



Food Assistance Convention

**FOOD ASSISTANCE CONVENTION
2023 ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT**

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ACRONYMS

AAH / ACF	Action Against Hunger / Action contre la faim
AAP	Accountability to affected populations
ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation
AECID	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo / Spanish Agency for International Development / Office for Humanitarian Affairs
ALIMA	The Alliance for Medical Action
APTERR	ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve
ATAHS	Agence Technique pour l'Action Humanitaire et Sociale (Chadian NGO)
AUD	Australian Dollar
BML	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management, Republic of Austria
CAD	Canadian Dollar
CBPF	Country-based Pooled Fund
CBT	Cash-Based Transfers
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CFGB	Canadian Foodgrains Bank
CHF	Swiss Francs
CRB	Croix-Rouge de Belgique / Belgian Red Cross
CRF	Croix-Rouge Française / French Red Cross
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
CWG	Cash Working Group
DG ECHO	European Commission's Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid
DKK	Danish Krone
DNPGCA	Dispositif national de prévention et de gestion des crises alimentaires (Niger) / National System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises in Niger
DREF	Disaster Response Emergency Fund from IFRC
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ESR	Enhanced Single Registry
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FAC	Food Assistance Convention
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FAP	Food Assistance Programme
FFPr	Food for Progress Program
FY	Fiscal Year
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
HIA	Humanitarian Innovation Accelerator
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMC Croatia	International Medical Corps Croatia
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC/CH	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IRA	Immediate Response Account

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JPY	Japanese Yen
KAFACI	Korea-Africa Food & Agriculture Cooperation Initiative
KOPIA	Korea Partnerships for Innovation of Agriculture
KRW	Korean Currency Won
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MAFRA	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MEB	Monthly Expenditure Basket
MFEA	Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade
MT	Metric tons
NFI	Non food items
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OAH	Oficina de Acción Humanitaria
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PUI	Première Urgence Internationale
ROK	Republic of Korea
RUB	Russian Ruble
RUTF	Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SHA Unit	(SDC) Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit
SI	Solidarités International
UN	United Nations
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN OCHA	UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, the number of people in a state of acute food insecurity and chronic hunger once more surpassed previous records: according to the Global Report on Food Crises 2023, more than 281 million people in 59 countries were dependent on humanitarian food assistance to cover even their most basic food needs (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above). This translates to an increase of almost 25 million people compared to 2022.

Conflict, economic shocks, natural disasters, climate change and its consequences continued to exacerbate pre-existing fragilities and drive food needs around the world. A notable trend in 2023 and the preceding years is that the influence of weather extremes as primary driver of food insecurity increases rapidly and leaves more and more people in a state of chronic hunger and malnutrition. These developments, coupled with the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hamas in autumn of 2023 with all its implications, as well as the ongoing war in Ukraine, resulted in an ever-increasing inability for vulnerable communities to access food.

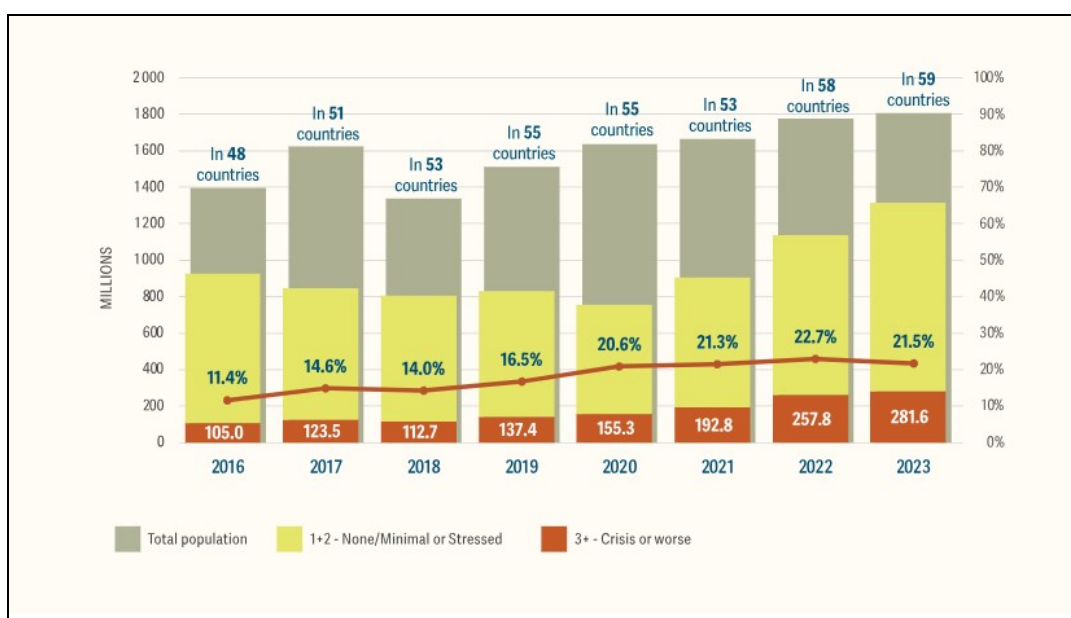
In 2023, all parties fulfilled or substantially exceeded their commitments by collectively contributing over USD 7.9 billion to the improvement of worldwide food security. Cash based transfers (CBT) as well as mixed Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) continued to receive increased support by many of the FAC parties. The majority of total contributions were provided fully in grant form, with a substantial part consisting of earmarked or lightly earmarked contributions, predominately at country level. Multi-year funding and un-earmarked contributions were mainly provided to WFP, and to a lesser extent to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Generally, the FAC members' interventions were implemented in collaboration with various agencies and programmes of the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and civil-society organizations.

Geographically, the interventions of FAC members focused on food assistance in some of the most critical humanitarian crises in 2023. Amongst others, this included Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Somalia and Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan, Syria and its neighbouring countries, Ukraine and Yemen. Apart from these contributions, several parties to the FAC provided food assistance to people living in so-called forgotten crises, such as the Central African Republic, Haiti, Venezuela and Colombia.

1. GENERAL CONTEXT

1.1 Global Food and Nutrition Situation in 2023

In 2023, over 281 million people were in a persistent state of food crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above), not being able to cover their most basic food needs. More than 37 million people were facing Emergency or worse (IPC/CH Phase 4 or above) conditions. Of critical concern were over 705,000 people facing Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) – starvation and death – in five countries/territories: the Occupied Palestinian Territories, South Sudan, Somalia, Burkina Faso and Mali. People in IPC/CH Phase 5 face large and prolonged times without any food, which leads to severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and an increase in harmful coping strategies and mortality rates, especially in children under the age of five.

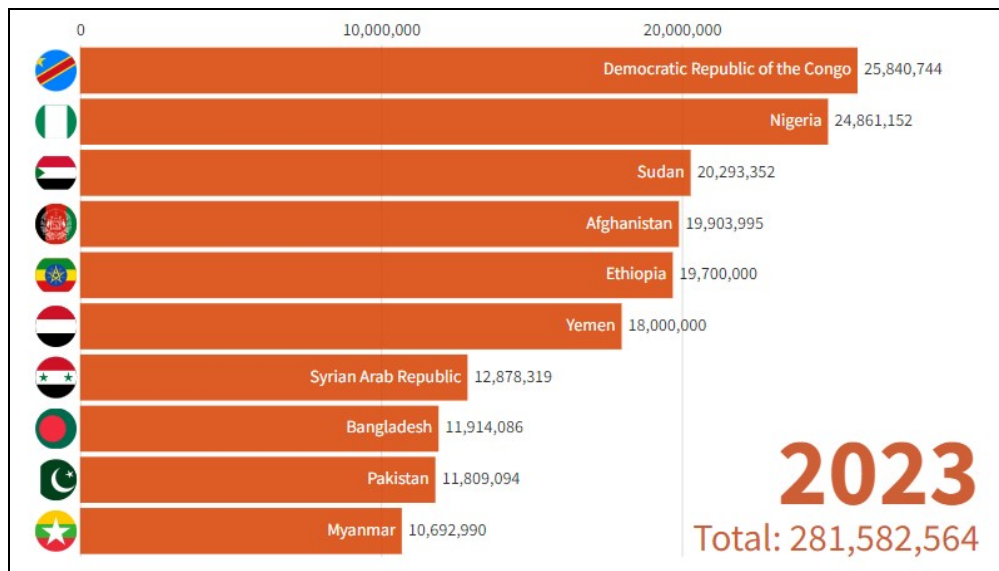


Number of people and share of analysed population in GRFC countries/territories facing high levels of acute food insecurity 2016-2023, Source: Global Report on Food Crises 2024

The number of people facing dire food and nutrition conditions (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) is almost three times that observed in 2016. In the same period, the number of people facing acute Catastrophe or famine (IPC/CH Phase 5) levels of food insecurity quadrupled.

Over 60% of the total number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) live in only ten countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Sudan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Myanmar.

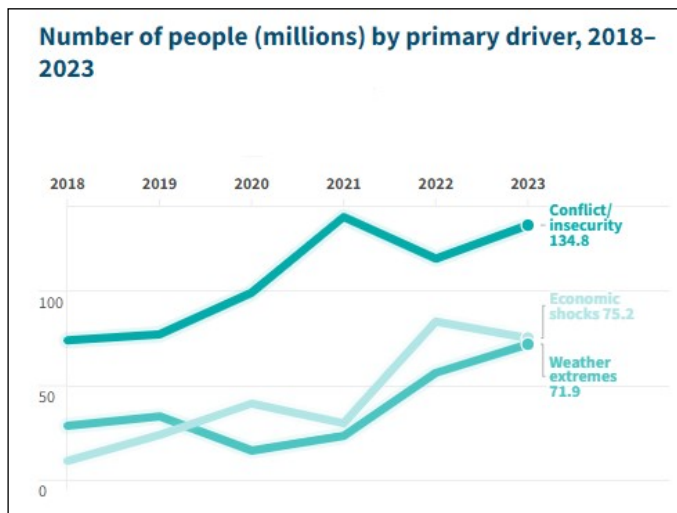
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Countries with the largest number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in 2023, Source: Global Report on Food Crises 2024

Food and nutrition insecurity has an array of implications and impacts various groups of people differently. Among those impacted the most are children under the age of five. Limited access to and availability of food and/or insufficient intake of nutrients within those early years leads to chronic wasting, stunting and generally, to a higher susceptibility to illnesses and an increased mortality rate. In 2023, more than 36.4 million children under five were acutely malnourished, of which almost 10 million classified as severe. The ten countries with the highest number of children under 5 years with acute malnutrition include Nigeria, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, Niger, Somalia, Chad and South Sudan.

As for the drivers of food and nutrition insecurity, food crises are the result of interconnected, mutually reinforcing drivers – conflict and insecurity, weather extremes and economic shocks. In 2023, these key drivers were associated with prolonged droughts, floods and other weather extremes, the impact of ongoing conflicts in the world.



Weather extremes were the primary driver of acute food insecurity in 18 countries where almost 72 million people were in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above - a stark increase from the 56.8 million people in twelve countries from the year before. These extremes included sustained drought in the Horn of Africa, devastating flooding in Libya and Afghanistan, and tropical storms, cyclones and drought in Southern Africa. Economic shocks were the main driver in 21 countries with more than 75 million people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above.

Conflict/insecurity was the most significant driver in 20 countries/territories where over 134 million people were in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above – up from 117 million people in 19 countries in 2022.

1.2 The Food Assistance Convention

The Food Assistance Convention (FAC) was adopted in April 2012 in London and entered into force in January 2013. It is the latest in a long series of multilateral cooperation instruments in operation since 1967, including the Food Aid Convention 1999, and has been ratified by 16 Parties.

The current Convention expands the traditional focus on in-kind food aid for direct consumption. It includes a broader range of eligible activities and food assistance products such as cash, vouchers and products intended for protecting livelihoods, and a great focus on nutrition. It also identifies an important set of guiding principles that Parties should follow in implementing their food assistance programs.

The objectives of the FAC are 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 the most vulnerable 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 provided to the most vulnerable populations is appropriate, timely, effective, efficient, and based on needs and shared principles; and
- 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 needs.

To achieve these objectives, FAC Parties commit to provide a minimum level of food assistance on an annual basis, set in accordance with their laws and regulations. Additionally, Parties strive for transparency and accountability to affected populations (AAP) in all food assistance operations. Consequently, they report annually on how their food assistance policies, programs and operations have contributed to the objectives and principles of the Convention.

The FAC is also a forum for Parties to share information and best practices in food assistance delivery. Meeting twice annually, Parties discuss the most efficient and effective means of delivery of food assistance. Recognizing the changing landscape of emergencies and other assistance needs, Parties have prioritized the consideration of new modalities for food assistance aimed at reducing associated costs, while ensuring that the most in need are reached.

