

In 2019, Australia assisted the immediate humanitarian needs of conflict-affected and displaced people in Bangladesh/Myanmar, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and South Sudan, with a focus on refugees, returnees and host communities. Furthermore, Australia provided longer-term support for increasing resilience of conflict and disaster affected communities.

Australia continued in 2019 to provide support for the protection, inclusion, and empowerment of women and girls, a key priority for its humanitarian policy and programming. Additionally, Australia supported the implementation of The Interagency Standing Committee Disability Inclusion Guidelines, launched in November 2019, following the introduction of the new UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.

Australia supported a Cash Learning Partnership (CALP) regional workshop in Bangkok in May 2019, where lessons on the use of cash from the Pacific, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan the Philippines and Vietnam were exchanged and coordination between country, regional and global levels strengthened.

The Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) program in Bangladesh, funded in part by Australia, was reviewed as a model for good gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) practice in a six-country study undertaken by WFP on cash and gender equality. The study, published in 2019, highlights how cash-based transfers can contribute to GEWE, not only as ends in themselves but also for food security outcomes.

Austria

In 2019, Austria responded to food insecurity and humanitarian crises caused by conflict and natural disasters alike. Austria again exceeded its financial commitment within the framework of the Food Assistance Convention (FAC) of USD 1.670 million by a slight margin, increasing the Austrian commitment within the reporting period to total contributions amounting to USD 1,780 million.

The food assistance contributions on behalf of Austria committed within this reporting period were implemented via the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP). In 2019, ICRC received USD 112,000 in response to the Emergency Appeal in Burkina Faso, thus enabling improved food security by assisting displaced, returnee or refugee populations with food coupons. Austria contributed with USD 1,670,000 to WFP's Ethiopia Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP), in order to assist focus areas of crisis response, resilience-building, and addressing the root causes of food insecurity, in line with the key objectives of providing relief to conflict-affected populations and rebuilding livelihoods in areas of relative stability. The Austrian contribution enabled WFP to provide specialized nutritious food, including fortified food products. WFP furthermore provided unconditional cash-based and in-kind food assistance, livelihood support and emergency school feeding to crisis-affected people, focusing infant children and pregnant and lactating women.

In Burkina Faso, which has been a priority country of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) since 1992, Austria can draw on long-standing experience and expertise, which enables dialogue amongst donors and coordination on the ground, in order to ensure efficient and effective support. Austrian partners in Burkina Faso includes ICRC, WFP, UNICEF, and civil society organisations. Through contributions to WFP activities in Ethiopia, Austria

supported innovative approaches and collaboration among partners, including the Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment, which brought together WFP, FAO, and UN Women to focus on women's empowerment in rural settings.

Canada

In 2019, Canada provided USD 272.5 million in a FAC-eligible contributions, substantially exceeding its commitment of USD 187.5 million. This funding was used to respond to increasing food-security needs driven in large part by conflicts, forced displacement and climate. Of the funding provided by Canada, approximately 70 percent was for eligible food security, nutrition, and livelihood assistance at country level. 19 percent was provided as un-earmarked long-term institutional support to multilateral partners, providing them flexible funding to help them to plan and respond to new needs, emerging crises, or critical funding requirements. The remaining 11 percent was provided to non-governmental organisations to support their food security activities at country-level.

Canada has continued to promote gender responsive humanitarian action as part of its Feminist International Assistance Policy. As part of this work, Canada partnered with WFP, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2019 to implement the project 'Breaking Barriers to Girls' Education' in Niger and Chad. Breaking Barriers to Girls' Education not only provides nutritious and fortified school meals to children in emergency contexts, but also integrates school health packages that include education services about nutrition and health, as well as sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence.

Canada also contributed to narrowing the gap between humanitarian and development activities by continuing to implement projects such as the Resilience Initiative, which represents an unprecedented effort to support and invest in the same vulnerable communities over a five-year period through context-specific, gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive assistance interventions addressing both immediate food needs and the root causes of hunger. This pilot initiative is being implemented by WFP, FAO, and IFAD and aims to develop best practices and methodologies for addressing food insecurity in protracted crises by increasing beneficiary resilience to shocks, crises and stresses.

Recognizing that not all food security needs are short term, Canada also, for example, provided multi-year funding to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) of the World Bank to improve food security and to support household resilience to shocks. IBRD collaborated with the government of Ethiopia through the Productive Safety Net Program to deliver a complementary set of activities, which included cash for work, land rehabilitation and irrigation, livelihood support, and direct cash transfers for the most vulnerable.

Denmark

In 2019, Denmark responded to food insecurity and humanitarian crises caused by wide range of conflicts, natural disasters, and economic shocks. Total food assistance contributions in 2019 amounted to USD 83 million. Denmark exceeded its financial commitment within the framework of the Food Assistance Convention (FAC) of USD 32.6 million by a large margin of USD 50 million. Compared to the Danish reported contributions of 2018, it is a substantial increase of 39.4%.