The FAC is governed by the Food Assistance Committee, which serves as a forum for member states to share information and best practices on food assistance. The International Grains Council (IGC) is the designated Secretariat of the FAC, to assist the FAC Chair with the

associated tasks. After 2024, Austria will complete its term as chair and will hand over the chairmanship to Luxembourg.

1.3 Reporting on Food Assistance Operations

Following each calendar year, Parties provide a financial and a narrative report on food assistance operations. 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.

In 2023, Parties to the FAC contributed a total of USD 7,985.5 million. Reporting members fulfilled their obligations, with almost all Parties substantially exceeding their commitments.

Humanitarian and developmental partners vary across Parties, with WFP, FAO, ICRC and UNICEF as the most common partners. Contributions to civil society organisations such as Action Against Hunger, CARE, Save the Children, and national Red Cross societies, among others, were also reported. In 2023, some of the top FAC recipient countries were Afghanistan, the Central Sahel Region of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Somalia, Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, Sudan and South Sudan, Syria and the neighbouring countries, Ukraine and Yemen.

1.4 Committee Meetings

The 17th Session of the Food Assistance Committee was held on Wednesday 21 June 2023. In the meeting, the global situation on hunger and nutrition was addressed. The IGC Secretariat presented the most recent price developments of grains, rice and oilseeds on the world market and provided FAC members with an outlook on expectations for the months ahead. Subsequently, the repercussions of Covid-19, supply chain issues, inflation and ongoing conflicts in the world on the price development were discussed by FAC members. The extensive implications on hunger, malnutrition and undernutrition were emphasized and both the WFP and FAO via statements provided a more detailed context on the global food insecurity situation. As a response, the FAC parties highlighted their respective operations and efforts on how they contribute to addressing these vast needs and foster food and nutrition security for those most vulnerable. Furthermore, FAC members shared important policy initiatives and longer-term strategies on food security.

The Committee also discussed the establishment of a methodology to record UNHAS funding. Several questions were raised with regard to a potential FAC-eligibility, amongst others the specific proportion of transported, eligible staff (WFP, WFP's cooperating partners and NGOs whose exclusive or main mission is food assistance activities) and the general possibility of a clear distinction between transportation for food assistance (staff, goods) and for non-food assistance. As several information items were still unclear, it was decided to postpone a definite decision on the FAC-eligibility. At the end of the session, the FAC Parties decided to have a seminar on School Feeding Programmes in DAC-eligible countries during the FAC Session in December 2023. All parties to the Committee agreed.

The 18th Session of the Food Assistance Committee was held on 18 December 2023. At the beginning of this session, the Committee approved the publication of the Annual Report for 2022 and the FAC Chair summarized some of the outstanding initiatives and operations of the preceding year. Further to reporting and an item previously discussed in the 17th Session, it was decided by all FAC parties that a certain percentage of the UNHAS contributions can be taken into account under the FAC. Detailed information on the eligibility was provided by the delegation of France. Subsequently, the IGC Executive Director confirmed the adaptation of reporting templates to reflect this novelty.

The update on the global grains market situation highlighted the price developments for rice wheat and pulses and the latest trends in freight markets. Production outlooks for 2024, including medium- and longer-term risk factors such as trade restrictions, economic shocks and climate disasters were addressed. A special focus was given to the concerning situation of food insecurity in Africa and Asia, and WFP and FAO provided background information on the most critical humanitarian food crises. FAC Parties informed on their current initiatives and responses to these food needs.

Next to a debrief from the seminar on School Feeding Programmes in DAC-eligible countries, all FAC members established and renewed their commitments under the FAC for 2024. To conclude the 18th session, the Committee agreed to the appointment of Austria and Mr. Jürgen Drexler, Senior Expert, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management, as FAC Chair in 2024. As there was no consensus on the position of the Vice-Chair amongst the FAC parties, it was decided that the position of Vice-Chair would not be filled in 2024. The schedule of formal sessions and informal meetings for 2024 was set and the 18th session was closed.

2. OVERALL ASSISTANCE BY FAC PARTIES

2.1 Food Assistance in 2023

Australia

Australia's commitment under the Food Assistance Convention for 2023 was AUD 80 million (USD 53.1 million). Australia comfortably exceeded its commitment in 2023.

Australia provides all food assistance as untied, cash-based support. In 2023, Australia provided the UN World Food Programme with USD 70.5 million (AUD 106.2 million) in food assistance, USD 26.5 million (AUD 40 million) of which was fully flexible core funding. The remaining USD 43.9 million (AUD 66.2 million) was softly earmarked at the regional / thematic level (Integrated Resilience in the Sahel and the Disability Inclusion Trust Fund) or at the country level to 8 countries, including multi-year funding commitments to WFP's operations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. Australia also provided its multiyear commitment of USD 7.3 million (AUD 11 million) to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and USD 21.9 million (AUD 33 million) to UN OCHA Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF) in Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Ukraine. Funding through these agencies provides coordinated support to populations affected by protracted conflict, food insecurity and displacement.

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In 2023, Australia maintained support for populations affected by protracted conflict, food insecurity and displacement in countries across Asia, the Middle East and Africa. In addition to supporting shelter, education, protection and WASH initiatives through other UN and international agencies, Australia provided emergency food assistance through WFP valued at AUD 76.9 million (USD 51 million). This assistance targeted conflict-affected populations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, as well as communities in the Middle East. This assistance was further supplemented by Australia's core funding, which in 2023 totalled AUD 40 million (USD 26.5 million) and was assigned by WFP to its highest priority and most underfunded operations.

Austria

In 2023, Austria responded to food insecurity caused both by conflict and disasters with increasing its funds to a record high since becoming a member of the Food Assistance Convention (FAC). Austria far exceeded its financial commitment of EUR 1,495 million (USD 1,6 million), increasing its support within the reporting period to a total of EUR 18 million (USD 19,46 million). The food assistance contributions committed within this reporting period were implemented via WFP (World Food Programme) and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) in Eastern Africa, the Middle East and Northern Africa, the Sahel Region as well as via the WFP Immediate Response Account.

Since 2015, the annual funds allocated for food assistance activities provided by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management (BML) have been administered by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the operational unit of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). This step was taken to establish a whole-of-government approach to ensure coherence and enhance effectiveness in Austria's aim to raise food security.

With its much-increased food assistance commitment in 2023, Austria focused on reaching people most affected by severe chronic hunger, malnutrition, and the consequences of climate extremes in some of the world's largest humanitarian crises. Austria's high degree of flexible and unearmarked funding ensured that its food assistance is used as effectively and efficiently as possible and allowed for much needed adaptability in highly volatile humanitarian situations. This flexibility is enabled by a perseverative, trustful cooperation with our implementing partners.

Canada

In 2023, Canada continued to support life-saving food and nutrition assistance in emergency contexts across the globe, as the scale and severity of food crises continued to worsen. To help address needs, Canada provided over USD 341 million (CAD 461 million) in FAC eligible contributions, exceeding its commitment of CAD 250 million. Of this funding, approximately 86% was provided at country level through multilateral, Red Cross/Crescent and NGO partners. The remaining 14% was provided as un-earmarked funding, including long-term institutional support, providing partners with the flexibility to respond to evolving needs.

Canada has made the provision of food and nutrition assistance a key component of its humanitarian assistance portfolio and steadily increased the share of its humanitarian funding in

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alignment with needs assessments. Funding to these food and nutrition sectors increased from 30% of Canada's total humanitarian budget in 2017 to 46% in 2023 in response to the financial requirements for food and nutrition increasing over the same timeframe. Using evidence-based and impartial needs assessments, provided through well-established and coordinated humanitarian mechanisms, promotes humanitarian responses that more effectively target key gaps.

As part of the response to food needs worldwide, Canada provided funding to experienced partners to deliver immediate food and nutrition assistance, including allocating additional humanitarian resources to help prevent famine in several hotspots, such as South Sudan, Ethiopia, Yemen, and the deteriorating crisis in Gaza. As a result, a significant proportion of Canada's funding was directed to major food crises in the Middle East and in Sub-Saharan Africa, which accounted for more than 43% and 33% of Canada's overall food and nutrition assistance respectively. Responses in key contexts included Afghanistan (CAD 36.5 million), Yemen (CAD 36.3 million), Sudan (CAD 22.7 million), Syria (CAD 25.5 million), Ethiopia (CAD 25.1 million), South Sudan (CAD 23.5 million) and West Bank and Gaza (CAD 12 million).

Canada finances humanitarian food and nutrition assistance in fully grant form to trusted partners. With this financial support, Canada's humanitarian partners deliver assistance using various activities, including the direct distribution of eligible food products, cash, vouchers, and nutritional interventions in emergency situations. 81% of Canada's funding was unearmarked at the modality level to allow partners to best adapt programming to local contexts, with the remaining 19% directed towards cash and voucher assistance, direct food distribution and other modalities.

Canada is committed to providing humanitarian assistance to help meet growing global food and nutrition needs. Most notably, in 2023 Canada mobilized extra budgetary resources to address the record levels of acute hunger. These resources facilitated the provision of emergency food assistance through WFP valued at CAD 84.5 million (CAD 82.1 of which is FAC-eligible) in early 2023. With Canada and other donors' support, WFP delivered emergency cash and in-kind food, as well as nutrition assistance, to communities experiencing situations of severe food insecurity that deteriorated throughout 2023. In the face of the global hunger crisis, providing this timely funding in an early manner allowed WFP to mitigate the medium-term impacts of the rapid increase in need, such as downstream mortality and population displacement crises.

In response to growing acute malnutrition, Canada also provided CAD 32 million to support UNICEF's emergency nutrition response efforts through a focused program to procure and distribute Ready to use therapeutic food (RuTF) in key humanitarian contexts across Central Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Canada is also a key donor to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Country Based Pooled Funds, which also support food assistance activities. Notably, food assistance was the CERF's most funded sector in 2023 with over USD 114 million in allocations, which accounts for over 17% of the total, to help tackle rising hunger and support the most vulnerable people in some of the most forgotten crises.

Through development assistance, Canada also endeavoured to help strengthen the resilience of agri-food systems to current and future shocks. Support for agriculture and food systems activities helps implement long-term solutions to the underlying drivers of food insecurity.

Denmark

During 2023, Denmark responded to food insecurity crises in a number of countries, caused by conflicts, economic shocks and natural disasters including those caused by the climate crisis. Denmark's food assistance contributions in 2023 amounted to DKK 452.9 million (USD 65.7 million). Denmark's financial commitments within the framework of the Food Assistance Convention amounts to DKK 203 million (USD 29.4 million) - this was exceeded by a margin of DKK 249.9 million (USD 36.2 million) in 2023. Denmark's direct food assistance contribution include funding for WFP, FAO, the CERF and UN OCHA's country-based pooled funds. On top of these contributions Denmark provides funding for food assistance through partnerships with other UN agencies, international and Danish civil society organisations in the form of non-earmarked core funding for which information on the percentage used for food assistance is often not easily available.

Denmark is committed to carry its share of the burden in reaching Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 2: "Zero Hunger". Denmark's contributions towards SDG2 in 2023 included a wide range of development and humanitarian interventions, predominately in collaboration with UN agencies and programmes, as well as Danish civil society organisations. Interventions include, but are not limited to, food assistance in protracted crises and emergencies, support to resilience and food security, forecast-based financing and anticipatory action, and agricultural development. Furthermore, Denmark is part of Team Europe's response to food insecurity and provides funding through IFIs to stabilize global food systems and build resilience against external shocks in order to improve long-term food security.

Denmark considers *cash-based assistance* to be an effective way of providing humanitarian assistance and encourages partners to use this modality wherever applicable. In accordance with the overall principles of Danish humanitarian assistance, with obligations under the Grand Bargain and in accordance with the Good Humanitarian Donorship-principles Denmark aims at providing as much flexible funding as possible and therefore does not at present provide funding specifically earmarked for cash-based assistance.

Denmark's contribution to food assistance in 2023 was to a large extent implemented through the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). Additionally, Denmark contributed to the achievement of food security through funding to United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Central Emergency Fund (CERF), and Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPF) managed by UN OCHA, as well as partners among Danish civil society organisations and their local partners. Localisation of assistance is high on the agenda for Denmark's humanitarian assistance and development cooperation as a way to ensure effective assistance that reaches those most in need and the most difficult to reach.

Denmark provides an annual contribution of DKK 210 million (USD 30,7 million) of flexible and softly earmarked funding for food-related assistance under its multi-year Multilateral Partnership Agreement with WFP, covering 2023-2025. An additional DKK 104 million (USD 15,1 million)

were allocated to WFP country- or programme specific interventions. Furthermore, Denmark was the 6th largest donor to the CERF and the 11th largest donor to the UN Country-based Pooled Funds in 2023 - CERF and many of the Country-based Pooled Funds allocate substantial funding to countries experiencing food insecurity or at risk of famine. 30.10% (USD 9.2 million) of the Danish contributions to the CERF can be attributed to food assistance (agriculture, food assistance, and nutrition) in 2023.

European Union

The European Union's (EU) humanitarian assistance is funded through the European Commission's Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO).

In 2023, the EU's humanitarian aid budget amounted to EUR 2.4 billion (USD 2.6 billion), reflecting a 17% decrease compared to 2022, which marked the highest level of humanitarian financing in the past 15 years. Despite this decrease, the funding level remained historically high, underscoring the EU's commitment to addressing the escalating humanitarian needs amid challenging budgetary circumstances.

The year 2023 was defined by several significant facts, including the continued Russian invasion of Ukraine, with far-reaching consequences on global food markets and prices. Additionally, climatic events such as El Niño led to extreme droughts or floods in various regions. Furthermore, ongoing conflicts in areas like the Sahel, Sudan, and Gaza were exacerbated. Particularly noteworthy was the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, which reached an unprecedented severity, resulting in acute food insecurity levels never recorded in the history of IPC/CH.

In response to ever-increasing humanitarian needs, DG ECHO intervened not only in large-scale humanitarian crises that attracted widespread attention, such as those in Gaza and Ukraine, but also in forgotten crises—severe, protracted humanitarian emergencies that often receive little media interest and insufficient international aid. DG ECHO supported operations in over 80 countries, including through global and regional interventions, and remained a key global humanitarian donor, contributing 9% of the total funding mobilised in the global humanitarian system.¹

The EU's commitment under the Food Assistance Convention for 2023 was EUR 350 million (USD 378 million). In response to the enormous scale of global food insecurity in 2023, the EU nearly doubled this commitment, allocating EUR 671 million (USD 725 million) from the humanitarian budget to food assistance and nutrition in operational programmes. Additionally, the EU contributed EUR 68 million to various CBPF, the DREF and UNHAS, part of which also supports food security interventions.

Despite this significant allocation, it represents a 32% reduction from 2022, mirroring the overall decrease in the EU's humanitarian budget. In 2023, food assistance accounted for over 29% of the total EU humanitarian assistance budget. Approximately 36% of this amount was provided

¹ [UN Financial Tracking System, Global Funding Overview Summary 2023](#)

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as cash transfers, including multi-purpose cash transfers, demonstrating DG ECHO's commitment to enhancing efficiency by promoting cash as a key implementation method. Projects were conducted worldwide, covering over 64 countries and several regional and global initiatives. More than 40% of the assistance was directed to Sub-Saharan African countries.

EU-funded projects target people who are food insecure or malnourished due to conflict, natural disasters, or economic shocks. Throughout 2023, food crises grew in both size and severity, reaching record-breaking levels with 281 million people acutely food-insecure and in urgent need of food assistance. Food insecurity was exacerbated by the ripple effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, crises in regions such as Gaza and Sudan, extreme weather events (notably droughts and flooding resulting from the El Niño climatic event), and various economic shocks.

DG ECHO responded quickly and mobilized substantial resources to address the hunger crises in 2023. It increased funding for the countries most at risk and intensified advocacy efforts in key regions such as the Sahel, Yemen, Nigeria, and Syria. Longer-term measures included strengthening coordination with international actors, promoting anticipatory action, and supporting improved data collection and usage.

Finland

Finland's commitment under the Food assistance Convention for 2023 was EUR 6 million (USD 6.4 million). Finland exceeded its commitment, contributing food assistance with EUR 28.9 million (USD 31.2 million), which was channelled through WFP.

Some food assistance, voucher or cash components are also included in the multi-sectoral operations of Finnish NGOs, Fida International, Finnish Refugee Council, Save the Children Finland and World Vision Finland. In addition, Finland provides support to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (both ICRC, IFRC and the Finnish Red Cross) and food assistance components are included in these operations. However, it is not possible to calculate the exact amount of food assistance in the aforementioned NGO and Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement contributions, as all of them also include humanitarian aid in other sectors. Similarly, an untracked amount of Finland's funding to UN OCHA's CERF and Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) has been used for food assistance. Therefore, they are not included in the figures above for Finland's overall assistance.

In 2023, Finland's food assistance targeted populations at country and regional level in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Mauritania, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Somalia, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Turkiye, Syria Lebanon, Yemen, West Bank and Gaza and Myanmar. Most food aid was granted to help people in need in Afghanistan and Ukraine. Countries and crises selected were largely based on the need expressed by partners, based on the humanitarian needs and funding shortfalls at the time.

Furthermore, Finland funded WFP with core funding of EUR 8 million (USD 8.6 million) and WFP's school meal programs with EUR 3 million (USD 3.2 million). EUR 1 million (USD 1.08 million) funding for WFP's school feeding programmes was channelled into contexts that are

fragile and host refugees or internally displaced or stateless person, also supporting those refugee host countries that bear the greatest responsibility for supporting refugees. In addition, Finland supported through the WFP the Grain from Ukraine initiative with EUR 2 million (USD 2.1 million) and the Black Sea Grain Initiative with EUR 5 million (USD 5.4 million).

France

While its initial commitment to this Committee amounted to EUR 150.4 million (USD 162.43 million) in 2023, France ultimately allocated EUR 308.5 million (USD 333.5 million) to its food assistance actions. In particular, this year, the main French instrument dedicated to food assistance, i.e., the French Food Assistance Programme (FAP) amount increased more than 21% compared to 2022, reaching EUR 170,4 million (USD 184 million) in 2023. Unlike previous years, this year France takes into account the food and nutritional assistance provided by the two other instruments of French humanitarian aid, the French Food Assistance Programme (FAP) remaining the main instrument dedicated to responding to acute food and nutritional insecurity.²

In 2023, 57 countries benefitted from the French food assistance with 213 projects, i.e., 70 more projects than in 2022, in the context of worsening existing food crises and the emergence of new crises. 49% of the funds benefitted Africa, EUR 151 million (USD 163.7 million) including EUR 23,25 million (USD 25.13 million) for projects implemented in Chad, EUR 14 million (USD 15.14 million) in Ethiopia. EUR 21.5 million (USD 23.2 million) also benefitted Ukraine and EUR 11 million Haiti (USD 12 million). France also increased its financial support to WFP in 2023, reaching EUR 167 million (USD 181 million) through different humanitarian aid instruments, including through FAP.

More than 50% of the funds benefitted Africa EUR 150 million / USD 162 million), in particular West Africa with EUR 19.4 million (USD 21 million) – 14.4% of the French food assistance was allocated to the Sahel (EUR 46.2 million / USD 49.1 million). An increased effort was also made for Ethiopia (EUR 14 million / USD 15.14 million) and the DRC (EUR 14.1 million / USD 15.3 million), as well as for Chad (EUR 23.25 million / USD 25.13 million). In East Africa (EUR 57.2 million / USD 61.8 million), the response to the Sudanese crisis, associated with long periods of drought, required a significant effort in Ethiopia (EUR 14 million / USD 15.14 million), in South Sudan (EUR 9.25 million / USD 10 million), as well as in Somalia (EUR 7.25 million / USD 7.8 million). In addition, EUR 5 million (USD 5.4 million) of FAP were mobilized as part of the regional response to the Sudanese crisis, in support of four neighbouring countries affected by the new influx of refugees.

In Asia & Pacific, France funding was mobilized to the tune of EUR 21.7 million (USD 23.5 million), including EUR 9.2 million (USD 10 million) for Afghanistan and EUR 2.25 million (USD 2.43 million) for Bangladesh to deal with the Rohingya crisis. The Palestinian Territories benefited from EUR 14.4 million (USD 15.53 million) (projects supported by UNRWA, WFP and

² From 2023, in a serious context of extreme global food security, the French two other channels have also started to finance food and nutritional assistance activities, as part of their multi-sectoral humanitarian projects.

two NGOs, PUI and ACF). In the Americas/Caribbean area (EUR 17 million / USD 18.4 million), nine countries benefited from funding, including Haiti first (EUR 11 million / USD 12 million).

France has therefore been able to adapt to the new geographies of food crises – Benin, Ghana, Turkey, Guatemala and Malawi benefited from support in 2023, unlike 2022 – while allocating more than 70% of the credits of the FAP (EUR 215 million / USD 223 million) to the least developed countries, in accordance with the objective of devoting 50% of credits to LDCs. Ukraine alone received EUR 21.5 million (USD 23.2 million) in 2023 like in 2022, in accordance with our political commitments; all throughout the budget year, the effort consisted in preventing any crowding out effect at the expense of other food crises, which were themselves exacerbated by the effects of the war in Ukraine.

The leading operator remains the WFP, with EUR 167 million (USD 181 million) in 2023. Next comes, in decreasing amounts of funding, Action Against Hunger (ACF), Solidarities International, PUI, ACTED, ICRC, UNRWA and UNICEF. In total, within the FAP: (i) international organizations benefit from 66.4% of credits in 2023; (ii) civil society organizations, for 30.39%: the ICRC, for 3.21%. According to the common methodology for reporting UNHAS contributions proposal, the France UNHAS contributions taken into account under the FAC reach EUR 4.3 million (USD 4.7 million).

In line with its [International Strategy for Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture \(2019-2024\)](#), France strengthens its action in nutrition, notably through the Food Assistance Program. The French strategy primarily targets under-nutrition and pregnant and lactating women and children under two years of age, the so-called « 1 000 days » period. France will host the next edition of the Nutrition for Growth/N4G Summit, on March 27th and 28th 2025. The objective of devoting 50% of funding to nutrition was also largely achieved: EUR 98.8 million (USD 106.7 million) or 58% of the total of the FAP, focused on this theme.

France also co-leads the School Meals Coalition initiated by the WFP, alongside Finland and Brazil. School feeding programs contribute to the fight against hunger, promote access and retention of students in school – especially girls – improve learning, health and student nutrition and support local food systems and markets. In the run-up to the first global meeting of the School Feeding Coalition held in Paris in October 2023, projects on school feeding programs have also been supported in several countries such as Afghanistan, Myanmar, Cameroon, Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Somalia, or even Ukraine, Venezuela and Yemen. It was announced on this occasion that EUR 36.5 million (USD 39.4 million) had been allocated to this theme, including more than EUR 26 million (USD 28 million, i.e.15%) coming from the FAP credits in 2023.

France, together with the EU and its member states, has been highly mobilized to avert a further worsening of the food crisis already unfolding, in the context of the war in Ukraine and the weaponization of food security by Russia. Solidarity corridors put in place by the EU and the Black Sea Grain initiative³ made it possible to help lower grain prices. As part of the FARM initiative, France has supported the “Grain from Ukraine” humanitarian programme since its

³ Before the interruption of the Black Sea Initiative (BSI) in July 2023

launch on November 26, 2022, which emphasizes the importance of food security and the global role of Ukraine and its partners in guaranteeing this security. The "Grain from Ukraine" initiative had enabled WFP to export hundreds of thousands of tons of Ukrainian cereals to vulnerable countries, including Somalia, Nigeria and Sudan with the support of France.

Finally, in line with French commitments to gender equality and within the framework of France's feminist diplomacy, almost all projects funded under the Food Assistance Program include a gender perspective. Our Food Assistance Program also supports local food production, as well as agricultural training projects.

Japan

Japan's contribution in 2023 as USD 247.7 million exceeded its annual FAC commitment of JPY 10 billion (approximately USD 73.5 million) by providing an array of programmes including bilateral food assistance, food assistance through international organizations, grand aid, and emergency grant aid. The total amount of Japan's contribution in 2023 resulted in an exceptionally large scale, addressing the global food security affected by the situation in Ukraine.

Japan concluded the Exchange of Notes (E/Ns) with 10 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, DR Congo, Gambia, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo) for bilateral food assistance programmes at JPY 3.4 billion (USD 24.5 million).

Japan also worked with WFP to respond to the food and nutrition needs of 11 countries and areas in Latin America and the Caribbean (Haiti and Venezuela), the Middle East (Palestine) and Sub-Saharan Africa (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Eswatini, Guinea, Lesotho, Mozambique, Republic of the Congo and South Sudan) for food assistance programmes at JPY 2.8 billion (USD 20.4 million). At the same time, facing the critical humanitarian needs of countries and regions in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Ukraine and its neighbouring countries, Japan provided JPY 6.8 billion (USD 49.71 million) for Emergency Grant Aid through WFP. Other funds were allocated to WFP's activities, including assistance for unstable food security in Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Ukraine and its neighbouring countries at JPY 18.4 billion (USD 134.1 million), responding to increasing humanitarian needs across Myanmar affected by the political and economic crisis and Emergency food and nutrition assistance to acutely food-insecure people of Afghanistan in IPC/CH Phase 3+ area. In addition, Japan contributed JPY 628.3 million (USD 4.5 million) to WFP as an unearmarked grant.