Denmark's contributions towards SDG2 in 2019 included a wide range of development and humanitarian interventions and in collaboration with WFP, FAO, UNDP and OCHA. Denmark's core contributions to WFP, UNICEF, and the CERF provides the organisations with multi-year reliable and flexible funding, thus strengthening the agility and flexibility to adapt their country operations according to needs and manage evolving food insecurity crises by determining the most effective means to delivering assistance.

Throughout 2019, Denmark maintained support for populations affected by protracted conflict, fragility, food insecurity and displacement in countries across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Addressing food insecurity in a wider manner than through narrow food assistance is necessary in the achievement of long-term durable solutions. With a range of partners, Denmark addresses food security issues as a core element of the HDP-nexus, contributing to agricultural development, climate change adaptation, resilience building, research, cash assistance, pooled funds, et cetera. Denmark thus supports WFP's dual mandate in providing short-term lifesaving food assistance as well as building longer-term food security and resilience.

European Union (EU)

The European Union's (EU) minimum commitment under the Food Assistance Convention for 2019 was EUR 350 million. The EU largely exceeded its commitment, allocating EUR 340 million from the humanitarian budget purely for humanitarian food assistance and nutrition, to which a significant proportion of the EUR 536 million of multi-purpose cash transfers should be added, bringing the total figure well above EUR 500 million.

Food security and livelihoods was the second most significant area of EU humanitarian assistance in 2019, after multi-purpose cash transfers, with food and nutrition interventions representing almost one fifth of the total EU annual humanitarian budget. Overall, emergency food assistance and nutrition, through cash transfers or in-kind donations, make the EU one of the world's major donors in this sector. Since 2010, the EU has supported more than 100 million people lacking access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food.

The EU continues to promote and encourage cash transfers, which improves the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and results in more aid directly reaching beneficiaries. In 2019, cash assistance was used primarily to meet basic needs such as food assistance and to preserve livelihoods, but it was also used to meet shelter, health and protection needs and in disaster risk reduction programmes. In line with the EU's commitment to support cash as a delivery modality whenever possible, the EU has encouraged the use of cash in its programmes and has continued to drive forward discussions on the use of cash transfers. The EU published the "EU Cash Compendium 2019: Doing More Cash, Better", a selection of case studies on the EU's humanitarian cash assistance. The publication highlights the evidence generated showing that the beneficiaries of cash allocated to cover food needs have greater food security and dietary diversity outcomes than beneficiaries who receive vouchers.

In 2019, the EU supported improved food security in a long range of countries, including Yemen, Syria (regional), DRC, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Ukraine, the Sahel, Saharawi refugees, and the Philippines. Food insecure populations in these countries and regions were assisted through the use of cash-based transfers, vouchers, in-kind food, specialized nutritious foods, livelihoods activities, and more. Additionally, the EU continues to encourage

partners to purchase food and supplementary feeding products locally or regionally, thus maximizing the acceptability of food products, protect or support local markets, and reduce transportation cost and delivery timeframes.

Finland

In 2019, Finland exceeded its FAC-commitment of USD 6.7 million by contributing with a total of USD 18.8 million. The majority of this contribution, USD 15.4 million, was channelled through WFP in three regional or country operations in Yemen, South Sudan, and the Syria crisis.

Finland's humanitarian assistance is un-earmarked and untied, either as core-contribution to WFP, or country and regional specific contributions without any particular activity or sector. Finland is committed to promote un-earmarked, multi-year and flexible funding, according to the principles of GHD and the commitments of the Grand Bargain.

Furthermore, Finland supports a range of Finnish NGO's, including Finn Church Aid, Save the Children Finland, Fida International, and Plan International Finland. In addition, Finland provides supports for the ICRC, the IFRC, and the Finnish Red Cross.

Together with WFP, Finland stresses the importance of school feeding in both development and humanitarian settings. Finland's core contribution to WFP can be used for this purpose. In 2019, Finland published a report based on 70 years of experience in school feeding. This publication was presented at a high-level side event during the Food Security Committee, where other countries also shared their experiences and plans on school feeding.

France

The amount of funding allocated to France's food assistance program in 2019 was USD 43.6 million, 16% more than in 2018. Its core objectives were to reinforce, mainly in post-humanitarian emergency situations, the resilience of populations and to fight against malnutrition through nutritional assistance operations. 30 countries benefited from the program and 78 projects were carried out in 2019, reaching more than 2 million people. France's 19 priority countries for development aid received almost 57% of the funding.

In accordance with France's commitment to the 2013 Nutrition for Growth Summit, more than 50% of projects included a nutrition component. Support to school canteens, in particular in Jordan, Djibouti, Chad and Haiti, aimed at achieving this objective in 2019. These programs, which often support small local producers, include training sessions on food diversification for women in charge of preparing and distributing meals. Initiated in most cases by the World Food Program, they provide an efficient response to nutrition issues, as well as education, women's autonomy (decent jobs), local production and social protection. Agricultural training programs were also developed to revive local agriculture and promote sustainable agricultural practices based on agroecology. Their main objectives were to prevent food insecurity and to increase resilience in fragile areas sensitive to climate change.

The French aid was distributed with 64% of its budget to Sub-Saharan Africa, 26.5% to the Middle and Near East, 6.5% in Asia and 2.5% in Haiti. These interventions included support through the use of cash transfers, food vouchers, food packages, food stamps, nutrition

projects, and agricultural development. In 2019, the first partner remained the World Food Program (WFP), with EUR 17.7 million (about 46% of the total amount). France's other partner organisations included ICRC, UNRWA, FAO, UNICEF, and a range of NGOs.

Japan

Japan's contributed with USD 206.2 million to food assistance in 2019, thus substantially exceeding the FAC commitment of USD 91.7 million. These contributions were implemented as bilateral food assistance project, through international organisations, Grant Aid projects, Emergency Grant Aid, etc. Approximately 75 percent of Japan's food assistance was implemented through WFP (72 percent) and UNRWA (3 percent).

Japan's contributions to WFP enabled food assistance interventions in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Yemen, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Ecuador, and Haiti. These interventions included a wide range of fields such as water, food distribution, nutrition, protection, livelihood programmes, and more.

Japan continues to support the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve, a cooperative system established to meet emergency requirements and to strengthen food security in the region. Japan contributed to the system by providing in-kind food.

Republic of Korea

In 2019, the Republic of Korea (ROK) met its commitment under the FAC of USD 40.8 million. These funds contributed to WFP enabled the purchase of 50,000 tons of Korean rice, which was fully utilized to meet the acute humanitarian needs of targeted people in Yemen, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, which received 19,000 tons, 16,000 tons, 10,000 tons, and 5,000 tons respectively.

In 2019, the ROK hosted the 3rd Global ODA Forum for Sustainable Agricultural Development. This event was attended by 12 international organisations, including WFP, FAO, the World Bank, and over 700 domestic and foreign experts. The Korean government has held the ODA forum since 2017, in which representatives from organizations and countries around the world are invited to share their lessons and insights learned from their policy experiences.

ROK revised its humanitarian assistance strategy in 2019 to reflect their aim to increase the volume and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and to strengthen the efforts in ensuring the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and in improving the humanitarian system. In doing so, ROK decided to endorse the Grand Bargain to join the international efforts in strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg's commitment under the FAC for 2019 of USD 4.5 million was met by a total contribution of USD 11.8 million. Luxembourg's food assistance was implemented via multilateral and national partners, such as the WFP and national NGO's.

In 2019, Luxembourg maintained support for people affected by protracted crises, food insecurity and displacement in numerous contexts across the Middle East, the Sahel, and Asia, among others. With Luxembourg's multi-annual contribution to WFP in 2019, WFP was

able to provide emergency food assistance targeting conflict- and crisis-affected populations in Yemen, Mali, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Bangladesh and CAR. Additionally, Luxembourg supported WFP's School Meals programs in Mali, Senegal and Nicaragua, where WFP provided nutritious meals to primary school children to encourage school attendance while supporting the national governments with capacity strengthening support to reinforce this vital social safety net.

Luxembourg's flexible contributions to WFP support the latter's mission to save lives in emergencies, particularly with the help of innovative food assistance tools, including community-based nutritional support, school meals, supplementary nutrition activities and cash-and-voucher programmes. In the same vein, Luxembourg places an emphasis on the potential of innovative approaches to attend to the needs of food insecure populations, especially in the context of disasters, protracted conflicts and ever-growing funding challenges. Luxembourg thus also promotes innovative tools for food assistance by supporting WFP in its implementation of cash-based transfer programmes in the humanitarian field as an effective tool to promote empowerment, dignity and security.

In 2019, Luxembourg remained committed to provide humanitarian assistance within the framework of the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit and in compliance with Grand Bargain. In the face of growing humanitarian needs, Luxembourg continued to draw particular attention to the importance of a coordinated and integrated approach to the implementation of the HDP-nexus. Furthermore, Luxembourg remains commitment to the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, complying with international standards and best practices in terms of providing predictable and flexible funding, while promoting respect for international humanitarian law. In line with the commitments taken at the World Humanitarian Summit, Luxembourg continued to provide an annual contribution to the CERF and to a number of Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF). Moreover, in 2019 Luxembourg maintained flexible financial support to the ICRC, the UNHCR and the IFRC.