Japan also supported UNRWA to distribute food to Palestinian and neighbouring countries' refugees, including Emergency Grant Aid projects in the Gaza Strip at JPY 2.2 billion (USD 16.3 million). Japan is also Task Force member of School Meals Coalition and has been supporting school meals programs in various countries including in Asia and Africa.

Luxembourg

In 2023, the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade (Luxembourg MFEA) allocated more than EUR 108 million

(USD 116.8 million) to its responses to humanitarian crises globally. Throughout the year, Luxembourg, in collaboration with national and international civil society partner organizations as well as multilateral partners, provided a needs-based and principled humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crises in countries across the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, and Asia, among others. Since Russia's illegal aggression against Ukraine, Luxembourg has been committed to providing both financial and material humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and intends to continue these efforts in the coming year. The year 2023, unfortunately brought further geopolitical turbulence, prompting Luxembourg to significantly increase its support for the Middle East. The bulk of this additional support was allocated to the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Gaza Strip, following the attacks on October 7, 2023.

Since its accession to the Food Assistance Convention in 2014, Luxembourg has committed to contribute EUR 4 million (USD 4.3 million) annually to meet the food and nutritional needs of the most vulnerable populations. For the last ten years, Luxembourg's financial contribution to interventions related to food security has regularly exceeded this pledge. In 2023, Luxembourg allocated more than EUR 20 million (USD 21.6 million) to humanitarian food assistance and nutrition, making food assistance the largest sector of contribution, accounting for 18% of Luxembourg's overall humanitarian budget.

Throughout 2023, Luxembourg maintained support for populations affected by protracted conflict, food insecurity, displacement, and climate related disasters across 42 countries in the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, South-East Asia and Ukraine, among others. In addition to supporting shelter, education, protection and WASH initiatives through the UN and international organizations, as well as national/international NGOs, Luxembourg provided overall funds for food security interventions amounting to more than EUR 20 million (USD 21.6 million).

More specifically, Luxembourg provided food assistance through WFP and UNHAS valued at around EUR 11.9 million (USD 12.9 million), as part of its multiannual Strategic Partnership Framework and additional contributions at the end of the year. Other crucial modalities for Luxembourg are the CBPF and the CERF, to which Luxembourg contributed a total of EUR 10.25 million (USD 11.1 million) in 2023 and which allowed for emergency interventions related to nutrition and food security in countries affected by protracted or emergent humanitarian crises. Finally, Luxembourg allocated funds to several national humanitarian NGOs for the implementation of emergency food assistance for vulnerable populations in countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, South Sudan or Ethiopia.

One of Luxembourg's strategic objectives is the promotion of sustainable humanitarian action. This includes addressing the root causes of the systemic challenges that generate humanitarian needs and vulnerabilities. In the case of food assistance, this includes preventive nutrition assistance, mainly for children, as well as the agricultural development of local communities. To achieve this, Luxembourg provides funding to the WFP School Feeding Programme as well as support to both national and international NGOs that implement multi-year projects aimed at increasing the resilience of populations and their local agricultural and food systems, mitigating and adapting to climate change, as well as providing school meals. Through its support for WFP's School Feeding Programmes, Luxembourg was active in Senegal, Mali, Niger and Nicaragua with a total of EUR 3 million (USD 3.2 million) in 2023.

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea (ROK) contributed KRW 51.9 billion (equivalent to USD 39.2 million) in 2023 exceeding its KRW 46 billion annual commitment. 2023 marks the sixth consecutive year for ROK to contribute to implementing Food Assistance Projects through the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) since 2018.

Despite the difficulties that arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global inflation, the Government of ROK has donated 50,000 MT of Korean rice through WFP, addressing the urgent humanitarian needs of targeted populations. The rice was successfully distributed to the most vulnerable people in Yemen, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Syria, and Afghanistan.

In 2023, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea (MAFRA) provided food assistance for six countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East which are in dire need of humanitarian assistance due to conflicts, disaster and climate crisis. With the ROK's contribution of KRW 51.9 billion, WFP purchased Korean rice and implemented food assistance on the ground. 50,000 MT of rice was distributed to Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Syria, Uganda, and Yemen, each receiving 2,502 MT, 13,000 MT, 11,000 MT, 3,006 MT, 2,492 MT, and 18,000 MT respectively. The rice was utilized to maintain pipelines of six WFP Country Offices and support for refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), and school feeding programmes.

Russia

The UN World Food Program (WFP) remains the key multilateral channel for Russia's food aid. In 2023, the Russian Federation contributed USD 50 million in total (3,415 thousand Rubles) to the WFP Fund. This funding is used to provide humanitarian assistance to food-vulnerable countries by purchasing food in the domestic market and supplying it to the agreed recipient countries. In addition to direct food supplies, Russia funds WFP initiatives aimed to develop sustainable school feeding systems.

The annual contribution (USD 20 million) is distributed among recipient countries as follows: Tajikistan – USD 4 million; Kyrgyzstan – USD 3 million; Syria – USD 3 million; Yemen – USD 1 million; Nicaragua – USD 2 million; Cuba – USD 2 million; Palestine – USD 2 million; Afghanistan – USD 1 million; Lebanon – USD 2 million. Besides, Russia provided several additional contributions to WFP Fund including two targeted contributions for African countries (USD 20 million).

In addition to direct food supplies, Russia funds WFP initiatives aimed to develop sustainable school feeding systems. Being at the intersection of humanitarian aid and development assistance, they have an integrated positive effect on combating hunger, promoting a healthy diet, and improving the educational environment. Russia and WFP continue implementing school-feeding projects in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Nicaragua, Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Cuba and Sri-Lanka. In 2023, Russia provided USD 12.5 million to the WFP Fund in order to continue these efforts in aforementioned countries.

The «Debt for Development» project implemented in Mozambique since 2017 will come to its end in 2024. The project allows to convert the USD 40 million debt into a national school feeding

programme. In 2020-2023, a joint Russia-WFP programme «Food, nutrition and livelihoods provision to the affected population» is implemented to provide food assistance to Syria with Russia's funding amounting to USD 20 million.

In 2023, Russia continued to contribute agricultural support and development programs in partner countries under the UNDP and the UNIDO. These activities are devoted to strengthening the climate resilience of the agro-industrial sector; improving skills of agricultural producers; facilitating agricultural products entry to the markets and building sustainable value chains. In 2023, the Russian Federation made a voluntary contribution of about USD 8 million to the FAO Fund in order to provide technical assistance in agricultural restoration and food security in Syria. Besides, in 2023 with the assistance of WFP Russia supplied 110 thousand tons of mineral fertilizers to Malawi, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria.

Slovenia

The commitment of Slovenia under the FAC for 2023 remained at EUR 30,000 (USD 33,630). Slovenia far exceeded its commitment in the same year, since the total food assistance and nutrition allocations in 2023 amounted to EUR 3,065,080 (USD 3,313,600). 62% of food and nutrition assistance was disbursed through international organisations, mostly through WFP. 38% of food and nutrition assistance was allocated to Slovenian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their local partners.

Most of the contributions through World Food Programme (WFP) were country-earmarked, while the largest contribution in the amount of EUR 1 million (USD 1,081 million) was made to the Grain from Ukraine initiative. Projects of Slovenian NGOs, in the total amount of EUR 1,151,000 (USD 1,237,634) were geographically focused on Sub-Saharan Africa and humanitarian emergencies in the European Neighbourhood. In 2023 Slovenia strengthened its long-term support to the WFP in L3 emergencies. Slovenia's contributions included EUR 450,000 (USD 486,486) to West Bank and Gaza, EUR 50,000 (USD 54,054) to Haiti and EUR 40,000 (USD 43,243) to Yemen. Sub-Saharan Africa is Slovenia's priority region. In 2023 Slovenia contributed EUR 200,000 (USD 216,216) to the Horn of Africa and EUR 100,000 (USD 108,108) to the Sahel Region.

For the second consecutive year, Slovenia contributed EUR 1 million (USD 1,08 million) to the Grain from Ukraine initiative. Additionally, Slovenia contributed EUR 50,000 (USD 54,054) through Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) for emergency humanitarian assistance in Somalia. Overall contributions through international organisations, including Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), amounted to EUR 1,914,080 (USD 2,069,274).

In 2023, Slovenia continued participation in the Grain for Ukraine initiative by the WFP, which proved as a successful approach to innovative food assistance. Slovenia's contributions to the initiative in 2022 and 2023 were used to bring food assistance to Kenya and Sudan respectively.

At the bilateral level Slovenia continued with food and nutrition related projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, namely in Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan in the total amount of EUR 621,000 (USD 671,301). Slovenia also provided EUR 530,000 (USD 569,892) to NGOs

for humanitarian emergencies, in particular earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye, and Morocco as well as providing support to the conflict-affected regions of eastern Ukraine.

Spain

Spain's commitment under the Food Assistance Convention for 2023 was EUR 10 million (just over USD 10.8 million). Spain exceeded its commitment comfortably in 2023. Total food assistance and nutrition allocations from the Spanish Agency for International Development's (AECID) Office of Humanitarian Affairs (OAH) in 2023 were EUR 23.876 million (USD 25.812 million). Over 78% of OAH's food assistance was implemented through the WFP (EUR 18.65 million, USD 19.955 million), while the rest was disbursed via other UN partners (EUR 1.2 million or USD 1.28 million to UNICEF and EUR 0.4 million or USD 0.43 million to UNHCR), Movement partners (EUR 2.436 million or USD 2.6 million), and Spanish (EUR 0.646 million or USD 0.691 million) and international NGOs (EUR 0.544 million or USD 0.582 million). Almost 4.2% of the total funds allocated are linked to cash-based interventions, a proportion which has increased since 2009 and is set to increase further in coming years. Food assistance still represents the major humanitarian sector using cash, followed by shelter and non-food items.

Throughout 2023, Spain maintained support for populations affected by protracted conflict, food insecurity, and displacement in countries across Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East. In addition to supporting shelter, education, protection, and WASH initiatives through other UN and international agencies, Spain provided emergency food assistance through WFP valued at EUR 18.65 million (USD 19.955 million). This assistance targeted conflict-affected populations in the West Bank and Gaza, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, as well as refugee communities in Central and South America (Venezuela, Guatemala, and Haiti), the Sahel (Mali, Niger, and Mauritania), and Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria. Spain supported the WFP's school feeding programmes in Niger, Mauritania, and Mali. These interventions focussed on food distribution to improve average daily nutritional intake and incentivise school attendance, particularly for girls, and many included the establishment of community gardens to increase local food production and improve the sustainability of school feeding programmes. Spain's assistance was further supplemented by Spain's annual subsidy to finance the WFP's logistical base in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

Sweden

Sweden's commitment under the Food Assistance Convention for 2023 was 200 million SEK (USD 18.8 million). Sweden's total contribution to food assistance amounted to over 2 458 million SEK (USD 231 million) and Sweden therefore comfortably exceeded its commitment. Sweden's support consisted of core funding to the World Food Programme in line with Sweden's multi-year Strategic Partnership Agreement with WFP, as well as funding to CERF and DREF. Sweden's country-level food assistance support was allocated to over 30 countries, and was channelled through Action Against Hunger, FAO and WFP, as well as CBPFs.

Sweden's allocation of humanitarian assistance follows a needs-based approach and intends to reach the most vulnerable, including in hard-to-reach areas. Sweden is committed to supporting an effective and flexible humanitarian response. Sweden's contributions to the above-mentioned partners therefore include a high level of core, flexible and programme-level funding, in order to

facilitate their response and make it as efficient and effective as possible. Wherever possible, Sida's country-level funding has a programme-based rather than project-based approach, to ensure effective and agile functioning of its partners. Sweden also integrates a food security analysis into its support to system-strengthening efforts through research and policy development. Sweden also continues to provide support to climate change adaptation, resilience-building and anticipatory action to mitigate the negative trend of increasing global food insecurity.

In response to the continued negative trend in global food security in 2023, exacerbated by i.a. conflict and climate change, Sweden maintained its extensive support to global food security. Sweden contributed to country-level responses of key food security implementing partners in over 30 countries worldwide, basing allocation decisions on a needs-based approach in line with the humanitarian principles. Sweden's major country-level responses in terms of emergency food security response included Afghanistan, Ethiopia, DRC and Myanmar.