Lastly, in its quest to improve and strengthen the impact and effectiveness of its humanitarian assistance, Luxembourg's humanitarian action service underwent a self-assessment in 2019, based on tools provided and validated by CHS Alliance. Luxembourg was among the first donors to complete this exercise, which has contributed to further enhance its engagement with partners and to adopt an even more comprehensive and impactful approach to humanitarian action.

Russian Federation

In 2019, the Russian Federation exceeded its annual FAC-commitment of USD 15 million with a contribution of USD 45 million. USD 30 million is allocated for the purchase of Russian food aid and its delivery. The greater part of Russian food assistance was distributed among developing countries on bilateral and multilateral basis, especially in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Pacific. USD 6.9 million was allocated to supporting sustainable school meal systems in developing countries. Another school meal project is underway in Mozambique. It amounts to USD 8 million financed by the Government of Mozambique under the "debt for development" scheme to offset debt to Russia. A particular focus is comprehensive assistance to the countries of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) both bilaterally and via multilateral mechanisms.

In 2019, the Government of the Russian Federation and WFP signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement for 2019-2022, thus confirming the strategic nature of a growing partnership between the two entities. Russian contributions to WFP were distributed in Afghanistan, Cuba, DPRK, Guinea, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Palestine, Tajikistan, Uganda, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, the Russian Federation continued developing solid and durable partnership with UNDP, FAO, and UNIDO, in accomplishing projects designed to enhance capacity, efficiency and sustainability of agriculture sectors, rural and remote areas in recipient countries. Majority of the donor projects financed by the Russian Federation are built upon Russia's extensive experience of strengthening national capacities of recipient countries. A key priority is the improvement of the quality of life in rural and remote areas in developing countries. In this regard, Russia adopted a state program for the integrated development of rural territories, which envisages the sustainable economic growth and raising standards of living in rural and remote areas. In this regard, Russia consistently advocates for the expansion of international cooperation in this area.

Besides the emergency food assistance in crisis situations, Russia continued the realization of projects aimed at finding durable solutions to the food security problems. In particular, the Russian Federation has for several years collaborated with WFP with the implementation of large-scale projects to support school feeding in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. Russia financed and supported WFP school feeding programmes in the Kyrgyz Republic, Armenia, and Tajikistan. Furthermore, Russia funded a "Debt for Development" project in Mozambique, to which the debt is being converted into a national school feeding programme. These programmes provide nutritious hot meals to primary schools, including those situated in the poorest rural areas. The programmes improve the learning environments, as well as investments for renovated canteens, training schools for chefs, and is helping schools establishing vegetable gardens.

Slovenia

In 2019, Slovenia exceeded its FAC-commitment of USD 33.570, with a total contribution of USD 116.000. Based on the Resolution of International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance of 2017, food security and access to safe drinking water are one of the priorities of Slovenian humanitarian assistance. Slovenia provides at least one yearly contribution to WFP, and between one and three multi-year contributions to humanitarian NGO-projects related to food security.

In 2019, Slovenia provided a financial contribution to WFP amounting to USD 55.950, which was provided as a response to the Yemeni crisis. Furthermore, Slovenia contributed with USD 53 thousand to a NGO-project focusing on food security among refugee populations in Uganda.

Sweden

Sweden's total contribution to WFP in 2019 amounted to SEK 1,2 billion. More than half of the total Swedish contribution consisted of multi-year core, unearmarked funding provided for 2019 under Sweden's strategic partnership agreement for 2018-2021 with WFP. WFP allocated the un-earmarked core funding provided by Sweden to country operations according to identified needs. Thus, as the organisation's largest donor of un-earmarked funding, Sweden assisted WFP retain the flexibility to respond to sudden crises and to adapt its food assistance operations accordingly.

In addition to the core contribution, Sweden provided funding for humanitarian responses in DRC, Yemen, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Mozambique. Further assistance was provided to FAO, thus strengthening food security in Somalia, CAR, the Lake Chad region, particularly Nigeria. Sweden furthermore supported Action Against Hunger (AAH) and its activities, including for nutrition and food security, with a total of SEK 206 million.

Sweden's key responses in Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, DRC, the Sahel and Southern Africa were implemented through the use of cash interventions, food vouchers, direct food distribution, nutrition interventions, and the strengthening of resilience through support for livestock and agricultural development. Multiple programmes specifically targeted displaced populations, women and girls, and populations struck by natural disasters, particularly Idai cyclone in Southern Africa.

Switzerland

In 2019, Switzerland's commitment under the FAC was USD 34.3, the same as in 2018. Switzerland significantly surpassed its established commitment by providing a total contribution of USD 85.5 million. Almost 74 percent of Switzerland's food assistance was implemented through support to WFP, with the remaining part distributed to NGO's, UNRWA, and various other UN partner organisations. Furthermore, Switzerland seconded 10 experts from the Swiss humanitarian Aid Unit to WFP, providing expertise in cash-based transfer programming (CBT), Social Protection, Protection and Gender-based Violence (GBV), Logistics, and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

In 2019, about 40 percent of Switzerland's contributions under FAC was allocated to support populations suffering from acute food insecurity and malnutrition in Africa (mainly in South Sudan, Sudan, Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, the central Sahel, Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Horn of Africa), primarily through WFP. Another 17 percent was allocated for food assistance and nutrition interventions in the Middle East (particularly in Yemen, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Syria and neighbouring countries). About 13 percent of contributions assisted food insecure populations in Asia (North Korea, the Rohingya crisis and Afghanistan) and almost 5 per cent was allocated to the Americas (Haiti, Columbia and Central America). Overall, Switzerland provided food assistance in 32 countries, including DPRK and Algeria, the only remaining countries that still received in-kind food assistance.

In addition to these contributions earmarked for WFP operations at country level and in line with its commitment under the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) principles to provide predictable and flexible funding, Switzerland also made a fully un-earmarked contribution of USD 8.04 million to WFP's Immediate Response Account (IRA), making it its third largest donor in 2019. This way, Switzerland enabled WFP, among other achievements, to provide life-saving immediate food assistance to 1.7 million people affected by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, cover the anticipated resource gaps in Yemen, and rapidly respond to the needs of people in Zimbabwe as a result of wide-spread drought, flooding and macro-economic shocks.

Switzerland, together with EU/ECHO, assumes the Co-Chairmanship of the Good Humanitarian Donorship for 2018-2020. In 2019, the Co-Chairmanship enabled expert discussions and High-Level Meetings, promoting principled and effective humanitarian assistance through innovative funding and delivery modalities. The goal remains to better serve affected people, ensuring relevance, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. A number of follow-up actions were decided, including the commissioning of a study on organizational readiness and enabling private capital for innovative financing in humanitarian contexts.

The benefits of enhanced donor coordination on these themes also extend to food-security related programming, for instance in the realm of risk financing. Other innovative funding modalities such as forecast-based financing assist the mainstreaming of early warning and early action models.

KEY FOOD ASSISTANCE RESPONSES BY FAC MEMBERS

The 10 worst food crises in 2019 by number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above)

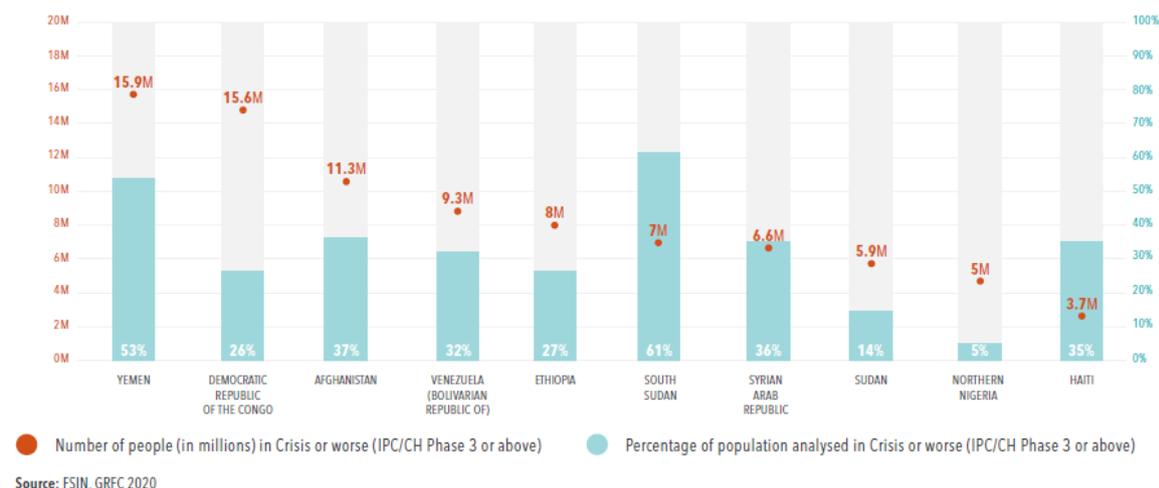


Figure 2: Overview of the 10 worst food crises in 2019¹⁰

Yemen

According to the Global Report on Food Crises 2020, Yemen remained the world’s gravest food insecurity crisis in 2019. Like the previous year, 53 percent - almost 16 million people - of the Yemeni population suffered from IPC/CH Phase 3 or above. The ongoing suffering of the people of Yemen illustrates the lack of concrete humanitarian progress from 2018 to 2019, and with the combined effects of conflict, macroeconomic crisis, COVID-19, climate-related shocks and crop pest, including fall armyworm and desert locust, levels of acute food insecurity are likely to increase further in 2020.