Switzerland

Switzerland's commitment under the FAC for 2023 was of CHF 47 million (or USD 52.3 million), compared with in CHF 34 in 2022. Total food assistance and nutrition allocations from Switzerland in 2023 reached a new record USD 134.8 million, thus significantly exceeding its commitment. This total was possible thanks to the disbursement of extraordinary funding and reallocation of unspent ODA funds in order to respond to both the Sudan and Palestine crises. Regarding the type of partners, 70% of Switzerland's food assistance was implemented through support to the World Food Program (WFP) with a total USD 92.9 million. The remaining part of its contributions was distributed as follows: USD 8.7 million (7%) was allocated to NGOs, USD 3.8 million (23%) to other global organizations such as UNDP, UNWRA, UN OCHA, IFRC's DREF or various other partners through global or core funding.

Switzerland focuses its humanitarian policy dialogue on governance and IHL in general; it does not support the advancement of the Cash-Based Transfers modality through earmarked contributions for specific project activities but through systematic policy dialogue and ad hoc expert secondments; 89% of Swiss aid under the FAC is country-earmarked or fully flexible. In addition to its funding, Switzerland supported WFP with 23 experts from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA Unit); their work is FAC-eligible and valued at USD 1.9 million. They provided expertise in Cash-Based Transfer programming (CBT) and Shock-Responsive Social Protection, Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Logistics, Civil-Military Coordination, Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Finance.

Switzerland takes a holistic approach in addressing global food security challenges and combines humanitarian aid, development cooperation, multilateral instruments, diplomatic measures as well as peace building initiatives, wherever feasible. Switzerland enjoys a long-standing and close partnership with WFP. Of all the UN agencies, WFP receives the largest amount of Swiss funding for humanitarian interventions. In 2023, Switzerland contributed to WFP with a record of USD 93.4 million eligible under the FAC; it was among the top 10 largest government donor. In terms of geographic breakdown, Switzerland's 2023 contributions allocated to support populations suffering from acute food insecurity and malnutrition went

accordingly: 32% to Africa, 5% to Asia, 37% to the Middle East and North Africa, 7% to the Americas, 3% to Europe and about 17% as core / global.

In line with its commitment to the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles, Switzerland made a fully un-earmarked contribution of USD 8.4 million to WFP Immediate Response Account (IRA), making it the fourth largest donor country in 2024; it enabled WFP to provide immediate food assistance in 31 countries and contexts, in particular in Palestine, Sudan or Turkey. UNHAS received Swiss contributions valued at USD 5.6 million Switzerland contributed also to the CERF and UN OCHA-led Country-Based Pool Funds (CBPFs) in 13 countries which USD 18.9 million was dedicated to emergency food security. Overall, the humanitarian aid of Switzerland provided food assistance in 33 countries. As an observer state of WFP's Executive Board in 2023, Switzerland remained actively involved in the Executive Board's informal consultations and sessions. It continued to play a leadership role in WFP, notably supporting the adoption of its new Cash-Based Transfers policy. It maintained its focus engagement on the implementation of the Protection & AAP policy, the development of a Localization of Aid policy, the support to Anticipatory Actions globally and the review of the WFP Executive Board governance.

United States of America

The United States (US) Government maintains its commitment to global food security and to improving the ability of the international community to respond to emergency food insecurity and other food needs of developing countries. For more than a half century, the United States has been the largest contributor to global development and humanitarian assistance. This is a testament to the humanity of the American people and our understanding that food security is also national security.

In 2023, the U.S., through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), exceeded its FAC commitment of USD 3.5 billion with nearly USD 5.6 billion in FAC-eligible humanitarian assistance funding, helping more than 70 million people in need in nearly 60 countries. When responding to severe food crises, the United States complements food assistance with comprehensive, multi-sector programming, such as treatment for acute malnutrition, clean water, and health services programming. The United States works with United Nations agencies that have the capacity to quickly scale their operations and also with non-governmental organizations to design this essential multi-sector programming. Our emergency food assistance is provided in the form of in-kind food, cash transfers for food, or food vouchers.

The United States remains deeply committed to our support to fight child wasting globally. In 2023, with our encouragement and facilitation, UNICEF and WFP developed a joint strategy for transitioning their programming in humanitarian contexts to reflect the new WHO guideline for wasting prevention and treatment. This includes transferring caseloads of "high-risk MAM" to UNICEF for appropriate supplementation, and a stronger focus on prevention. This plan was finalized in July 2023. This is important progress, and we are continuing to work closely with these key partners as they carry out this strategy.

USAID also supports multi-year resilience food security activities that enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations around the world. These activities aim to build people's capacities to

better manage shocks and stresses by combating malnutrition, reducing morbidity and mortality, promoting economic growth, minimizing disaster risks, improving food security, and adapting to climate change. The United States obligated a total of USD 367 million for these activities in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. Additionally, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded more than USD 422 million for food assistance programming overseas in FY 2023. These contributions helped provide school meals and supported capacity building initiatives that improved agricultural production and economic expansion in developing nations. Through the USDA international food assistance and capacity building programs more than 5.2 million direct participants in 52 developing countries were supported in FY 2023.

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (McGovern-Dole) funds school meals, education and nutrition programs that are implemented by private-voluntary organizations and other international organizations for women, infants, and children in countries with high food insecurity. The program's statutory objectives are to reduce hunger, increase literacy, and improve the health and dietary practices of school-age children, with an emphasis on girls. In FY 2023, McGovern-Dole reached more than 4.5 million participants with all active programming. The Food for Progress Program (FFPr) focuses on improving agricultural productivity and expanding agricultural trade in developing countries and emerging democracies. The FFPr statute directs USDA, when awarding projects, to consider a country's commitments to promote economic freedom and expand efficient domestic commodity markets. Projects are funded primarily by proceeds from the sale of donated U.S. agricultural commodities. The projects are intended to strengthen the capacity of foreign countries to engage in international trade and enhance global food security. In FY 2023, FFPr reached more than 662,000 direct participants. Through FFPr assistance, more than 357,000 individuals applied improved climate smart agriculture technologies or management practices, and farmers increased sales of their agricultural products. The U.S. expected commitment for food security in 2024 is at least USD 3 billion.

2.2 Key Responses

Afghanistan

Following the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in August 2021, over 24.4 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance. By 2023, according to the UN, this number increased to almost 30 million. In particular, the food security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated alarmingly, and according to IPC/CH approximately 13.1 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) in 2023. Malnutrition, particularly among children, has increased, and infant and maternal mortality rates are equally high. The country's basic services, including health and education, are on the verge of collapse.

The causes are numerous, such as a failing economy, global and local economic shocks, decreasing humanitarian and development funding, and an increase in both number as well as severity of natural hazards (such as droughts, floods, earthquakes). The dire situation resulted in skyrocketing levels of insecurity, especially with regard to food, health and livelihoods, rising poverty and continued displacement.

The majority of the FAC parties, via its humanitarian partners, provided life-saving humanitarian and food assistance to those most in need in Afghanistan. Next to food and nutrition commodities, FAC members supported those most vulnerable with cash-based assistance, urgently needed medical equipment, the provision of emergency health care, water-sanitation-hygiene measures, protection, education in emergencies as well as the support of humanitarian logistical services. Additionally, the acute needs stemming from droughts, earthquakes and floods, especially with regard to temporary shelter and emergency food rations, were addressed efficiently and effectively by many FAC parties.

Bangladesh and Myanmar

The humanitarian needs of the nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees living in extremely congested camps in Bangladesh remains high. The displaced populations mainly rely on outside assistance, especially regarding food supply. Malnutrition rates in infants (6-23 months) and pregnant and breastfeeding women are ever increasing and the lack of long-term perspectives and solutions on return, resettlement or local reintegration leads to increasing numbers of frustration and internal conflicts.

In Myanmar, the escalating conflict and the weak economy continue to negatively impact food security levels. Inflation and the depreciation of the local currency, low agricultural production, the regime's limits on rice and fuel transportation, and domestic and global trade disruptions have contributed to staple food shortages and rising food prices. Limited livelihood opportunities, along with higher prices, have forced households to reduce food consumption as a coping strategy. As of December 2023, food insecurity affected around 12.9 million people or nearly 25% of the population. Displaced people, non-displaced Rohingya people and female-headed households, are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity.

The much-needed support by FAC parties focused on providing essential food and nutrition assistance, addressing critical livelihood and other basic needs as well as fostering protection and safeguarding of those most vulnerable.

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger

The people in the Central Sahel countries Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger are facing a complex humanitarian crisis and continue to be affected by multidimensional hazards. Intercommunal conflicts, political and economic instability, the impact of climate change and weather extremes further aggravate the already dire humanitarian situation. As a result, displacement, inflation and economic shocks, irregular rainfall and poor harvests all contribute to increasing livelihood and food needs amongst the populations in the region.

In 2023, according to the Cadre Harmonisé, 3.28 million people were in food crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above) in Niger, while around 1.26 million people were projected to face high acute food insecurity in Mali, including tens of thousands facing catastrophic conditions (Phase 5). In Burkina Faso, an estimated 5.5 million people urgently needed humanitarian and food assistance in 2023, including 3.2 million children. Overall, an estimated 43.9 million people in the Sahel and West Africa were in need of immediate food assistance in 2023. Apart from the direct humanitarian needs, the unstable security situation severely limited the access of

humanitarian actors and consequentially the delivery of assistance in large parts of Burkina Faso and Mali.

Under these difficult circumstances, the overwhelming majority of FAC members supported the countries of the region and those most in need with emergency relief and food assistance. Next to the support of School Feeding Programmes, the provision of health and nutrition related interventions, and disasters preparedness, members made considerable contributions to the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), advancing humanitarian access wherever possible. Through their interventions, FAC parties strengthened food and nutrition security and increased the dietary diversity of people in one of the biggest hunger hotspots in the world.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In absolute number of persons affected, the food crisis in the DRC is one the largest worldwide. It is estimated that more than 25 million people suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), with more than 23 million people being in IPC/CH Phase 3 and above. Children under five, pregnant and lactating women, people with disabilities as well as people facing intersectional discriminations are particularly affected.

Armed conflict, especially in the north-eastern provinces of the country, has worsened over the course of 2023, contributing largely to the high levels of food insecurity. Moreover, the armed conflict is one of the major drivers of internal displacement. Hunger and conflict fuel one another, with armed conflict and widespread displacement prevailing for the past 25 years.

Besides strengthening food and nutrition security through their interventions, several FAC members also supported multisectoral responses with a focus on health, wellbeing and protection.

Occupied Palestinian Territories

Due to the 7 October terror attack by Hamas and the consequent conflict between Israel and Hamas, the dire humanitarian crisis for the civilian population of Gaza and the scale of internal displacement has overwhelmed existing resources, leaving a large part of the population without access to basic necessities, including food, clean water and electricity. Extensive bombardments, ground operations and besiegement have caused catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity across the Gaza Strip. More than 1 million people have been displaced, with many people relocating multiple times in increasingly smaller geographic areas.

Despite all efforts of the international community, severe access constraints and restricted operational space prevented sufficient assistance reaching the people in need. An IPC/CH analysis conducted in December 2023 highlighted that over 90% of the population in the Gaza Strip, more than 2 million people, were acutely food insecure.

Many FAC parties rallied to quickly address the rapidly growing humanitarian needs of the population in the Gaza Strip. A majority of contributions focused on emergency food and livelihood assistance, especially ready-to-eat, high energy and fortified staples as well as ready to use therapeutic food (RUTF).

Somalia, Ethiopia and Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa is one of the most food-insecure regions in the world. In 2023, humanitarian needs were further exacerbated due to conflicts, climate change, natural disasters, and disease.

In 2023, Somalia endured the worst drought in decades, followed by the most extensive floods in generations, all within a few months. As a result, humanitarian needs remain severe: Four million people (21% of the population) were facing IPC/CH Phase 3 or worse, with rural areas being particularly affected. An estimated 1.7 million children aged 6 to 59 months faced acute malnutrition in 2023, including 430,000 who were likely to be severely malnourished. The situation was exacerbated by the impacts of five consecutive seasons of below-average to poor rainfall, a likely sixth season of below-average rainfall, high food prices, conflict/insecurity, and disease outbreaks.

The humanitarian situation in Ethiopia is equally deteriorating: In 2023, more than 15 million people were in need of food assistance as a result of various shocks, including conflict and the negative impact of weather extremes from previous agricultural seasons. Five consecutive unsuccessful rainy seasons on the one hand and devastating floods on the other have wiped out entire harvests and led to immense food insecurity and malnutrition in the country. Staple food prices, such as maize, sorghum, and teff, continued to rise, contributing to ever growing humanitarian needs, especially among the most vulnerable populations, including IDPs.