The majority of the FAC Parties including Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, the Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA made significant efforts to provide the urgently required food assistance in the country. The assistance was provided in various ways, including in-kind contributions, food vouchers, unconditional cash transfers, targeted nutrition interventions for pregnant and lactating women, etc. Contributions were provided through humanitarian partner organizations, including WFP, OCHA, and ICRC. Several members provided support through the CERF and CBPF’s.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

After Yemen, the DRC had the highest number of acutely food-insecure people in urgent need of assistance in 2019. With a total of 15.6 million people in IPC/CH 3 Phase or above, more

¹⁰ GRFC 2020, p. 21

than a quarter of the population suffered of food-insecurity. Conflict, particularly in the eastern part of the country, continues to remain the largest cause of humanitarian despair. The 2020 forecast illustrates a worsening situation as a result of intensifying conflicts, COVID-19, and poor harvest predictions.

Through partnerships with various humanitarian actors and with the use of funds, Canada, the European Union, France, Japan, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA all contributed to improve food security in the country.

Afghanistan

In 2019, 37 percent, or 11.3 million people, suffered from acute food insecurity in Afghanistan. The GRFC increased the numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above from 2018 to 2019, partly due to the inclusion of the urban population in 2019 analysis. Compared to 2018, acute food insecurity decreased among the rural population. The combination of protracted conflict, economic shocks, and weather extremes continues to keep large parts of the population in food insecurity. The level of food insecurity is not expected to change drastically in 2020, although increasing returns of displaced Afghans from neighbouring countries may worsen the situation.

FAC members – Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, France, Japan, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, and the USA supported the Afghan people by delivering assistance with cash, in-kind food distribution, livelihood support and agricultural development, and more. The assistance was provided in both unearmarked contributions, and targeted interventions directed at displaced people, returnees, host communities, women, children, drought-affected communities, etc. Key partners were WFP, FAO, UNICEF and a range of NGO's.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Acute food insecurity levels rose as the Venezuelans remaining in the country felt the acute impact of hyperinflation and were unable to meet their essential needs. In 2019, 9.3 million people, or 32 percent of the population, were in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above. These numbers are excluding the millions of Venezuelans who have fled to neighbouring countries, constituting the leading mass-migration movement in Latin America and the second largest in the world, following the Syrian refugee crisis. Economic hardship is expected to intensify for the Venezuelans left in the country, as well as for the increasing numbers migrating to Colombia and Ecuador.

Canada, the European Union, and Japan contributed to improved food security in Venezuela or host communities in neighbouring countries. The assistance was provided in both short-term humanitarian interventions and long-term development programmes.

Ethiopia

In 2019, 8 million people in Ethiopia were categorized as IPC/CH Phase 3 or above, thus keeping the numbers relatively stable since 2018. Ongoing food insecurity is the result of a combination of factors, including weather extremes, conflicts, and economic shocks. Below-average and erratic seasonal rains, combined with floods, and desert locust infestation

affected local food production negatively. Ethnic tension, conflict, and increased food prices also kept levels of food insecurity high.

Several FAC members, including Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, the European Union, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA contributed to improve levels of food security in the country through various means. Long-term development and resilience building have been particularly evident. Several members have addressed the root causes of food insecurity through development assistance, building resilience, creating livelihoods, etc. Multiple donor states contributed to the Ethiopian-led Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Short-term interventions focused on nutrition programmes and the implementation of fortified food products, targeted and pregnant and lactating women, as well as children. In-kind food distribution, particularly in drought-affected areas and in refugee and IDP settings, have also been prevalent. Key partners were the Government of Ethiopia, WFP, FAO, UNHCR, and various NGO's.

South Sudan

Despite lower levels of conflict, the number of people in crisis level increased to record number between 2018 and 2019, amounting to a total of 7 million people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above. While armed conflict have decrease significantly following the formation of a transitional unity government, increased inter-communal violence continues to displace people and increase levels of food insecurity. Economic shocks and weather extremes such as floods and desert locust have furthermore lowered food production and affordability. While food security levels are forecasted to improve in 2020, these predictions remain uncertain due to COVID-19 and a fragile peace agreement.

Australia, Canada, the European Union, France, Luxembourg, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA all contributed to improve food security in South Sudan in 2019. Contributions were made within the humanitarian and development sector, mainly through partners such as WFP, FAO, OCHA, local government institutions, and various national and international NGO's. Interventions includes, but are not limited to, food-for-work programmes, take-home school meals, food distribution in IDP and refugee camps, nutrition interventions, distribution of seeds, capacity building in diversified and sustainable agricultural practices, etc.

Syria (and neighbouring countries/Syrian Refugees)

In 2019, 6.6 million people were classified as living I IPC/CH 3 or above in Syria. The ongoing conflict and a shattered economy keeps acute food insecurity at similar levels compared to the previous year. In 2020, the GRFC expects the weakened currency and economy, combined with continuing hostilities, displacements and returns to keep food insecurity at a critical level. Political and/or economic instability in neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey further contributes to increasing numbers of displaced Syrians living in food insecurity.

Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Luxembourg, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA all contributed to the Syrian humanitarian crisis in 2019. Assistance was predominately offered through various country funds, WFP, UNHCR, UNFPA, ICRC, and various NGO's. Assistance was predominately targeted towards IDP's and refugees in neighbouring countries through the use school feeding programmes, food vouchers, cash transfers, etc.

COORDINATION AMONG DONORS

Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD)

The GHD initiative is an informal donor forum and network, which facilitates collective advancement of GHD principles and good practices. It recognizes that, by working together, donors can more effectively encourage and stimulate principled donor behaviour and, by extension, improved humanitarian action. Altogether 42 members of the GHD group endorsed the Principles and Good Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship. These were drawn up to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of donor action, as well as their accountability to beneficiaries, implementing organisations and domestic constituencies, with regard to the funding, coordination, follow-up and evaluation of such actions.

Several members expressed their ongoing support to the principles of GHD in the 2019 FAC reports. Commitments to promote un-earmarked, multi-year and flexible funding, as expressed by multiple FAC parties, play a key role in the improvement the humanitarian-development sector and the efficiency and dollar-value of the interventions.

Switzerland and the EU/ECHO assumes the Co-Chairmanship of the GHD initiative for 2018-2020. Under the four priorities of the co-chairmanship, work continued on promoting principled and effective humanitarian assistance through innovative funding and delivery modalities. The topic was discussed in an expert meeting in May 2019 and highlighted during the High-Level Meeting in June 2019. The goal remains to better serve affected people, while ensuring relevance, efficiency and cost-effectiveness. A number of follow-up actions were

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Global Network against Food Crises

At the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul, the European Union, WFP and FAO launched the Global Network against Food Crises (GNFC) in May 2016. The GNFC serves as a forum informing food security and nutrition decisions by allowing donors and partners to share data and analyses as well as lessons learned and best practices. Special emphasis is set on the humanitarian-development nexus approach and on promoting effective ways to address the root causes of hunger. The GNFC consists of a technical component, with the joint publication of the annual Global Report on Food Crises, which have been an essential component in the production of this report.

In April 2019, members of the Global Network against Food Crises, together representatives of national governments, IGO's, NGO's, and the private sector participated in the high-level event 'Food and Agriculture in Time of Crises', alongside the publication of Global Report on Food Crises 2019. The event, hosted by the European Union, highlighted current and future challenges and opportunities in respect to food security. Several FAC-members participated in the event, promoting closer linkages between various actors' development interventions.

Committee for World Food Security (CFS)

Funded by the Rome based Agencies (RBAs) and voluntary donations, the Committee for World Food Security (CFS) is the only UN led intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder platform dedicated to global coordination of food security and nutrition activities and the promotion of policy convergence and adoption of best practices. It produces a wide array of valued documents on food security and nutrition. Finland and Canada, both active members of the CFS as other FAC Parties, co-hosted in 2019 a side-event on school feeding together with the Government of Ethiopia and WFP. This event enabled a discussion of the multisectoral benefits of implementing school-feeding programmes in developed and developing countries alike. Furthermore, key speakers and panellist from various countries and organisations shared their experiences on how to use school feeding programmes in different contexts, and how technological advancement can be used to improve the levels of nutrition and minimize expenses. The event showcased the importance of multiple actors and sectors coming together to jointly advocate for and drive the global school feeding agenda, to ensure that all children are able to learn and thrive in school.

POLICY INITIATIVES

The Grand Bargain (GB)

One of the clearest outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 was the Grand Bargain. The GB is a set of 10 non-binding political commitments that donor governments and humanitarian organizations plan to jointly pursue to strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of humanitarian assistance to people in need. The commitments are taken forward through eight thematic work streams involving a series of changes in the working practices of donors and humanitarian assistance organizations.

Following a successful application and the submission of the 2020 self-report, the Republic of Korea became the 62nd signatory of the Grand Bargain in March 2020. The Republic of Korea revised its humanitarian assistance strategy in 2019 to reflect the aim to increase the volume and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and to strengthen the efforts in ensuring the HDP-nexus and in improving the humanitarian system. In doing so, the Republic of Korea decided to endorse the Grand Bargain and join the international efforts in strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance.

The Grand Bargain commits its signatories to increase the amount of un-earmarked donor funding. In 2019, several FAC-parties contributed significantly with core contributions to international organisations working in the food assistance sector, including OCHA, WFP, FAO, UNICEF, UNRWA, and ICRC among others. Lightly earmarked contributions were also provided to country or activity level, either to various CBPF's, or to food and nutrition related activities.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

School feeding programmes

School feeding is the world's most widely provided form of social protection. In general, school feeding can make a significant contribution towards achieving the globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals, especially to the second goal (SDG2) - Zero Hunger. Schools provide a

unique opportunity to coherently address the different causes and consequences of malnutrition, and at the same time facilitate children's access to school, increase enrolment and attendance rates as well as improve their cognitive development. Educating girls is one of the most effective ways to improve food security: when girls are educated they are more likely to be able to meet the nutritional needs of their children and to head households that are food-secure. Moreover, school feeding goes far beyond the plate of food, producing high returns in education, gender equality, health and nutrition, social protection, and economic and agricultural development. School feeding programmes have proved to be successful interventions able to exploit the synergies between education, nutrition, and health among some of the most vulnerable children. Working across the humanitarian-development nexus and having a positive impact on multiple Sustainable Development Goals, school feeding programmes are efficient multisector interventions able to address both short and long-term needs, particularly among children.

In 2019, WFP adopted a new school feeding strategy for 2020-2030. The strategy received widespread support among recipient and donor countries. While school feeding is far from a new concept in the humanitarian and development assistance sector, decades of experiences, reviews, and reports have improved the quality of these multisectoral interventions. Canada, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, France, Republic of Korea, Russia, and Switzerland all directly mentioned school feeding interventions in the 2019 narrative reports, thus demonstrating the widespread support among FAC members.

Forecast-based Financing and Early Action

Forecast-based Financing (FbF) and Anticipatory Action can be a useful mechanism to improve the food assistance sector, as it provides incentives for early action and enables humanitarian actors to move from crises response to risk management. Rather than disburse funding and implement response programmes after the outbreak of an emergency, FbF enables relevant actors to prepare and anticipate responses to e.g. droughts or floods, thus minimizing the potential damage of a crisis, maximizing impact, and raising the dollar-value of the contribution.

Denmark in 2019 participated in the International Dialogue Platform that takes place in Berlin once a year. The event gathers humanitarian actors, meteorologists, climate scientists, national governments and decision-makers. They discuss how to improve Forecast-based Financing, how to implement the concept into existing projects and how to advance the use of weather and climate data. The Dialogue Platforms' overall goal is to develop a methodology for forecast based action, together with partners and pilot countries, and to create an exchange between participants to help and enable the implementation of FbF. Experience from current FbF-pilots is evaluated at the Dialogue Platforms and additional scientific expertise helps to fine-tune the work.

WFP and FAO are collaborating with several countries prone to recurrent climate-related shocks in order to implement early warning indicators, thus enabling a more efficient and cost-reduced anticipatory response. Multiple FAC parties supported these initiatives in 2019, partly through a contribution to WFP's Anticipatory Trust Fund, and partly through contribution to FAO's Anticipatory Action Fund.

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN 2019

SIPRI Research and the 12th Session of the Food Assistance Committee

In June 2019, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and WFP published the first phase of a research report investigating the linkage between conflict and food insecurity, alongside WFP's contributions to improving the prospects for peace. The research findings were also presented in the UN City in Copenhagen on 23rd of August 2019. Furthermore, the 12th session of the Food Assistance Committee in November 2019 also included a discussion of the research findings and of the relation between food security and peace. The report is based on four field research-based case studies in El Salvador, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, and Mali, showing that WFP's work in these countries to a certain degree contributes to improving prospects for peace. Livelihood investment, natural resource management, community-based participatory approaches, and improving relations between citizens and governments all exhibited positive effects in establishing peace. The report recommends systemic conflict analysis integrated within WFP programming, alongside increased coherence between WFP's humanitarian and development interventions, thus underlining the need for successfully working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

The 12th session of the Food Assistance Committee also included a discussion of forced displacement and its implications on International Humanitarian Law (IHL). In the line of focus were the complications of food assistance in conflict settings, above all in relation to Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) right to food under the IHL. The session furthermore included a presentation of key findings and recommendations based on the Global Report on Internal Displacement 2019.

Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network

In August 2019, the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) published a report assessing the country-level collaboration between FAO, IFAD, and WFP. The report, championed by Denmark and the USA, found that the three agencies had significant collaboration on the ground. The partnership between the Rome-based agencies (RBA's) led to project-level collaboration, although somewhat transactional in nature, rather than strategic. MOPAN suggested improvements for collaboration by aligning internal business processes and implementing common country strategies.

In-kind food assistance

In 2019, USAID piloted a more resilient, puncture-resistant hybrid packaging for fortified flours, which protects the product against breakage and pest infestations to preserve the integrity of the food. USAID also collaborated with WFP to improve the shelf life of high-energy biscuits (HEB). With updated formula and packaging, the shelf life of HEBs increased from a few months to two years. USAID continued working with the suppliers of commodities and our implementing partners to improve the safety and quality of key food commodities, with a focus on therapeutic and supplementary ready-to-use foods (RUFs). In-kind food assistance remains vital in areas where supply chains are disrupted by conflict, economic shocks or natural disasters, or where local food supplies are insufficient or unsafe.