To respond to this dire humanitarian situation, most of the FAC parties provided life-saving assistance, particularly through general food distribution of cereals, pulses, oil, super cereal (CSB+), and salt. Moreover, interventions focusing on integrated water and land management and climate smart agri-food systems helped to meet dietary needs and improve food and nutrition security, to protect livelihoods in the face of shocks as well as promote resilient agri-food value chains.

Sudan and South Sudan

The outbreak of conflict in Sudan in April 2023, involving the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has led to a significant deterioration in humanitarian conditions not only in Sudan but also in neighbouring South Sudan and triggered one of the largest displacement crises globally.

In Sudan, the intensifying conflict and intercommunal violence have brought about a macroeconomic crisis with soaring prices of fuel and essential goods, hindering agricultural activity. Farmers are unable to access finance, face high costs due to the devaluation of the local currency, cannot import and face limited supplies at local markets. Pastoralists are unable to access grazing areas due to insecurity, while livestock are not getting proper veterinary care due to a severe shortage of vaccines, supplementary feed and water shortages. As a result, food insecurity reached dramatic levels, with 17.7 million people (37% of the population) across Sudan were in high levels of acute food insecurity. Of those, about 5 million were classified in emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) levels, with a real threat of sliding into catastrophic food insecurity and famine (IPC/CH Phase 5). Moreover, Sudan has the highest rate of child malnutrition globally: 700,000 children are at high risk of death without treatment.

Food insecurity has become a pressing issue in both countries, Sudan and South Sudan, exacerbated by conflict, economic shocks, inflation, and environmental factors. The national 2023 IPC/CH analysis for South Sudan revealed 5.83 million people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or worse, projected to soon surpass 7 million. With the onset of the Sudan crisis in April 2023 and a combination of violence, climate change and the cessation of food distribution in parts of Ethiopia, thousands of people returned to South Sudan. This influx of returnees, many with limited resources, strains host communities, particularly near Sudanese and Ethiopian borders. The situation remains alarming, necessitating urgent humanitarian intervention.

To mitigate the crisis and alleviate suffering in both countries, many of the FAC members contributed life-saving humanitarian assistance via their trusted and longstanding humanitarian partners. FAC parties' interventions provided emergency food assistance through voucher and cash-based assistance combined with in-kind solutions where necessary. Further emphasis was given to creating safe and sustainable access to water, promoting sustainable agricultural practices and mainstreaming protection concerns in all interventions.

Syria and neighbouring countries

The humanitarian situation in Syria and its neighbouring countries continues to deteriorate as a result of the decade-long civil war and other factors such as the devastating earthquakes of February 2023, the ongoing cholera outbreak, worsening economic indicators, collapsing basic services, and climate and human-caused shocks.

In 2023, the food insecurity situation in Syria is soaring rapidly, with 12.9 million people, or 55% of the population, facing high levels of acute food insecurity and another 2.6 million are at risk of hunger. The situation has been compounded by the dramatic economic situation, currency depreciation and rising prices of essential goods, which gravely affected the purchasing power of households. The 2023 earthquake aggravated needs immensely, leaving tens of thousands dead and destroying the livelihoods of more than half a million people. As the humanitarian crisis continues to worsen, Syria is witnessing a surge in violence characterized by heightened hostilities and instability.

The neighbouring countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey have taken in over 5 million Syrian refugees and are equally dependent on support; especially Jordan and Lebanon experience worrying levels of poverty and food insecurity. In Lebanon, more than 3.8 million people were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in 2023, including over 800,000 registered Syrian refugees. According to UN OCHA, 3 out of 4 people in Lebanon were not able to cover their regular food and nutrition needs. The situation in Gaza has further exacerbated the difficult refugee situation with new displacement in southern Lebanon and heightened security and protection risks in the whole country. The humanitarian situation of the more than 700,000 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan is equally dire: Both Syrian refugees and host communities are facing increasing economic and social challenges, with soaring needs especially in regard to food and nutrition assistance as well as basic health services.

In response to the difficult situation of Syrians as well as Syrian refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries, most of the FAC parties provided lifesaving food assistance and protection for internal displaced persons, refugees and host communities. Through multisectoral interventions, multipurpose cash assistance and in-kind contributions, conflict-affected and food

insecure people across the region were able to cover their most critical food and nutrition needs and receive general livelihood support.

Ukraine

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has caused enormous destruction and humanitarian suffering. In 2023, according to the Humanitarian Response Plan published by UN OCHA, approximately 17.6 million people - almost half of the population - needed humanitarian aid, while 11.1 million people were in need of food security and livelihood support. At the same time, Ukrainians face continued and recurring phases of displacement and return. In addition to the very personal hardships of recurrent displacement, it leads to overstrained social protection and welfare systems, which in large parts ceased to function under the constant distress.

Apart from the direct humanitarian needs, the continued act of war has highly contaminated Ukraine's territory with landmines and unexploded objects. Estimates are that up to 30% of Ukraine's territory needs decontamination of mines and other explosives, increasing the death toll and number of injured and impaired people further. Moreover, it greatly hampers the critical food production as thousands of farms and rural households have been forced to cut down or shut down their agricultural activity.

In these difficult humanitarian circumstances, the overwhelming majority of FAC parties provided life-saving assistance to people in need in Ukraine. The FAC members' assistance via humanitarian partners such as UN agencies, the International Red Cross and NGOs supported School Feeding Programmes, the Grain from Ukraine Initiative, the Black Sea Grain Initiative as well as general food aid via cash assistance and in-kind support. Other sectors of intervention included interventions in water and sanitation, shelter and non-food items (NFIs), health and protection, including gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH), child protection and Education in Emergencies. Apart from traditional humanitarian assistance, many of the FAC parties supported demining and land clearing initiatives, decreasing the number of mine victims and allowing for the revitalization of farmland for agricultural cultivation.

Yemen

Yemen remains one of the worst humanitarian food crises in the world. After nine years of conflict, the country is experiencing extremely difficult economic conditions, extensive damage to civilian infrastructure, and the collapse of essential services. The conflict is the key driver of large-scale vulnerabilities, and coupled with economic downturns and reduced humanitarian food assistance has left a staggering 17 million people, more than half of the population, in dire need of food assistance in 2023. Nearly half of all children under five suffer from moderate to severe stunting and malnutrition. As per IPC/CH estimates, 45% of the Yemeni population experience IPC/CH Phase 3 or worse levels of acute food insecurity.

This food security emergency is further compounded by health, nutrition and WASH acute needs, among others. In parallel, the military escalation in the Red Sea has been threatening to disrupt the humanitarian supply chain, hampering the availability and affordability of basic commodities and goods including medicines, food and fuel even further.

To avert the risk of famine and alleviate the most pressing humanitarian and food needs, the majority of the FAC parties provided food assistance for the people in Yemen in 2023. Next to a mix of multi-purpose cash assistance and in-kind support to cover urgent hunger and nutrition needs as well as much needed malnutrition treatment, FAC members promoted the adherence to International Humanitarian Law and the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

2.3 Forgotten Crisis

Central African Republic

Food insecurity remains a major concern in the Central African Republic. In December 2023, 41% of the population experienced high levels of acute food insecurity and ranked last in the World Hunger Index. Food insecurity in the country is mainly caused by conflict and resulting insecurity, which limits access to the fields, heavy rains and crop disease. Yet, the Central African Republic is one of the ten worst humanitarian crises often forgotten and overlooked and least reported on.

To address the soaring humanitarian needs, some of the FAC parties provided much needed emergency food assistance.

Haiti

Haiti has one of the highest levels of food insecurity in the world. In 2023, the food security situation in Haiti deteriorated further. Structural low agricultural productivity, sustained inflation, chronic socio-political instability, the progressive decapitalization of households and widespread gang violence restricting movements of goods and people result in critical hunger and malnutrition rates: Almost half of the population was experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity in 2023.

To support those in need, several of the FAC parties responded to the most urgent food and nutrition needs through emergency food and cash assistance and nutrition services in rural and urban areas.

Venezuela and Colombia

After nine years of social and humanitarian crisis, the challenges and deficiencies in the economic, political and social fields that lead to humanitarian needs in Venezuela still persist in 2023. No improvement in the livelihood conditions of the UN OCHA-identified 7.7 million Venezuelans in a state of humanitarian need, is foreseen in the short or medium term. The humanitarian crisis continues to have a direct impact on the food and nutrition security of the population.

During 2023, Colombia witnessed a deteriorating humanitarian situation, exacerbated by increased violence from non-state armed groups. Extreme weather and climatic events, a massive migration crisis, high food price inflation and currency devaluation were amplified by the lingering impacts of the Ukraine crisis. The combination of increasing violence and displacement, high food prices, record inflation, deepening poverty and limited agricultural production severely stressed the food security and nutrition of the most vulnerable households.

WFP's Vulnerability Assessment revealed worrying food insecurity and malnutrition levels for both migrants and Colombians.

Several of the FAC parties contributed considerable funds to mitigate the impact of the humanitarian crises in both countries and to address priority needs such as food and nutrition security, basic services, recovery of livelihoods and access to protection.

3. COORDINATION AMONG DONORS

ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR)

Since 2017, ROK has been providing Korean rice to ASEAN countries affected by meteorological disasters through the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR), an international public rice reserve system involving 13 participating countries. In 2023, 3,250 MT, 500 MT and 750 MT of rice were provided to Myanmar, Lao PDR and the Philippines, respectively. APTERR is a cooperative system established to respond to food crises due to disasters in the region promptly and effectively. ROK will continue working toward zero hunger by providing food assistance through the APTERR activities and ensuring food security in ASEAN countries.

Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA)

The Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) is the primary forum within the EU for strategic and policy discussions on humanitarian assistance. At these meetings, EU Member States and the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department (ECHO) exchange information on humanitarian crises, assess humanitarian needs, and work to enhance the coherence of aid efforts at both the EU and global levels.

Flagship Initiative

In 2023, Switzerland contributed USD 75 million to the UN OCHA managed country based and regional pooled funds. Of the overall USD 1.12 billion (2023) donor contributions, 11% was allocated to food security. The funds are seen as one of the main instruments to implement the Flagship Initiative that was launched by the Emergency Relief Coordinator M. Griffiths at the beginning of 2023. The Initiative aims to explore ways to deliver people-centred solutions and build resilience by ensuring that the priorities of crisis-affected communities drive humanitarian assistance. Community engagement and the accountability to affected people are at the heart of the Initiative. The Initiative is relevant for the WFP to achieve progress on the move from a business model based on food assistance to increased resilience; Switzerland is planning a contribution in 2024.

As Chair of the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG) from July 2023 to June 2024, Luxembourg actively supported OCHA in its endeavour to create a humanitarian system that is more people-centred and context-specific, while also striving for greater effectiveness and reduced bureaucracy. During its chairmanship, Luxembourg attached great significance to the Flagship Initiative by including it on the agendas of all ODSG meetings. Moreover, in March 2024, Luxembourg hosted the first Global Learning Event of the Flagship initiative, bringing together

stakeholders from diverse backgrounds including UN agencies, academia, NGOs, donors, RC/HCs and, most importantly, local actors.

Global Network against Food Crises

The EU supports the Global Network politically and financially, as it is considered a crucial platform to coordinate data, analysis and interventions against hunger across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. In 2023, the EU participated in the strategic review leading to the updated governance structure of the network. In 2024, four new organizations (UNICEF, IFAD, UNHCR, and UNDP) will join the network alongside the long-standing members (EU – DG INTPA and DG ECHO-, WFP, FAO, USAID, and the World Bank). The Global Report on Food Crises is the flagship publication of the Global Network. It focuses on food crises that exceed the national coping capacities and therefore require the mobilisation of the international community. The 2024 edition, covering the year 2023, was released on 24 April 2024 and reported that around 282 million people in 59 countries/territories faced Crisis, Emergency and Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phases 3-5) levels of acute food insecurity in 2023, up from 258 million people in 58 countries/territories in 2022. An update is released in October 2024. Among other publications, the network also produces the Hunger Hotspots report, an early warning tool that identifies the countries of highest concern, notably those that are considered at risk of famine. These two reports have become key global references on food insecurity.

Global ODA Forum in Ghana 2023

MAFRA hosted 2023 Global Agricultural ODA Forum in Ghana aiming to address food insecurity in countries facing food shortages. The forum reviews the progress of several projects, including the K-Rice Belt Project, which involves seven African countries. Ghana is the first to start this year, focusing on increasing productivity in rice supply and demand. The project requires a multi-disciplinary effort, involving experts from various fields and organizations like KOPIA and KAFACI. By learning advanced technologies and distributing seeds to farmers, the forum aims to expand rice production and improve food security.

Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD)

Recognizing the need for global cooperation and harmonization, Austria's policy measures are designed to leverage effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of international support and deliver the best possible impact for the beneficiaries in need. The projects are hence being aligned with all existing national and international aid efforts through various coordination and networking mechanisms, especially commitments in the framework of the World Humanitarian Summit 2016 and the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD). For their programming, BML and ADA use a set of standardized criteria to select target regions and countries most suitable and in need for Austrian food assistance funds. These criteria include (a) adherence to the principles of the Food Assistance Convention and alignment with the current Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy, (b) humanitarian need (especially regarding the level of food insecurity and malnutrition as measured by the IPC/CH), and (c) funding levels (especially regarding funding gaps as measured by WFP and FAO).

In 2023, Luxembourg remained committed to providing humanitarian assistance within the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. Faced with rising humanitarian needs, which often outpaced available resources, Luxembourg reiterated its commitment to a coordinated and integrated approach to implement the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Luxembourg continued its approach of improving its effectiveness and efficiency of aid delivery, following the principles of the GHD. This includes providing predictable, flexible and multiyear funding to its main partner organizations, including to strengthen the respect for IHL as well as humanitarian principles.

In 2023, Belgium and Finland handed over the co-chairing of the Good Humanitarian Donorship to Estonia and the United Kingdom. On the operational side, the GHD considered accountability to affected populations (AAP) and humanitarian organizations; this is an issue that is important in any humanitarian crisis, also a food crisis, so that needs, experiences and demands of affected populations are taken into consideration in the design, priority setting and implementation. The co-chairs also initiated a joint messaging among donors on climate change as next steps after the COP 28 Summit. Switzerland welcomed this endeavour as joint positioning among humanitarian donors forms an important function of the GHD. Switzerland supported the messages as they were aligned with the Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace declaration at the COP28. Together with the replenishment of the Green Climate Fund and a total contribution by Switzerland of CHF 150 million over the next four years, Switzerland contributes to scaling-up adaptation and resilience activities and responses in order to reduce the vulnerability of food producers and secure greater food security.

Sweden's humanitarian aid is based on the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality and guided by the principles of the GHD. Sweden continues to defend and stand for the respect of international humanitarian law. Sweden's humanitarian funding is allocated using a needs-based approach and applies a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach in order to strengthen community capacity and reduce humanitarian needs. Sweden remains a strong proponent of flexible funding to humanitarian actors, as exemplified by its role as a top provider of flexible funding to humanitarian actors including WFP, CERF, DREF and CBPFs. Wherever possible, Sweden's country-level programming takes the form of programme-based funding, allowing partners maximum predictability and flexibility.

G7's Apulia Food Security Initiative and G20's Global Alliance on Hunger and Poverty

In 2023 the EU welcomed new food security initiatives put forward by the G7 and the G20. The G7 Apulia Food Security Initiative focuses on the food – climate nexus and financing for food security in Africa, whereas the G20's Global Alliance on Hunger and Poverty aims to create a "global policy basket" with policy instruments that have a proven positive impact on food and nutrition security. The EU has nonetheless warned that the proliferation of global initiatives in recent years has led to overlapping missions and memberships, posing challenges to full engagement and potentially resulting in redundant efforts. It is therefore imperative to foster synergies and avoid duplicating the endeavours of existing multilateral initiatives addressing food insecurity.

4. POLICY INITIATIVES

Australia's International Development Policy

In August 2023, Australia released a new international development policy, setting the long-term direction for Australia's development program. Among its key commitments, the policy identifies ambitious targets and action on climate change through boosts in investments and access to specific climate expertise. It committed to the development (in 2024) of a new strategy to guide Australia's humanitarian engagement internationally, ensuring we have an adaptable, responsive framework that responds to humanitarian need and builds resilience. Similarly, new strategies will be developed that will reaffirm and strengthen the centrality of gender equality, disability and LGBTQIA+ rights to Australia's foreign policy.

DG ECHO guidance note on localisation

In March 2023, the European Commission issued its guidance note on promoting equitable partnerships with local responders in humanitarian settings. This guidance's goal is to encourage the humanitarian community to recognise and strengthen the capacity of local and national actors to respond to crises. By doing so, responses can be more inclusive and better address the needs of affected populations. In the document, the European Commission outlines how it plans to further operationalise its commitment to localisation. It also sets out key recommendations, expectations and commitments for more equitable partnerships with local responders, including:

- recognising the value, skills and resources of local and national actors,
- establishing fair and impartial partnerships between international and local organisations,
- enhancing direct communication with local actors and their active participation in the humanitarian response,
- facilitating access to localised financing models.

FARM Initiative

In order to address global food insecurity and malnutrition, France launched the FARM initiative (Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission), with three objectives: 1/ free movement of agricultural foodstuffs and market transparency, 2/ greater solidarity with the most vulnerable and 3/ the increase in agricultural and food production capacities, while strengthening their resilience and sustainability.

K-Rice Belt Project

MAFRA launched the K-Rice belt project in 2023. The initiative has produced 2,321 MT of high-yield rice seeds in six African countries, including Ghana, Gambia, Senegal, Cameroon, Guinea, and Uganda. The project aims to contribute to zero hunger in Africa by building rice seed production complexes and supplying them to farmers. The ROK government plans to increase

annual production to 10,000 MT by 2027, providing rice to a 30 million population African population.

Nutrition for Growth

In line with its [International Strategy for Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture \(2019-2024\)](#), France will continue to strengthen its action in nutrition in 2024, notably through the Food Assistance Program (FAP), by allocating at least 50% of its funding to projects including nutrition. The French strategy primarily targets under-nutrition and the « 1 000 days » period⁴; France will also host the next edition of the *Nutrition for Growth/N4G* Summit: France therefore calls on members of the Convention to contribute to this process by taking ambitious commitments against malnutrition. In 2023, 96% of projects included a nutrition component for an amount of around EUR 99 million (USD 106.9 million) mainly within the framework of the FAP.

School Meals Coalition

The goal of the School Meals Coalition is to guarantee every child access to school meals by 2030. 97 countries from all regions across the world, together with more than 125 partners, including UN agencies, International Financing Institutions (IFIs), multilateral development agencies, NGOs, philanthropic foundations, think tanks and academic partners, have come together to restore, expand and improve school meal programmes as a transformational platform for food and education systems. Widely recognized as a very successful multilateral initiative, the School Meals Coalition has already achieved significant results. In the last two years, the coverage of school meal programmes has increased to 418 million, from 388 million in 2020. An additional USD 5 billion in domestic funding has been mobilized for the programmes, and 4 million jobs have been created. Many have committed to expanding and improving their national school meal programmes in an effort to simultaneously combat hunger, support education, transform food systems and advance climate action.

Denmark as a member has previously supported WFP school meals programmes in the Sahel and on the Horn of Africa, but at present mainly provides support through flexible funding for WFP's humanitarian assistance in relevant crisis situations.

Finland, France and Brazil co-chair the Taskforce of the School Meals Coalition initiated by the WFP. Finland's Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Mr. Ville Tavio, acts as the School Meals Coalition Champion and the co-chair of the School Meals Coalition. Finland co-leads the School Meals Coalition member state taskforce and the strategic coordination of activities for the Coalition. Finland also co-chairs the Working Group of the Coalition. Finland has joined the Coalition's Sustainable Financing Initiative and the Research Consortium. In 2023, Finland contributed a total of EUR 3 million to the WFP's school meals programmes. Finland has also provided a JPO for the WFP School Feeding Programme Secretariat.

⁴ Pregnant and lactating women and children under two years of age

In a context of multiple crises and constrained resources, France promotes integrated solutions with co-benefits such as school feeding programs. Several projects funded in 2023 through the Food Assistance Program and another French aid instrument supported school feeding, in particular in Ukraine for the FAP (up to EUR 5 million / USD 5.4 million), but also in Algeria, Gambia, Guinea, Haiti, Lebanon, Mauritania, Niger, Togo, Venezuela and Yemen. On the occasion of the first global meeting of the School Meals Coalition's Taskforce, held in Paris on October 2023, France announced that EUR 36.5 million (USD 39.4 million) were devoted to support school feeding programs in its partner countries in 2023, through different instruments (including the Food Assistance Programme).

Since joining the School Meals Coalition in 2021, Luxembourg has actively engaged in supporting school feeding programs through WFP, particularly in Senegal and Mali. Recognizing the pressing global challenges related to food and nutrition and understanding the associated scientific and awareness-raising obstacles, Luxembourg has been supporting a research project led by WFP on "Exploring School Feeding in Fragile Contexts" since 2022, alongside the advocacy initiative "A Pen for a Gun" led by Under-Secretary-General Cristina Duarte, Special Adviser on Africa to the United Nations Secretary-General. These efforts focus on fragile countries and explore how school meals can serve as a protective measure against instability by encouraging school attendance among children.

Shock Plan to counter the Food Emergency in the Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Yemen

In January 2023, the head of Government announced the creation of a "Shock Plan" to counter the food emergency in the Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Yemen, with a total budgetary allocation of EUR 14.4 million (USD 15.408 million). Of these, EUR 4.4 million (USD 4.708 million) correspond to the Grain from Ukraine initiative, whereby Ukrainian grain is bought with Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds and channelled through the WFP to humanitarian contexts.

Team Europe response strategy to the global hunger crisis

The EU and its Member States have pursued their endeavours to fight the global food crisis through the Team Europe response strategy⁵. The strategy, adopted on 20 June 2022, is a comprehensive and ambitious response strategy that provides a common framework for the European response. It is built around four pillars:

- Solidarity (including the humanitarian response),
- Production (aiming at promoting sustainable food production and resilience in affected countries),
- Trade (which includes the Solidarity Lanes initiative, as well as the defence of open and operational markets), and

⁵ [Global Food security | EEAS \(europa.eu\)](https://eeas.europa.eu/global-approach/global-food-security/)

- Effective multilateralism (aiming at an EU response that is well coordinated and integrated with the actions of other global actors).

The “solidarity” pillar reflects the importance of the nexus, of tailor-made interventions adapted to each specific context, and stresses that short-term relief should be accompanied by efforts to support local production and resilience. The European Commission supports this initiative with a commitment of EUR 8.3 billion for the period 2021-2024. Together with Member States contributions, the total envelope is around EUR 18 billion. The humanitarian response (integrated in the “solidarity” pillar) will be supported by around EUR 2.5 billion by the EU, including EUR 1.7 billion already allocated in 2022-23.

The Grand Bargain

The clearest outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit was the Grand Bargain. The Grand Bargain 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. In 2023, the Grand Bargain iteration 3.0 was adopted with continued focus on Quality Funding, Localisation, Participation and a new focus on Anticipatory Action, Multisector Collaboration and Innovative financing mechanisms.

Denmark is one of the signatories to the Grand Bargain and considers this mechanism an important tool for ensuring that humanitarian assistance is strengthened and made more efficient – this includes food assistance. During 2023, Denmark was one of the co-leads on localisation as part of the Grand Bargain, working to promote localisation as an approach that ensures better results.

As far as commitments regarding localization of the aid are concerned, France funded directly local Civil Society Organizations in Kenya, Lebanon, Somalia, Chad, Haiti, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. In Niger, the National System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (DNP-GCA / bilateral) was also supported through the Food Assistance Program. Direct support to local organizations amounts to EUR 7.5 million (USD 8.1 million) in 2023.

In 2023, Luxembourg reaffirmed its commitment, especially around flexible funding and localization. By allocating a total of EUR 105.3 million (USD 113.7 million; 96% of total funding) to flexible funding, Luxembourg provided 14% of un-earmarked funds and 86% of softly earmarked funds. In regard to localization, Luxembourg also strongly supported the leadership of local humanitarian actors with a total budget of more than EUR 69 million (USD 75.2 million, 63% of total expenditures in 2023). The allocation of funds breaks down as follows: 14% to direct funding, a total of 75% for single-intermediary funding, and 11% of pooled funding.

Switzerland has sought to translate its Grand Bargain commitments, amongst others on quality financing and the role of intermediaries. This has provided further impetus for Switzerland to look at options to support WFP with more flexible and longer-term support. Switzerland also initiated a localisation donor support group among representatives in Rome and is looking at providing concrete support to WFP to develop a localisation policy since this is relevant to achieve progress on the four dimensions of food security (availability, access, utilisation and

stability). Switzerland is providing quality core funding to a number of international and local partners, allocated as multi-year, flexible and un-earmarked; it remains Switzerland's policy to provide timely and predictable funding of high quality whenever possible.

“The World We Share”

“The World We Share”, Denmark's strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action, provides the overall framework for all Denmark's efforts to prevent and fight poverty, conflict and displacement and restore balance to the planet. Among the objectives of the strategy is that Denmark will work for greater food security and access to water; and help ensure effective access to protection and life-saving assistance in crises situations, including food aid. Another objective is to support climate-smart agriculture and sustainable food systems, prevent food loss and food waste, promote agro-organic cultivation methods, and strengthen green value chains. This will contribute to building resilience, improving food security and generating employment.

5. INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

Anticipatory Action

Australia supports key partners in Asia and the Pacific to build anticipatory action frameworks, to pilot and strengthen existing anticipatory action mechanisms, and continue to develop evidence on the effectiveness of early humanitarian action in our region. In 2023, Australia's funding contributed to the development of new anticipatory action frameworks in Fiji, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste, and expand and strengthen existing mechanisms in Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines. Our partners (UN OCHA, WFP and several NGOs) participate in regional anticipatory action working groups to share documented learnings, engage with Government and stakeholders at country level, and to ensure anticipatory action work remains coordinated and collaborative.

Cash Innovation

The modalities of humanitarian and food assistance have changed significantly over the last years and decades, shifting from in-kind aid to providing more and more cash-based assistance. As of 2022, according to the UN OCHA's financial tracking service, around 20% of worldwide humanitarian assistance is being provided in the form of cash. Cash transfers, vouchers and cash for work are highly effective and efficient in terms of costs. What is even more important: Cash-based assistance gives those in need dignity, choices and it gives them back some control over their lives. It provides people in need with the possibility that they themselves can make decisions and meet their own needs as they see fit.

In 2023, while Austria did not earmark its contributions, a significant share of all food assistance projects of 2023 used unconditional cash-based assistance as preferred modality. What Austria has observed in its funded projects is that a combination of unconditional cash assistance with cash-for-work and traditional humanitarian assistance like the provision of agricultural inputs – the Cash+ approach – has proved to be extremely impactful: Post-distribution monitoring showed that the unconditional cash assistance allowed people to cover their most urgent and immediate needs. In addition, the cash-for-work activities combined with the provision of in-kind

agricultural inputs strengthened their financial capacities, provided a stable position to cover their longer-term livelihoods and even permitted them to invest in sustainable activities such as livestock and vegetable production. It was further observed that the Cash+ approach led to a reduction in the use of negative coping strategies, underpinning the impact of cash assistance on social and economic well-being.

In 2023, DG ECHO continued the implementation of the reviewed Thematic policy on cash transfers, published in March 2022. The policy highlights the importance of cash the most efficient and effective modality of getting humanitarian assistance to affected people. Cash assistance generates better value for money for donors and taxpayers as more aid directly reaches beneficiaries. It also supports local markets and lays the foundations for communities' recovery and resilience. Cash has been a catalyst for transformation in the humanitarian system: demonstrating how to concretely link humanitarian assistance and social protection, accelerating advances in digitalisation, and - through connecting people to local markets - providing an alternative to carbon-intensive in-kind supply chain models. In order to implement the policy, in 2023 DG ECHO rolled out an internal training and issued some accompanying documents, including on Implementing Humanitarian Aid actions in countries where use of money transfer agents is needed. The thematic policy on cash transfers included the Large-scale Cash Guidance Note as an annex. It outlines DG ECHO's funding guidelines on the provision of large-scale cash transfers, which DG ECHO considers to be any cash programme of EUR 10 million and above. The specific considerations include segregation of functions, cost-efficiency (including indirect costs), and transparency. In 2023, around 22% of the overall volume of EU humanitarian assistance was delivered in the form of cash.

France's major contribution is through the "Cash transfers/vouchers" modality as part of food assistance and fight against malnutrition projects. In 2023, this amount reaches more than EUR 33.5 million (USD 36.18 million). This year, some countries set up innovative modalities through the cash transfer, in particular related to the malnutrition fight. We can, for example, introduce the Madagascar ACF project in the Southeast region, funded by the FAP in 2023. Firstly, cash transfers were set up with women, to meet household needs, since research findings show that directing financial assistance to women, rather than men, often lead to greater improvements in children's well-being. Indeed, it allows women to have greater control over household resources and thus increases spending promoting the health, nutrition and education of children.⁶ Secondly, a fixed transfer value is set by the Cash Working Group in the country per household per month. This value is aligned with the CWG national strategy and based on the Monthly Expenditure Basket (MEB), covering approximately 47% of the MEB. The innovation here consists of a supplement per household per month in order to encourage the purchase by beneficiary households of nutritious and diversified food (eggs, meat/fish, legumes, fruits and vegetables), which is decisive in children's nutrition, from 6 to 24 months, in addition to breastfeeding. Likewise, another supplement is added to the total taking into account the isolation of the intervention areas. Indeed, in certain cases, representatives of beneficiary households can travel several kilometres to the distribution sites. Therefore, to avoid

⁶ Global nutrition cluster, Synthèse d'orientation Comment intégrer les transferts monétaires dans les interventions dans le domaine de la nutrition, septembre 2020

households having to deduct transport costs from the amount distributed, this additional sum will cover possible transport costs.

In 2023, Luxembourg provided multi-annual funding support to WFP's Innovation Accelerator (EUR 250.000 per year until 2025; USD 270.100) under its Strategic Partnership Framework 2022-2025, which sources, supports and scales high-impact innovations to achieve Zero Hunger. Luxembourg's contribution has significantly bolstered the efforts of WFP's Frontiers Technology Portfolio, enabling support for cutting-edge start-ups. Notably, collaboration with technology firms such as Google Research has allowed the Frontiers team to assess, pilot, and scale new solutions addressing WFP's strategic priorities and core operational needs in Cash-Based Transfers and emergency response.

The Spanish Humanitarian Aid Office has been employing cash and voucher-based interventions since 2009. Spain's first pilot programme was organised with the WFP in Ecuador, Yemen, Niger, and Uganda. The main partner is still the WFP, in contexts like the West Bank and Gaza, Haiti, Jordan, and Lebanon. Spain also cooperates with the Movement in the Sahrawi refugee population camps, as well as different Spanish and international NGOs. This priority has been strengthened since 2016, in the wake of the Grand Bargain. Today, Spain's Humanitarian Action Strategy (2019-2026) defines the objective of distributing 18% of humanitarian aid via cash and coupons by 2026. By 2023, 17% of OAH's humanitarian assistance was already distributed via cash and coupons. Most interventions are conditional and distributed via cash. The first beneficiary region is Latin America and the Caribbean, followed closely by Syria and its region. Other beneficiaries include Africa, the Sahrawi population refugee camps, the West Bank and Gaza. Food assistance represents the major humanitarian sector using cash and voucher-based interventions: 30% of OAH's cash interventions are found in the food security and nutrition sector. In 2023, over EUR 1 million (USD 1.07 million) of OAH's humanitarian budget was distributed via cash or coupons in this sector. Our main partner in this field is WFP, with whom OAH has cooperated with a cash intervention in Ethiopia (EUR 0.5 million or USD 0.535 million) and the West Bank and Gaza (EUR 0.65 million or USD 0.696 million).

Sweden is a strong proponent of multi-based cash assistance wherever appropriate in line with the local context, given its role for a dignified humanitarian response by providing agency to recipients.

Based on the Joint Donor Statement on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, Switzerland and like-minded donors have continued to enhance coherence, efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian cash assistance received by people affected by crises. In 2023, efforts focused on topics such as cash coordination, locally-led humanitarian response and interoperability. Aligned with the Donor Cash Forum Statement and Guiding Principles on Interoperability of Data Systems in Humanitarian Cash Programming, Switzerland provided financial support to a partner organisation working on interoperability. This project aims to improve data sharing in selected use cases – specifically deduplication and referral – to ensure people are not excluded from cash assistance and that their data and privacy better protected. Additionally, the project targets an increased efficiency and effectiveness of the existing coordination mechanism between organizations. The primary objective is for humanitarian organisations to securely beneficiary- and assistance-related data while ensuring data owners retain visibility and control.

Throughout 2023, Switzerland continued to maintain a robust dialogue with its main partners on CVA, both at global and national level, and played an active role in global discussions to establish CVA as a systematically considered response option like with WFP new CBT policy. Switzerland continued financial support to CVA-specific organisations like CALP and CashCap. To advance CVA with social protection in humanitarian response, Switzerland seconded 14 CVA experts to UN OCHA, WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, ICRC, and CALP, addressing topics like Shock-Responsive Social Protection or Cash Coordination.

In FY 2023, through USAID, the United States awarded over USD 2.3 billion in cash and voucher assistance. Although overall funding declined from FY 2022 to FY 2023, the cash-based food assistance and multi-purpose cash assistance budget as a proportion of the total budget in FY 2023 increased slightly, exceeding 23% of the humanitarian assistance budget. USAID also implements cash programming in a range of other sectors such as livelihoods grants and cash for protection. The United States supported linkages between multipurpose cash assistance and Ukraine's social protection system by serving on the steering committee of the Perehid Initiative, and by funding two positions on a Technical Assistance Facility which supports the multi-stakeholder initiative. Perehid works to link the humanitarian response with a more shock-responsive social protection system in Ukraine by developing and implementing a strategy to unify government, humanitarian, and development stakeholders towards a common vision. The United States, through USAID, also supported Kenya's continued rollout of its Enhanced Single Registry (ESR) system, a Government of Kenya database that stores information on vulnerable households and individuals and promotes social protection policies and programs that connect individuals to social protection programmes – ensuring food assistance partners stay coordinated with the Registry while enrolling their recipients of assistance to avoid duplication.

Disability Inclusion

Australia strives for disability inclusion within humanitarian action to be the 'default setting'. To encourage disability inclusive humanitarian assistance as a default, Australia has adopted such practices as providing multi-year funding; providing clear and consistent policy direction; incorporating disability inclusion into our partnership frameworks and as a program design requirement; and providing dedicated resources for learning and assessment. Australia has also supported WFP's Disability Inclusion Trust Fund since its inception and made a further contribution in 2023. Australia has also provided significant technical assistance to support WFP to pilot and rollout its Disability Inclusion Roadmap.

Finland has worked to enhance WFP's work on disability inclusion through active advocacy work in the WFP executive board, bilaterally and in cooperation with other like-minded countries. In November 2020, the Executive Board of WFP endorsed the "WFP Disability Inclusion Road Map" to kick-start the organization's progress against the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) supported by funding from Finland and Australia that contributed to an earmarked Trust Fund for this work. In 2023, Finland contributed EUR 1 million to the Disability Inclusion Trust Fund and worked actively to encourage other donors to join. For example, children with disabilities are at higher risk of malnutrition due to specific nutritional needs and barriers to accessing nutrition programmes. Already before 2023, the Asia-Pacific region was a pilot region for WFP's disability inclusion. In 2023, WFP took on two

new pilot regions to be financed by the Fund. A regional approach helps WFP progressively develop disability inclusion, and progressively have a bigger impact at country-level. Human resources and budgets for disability inclusion are key to this. For food and cash assistance in particular, WFP is now developing a more precise definition and programmatic guidelines for its assistance activities, based on its pilots. For example, this could mean increased assistance to allow for transport and the presence of a facilitator. This will improve the accessibility and accessibility of the programmes. Criteria for mainstreaming disability inclusion are being developed. WFP has also included mandatory indicators on disability inclusion and indicators requiring disaggregated data by person with disabilities.

Holistic multisector and multi-country Interventions

Throughout 2023, Canada continued to support global initiatives that strengthened the food and nutrition sector as a whole. Canada remained a resource partner for the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC/CH) initiative, hosted by the FAO. Rigorous evidence- and consensus-based analysis of food insecurity and acute malnutrition is essential to ensure impartial, needs-based policy and programming for an effective humanitarian response. Canada's multi-year contribution of CAD 5 million over three years (2022 to 2024), supported the IPC/CH's transition from its 2019-2022 Global Strategic Programme (GSP) to its 2023-2026 GSP. Canada maintained a strategic partnership with Action Against Hunger (AAH) Canada throughout the last year of a pilot multi-country programmatic project for nutrition-specific humanitarian responses. AAH Canada delivered emergency nutrition interventions alongside complementary health and water, sanitation and hygiene services to improve the nutritional status of vulnerable populations across 14 countries in 2023. Canada also supported the Technical Support Team of the Global Nutrition Cluster, hosted by Action Against Hunger Canada, to provide technical expertise and improve nutrition outcomes in emergencies. This global mechanism provided support in a rapid and flexible manner that built capacity on the ground in a sustainable manner. Activities included on-site technical expertise in the form of technical experts deployed in-country; remote support from technical experts; recommendations of vetted consultants; or other capacity building initiatives.

Innovative, integrated Resilience and Livelihoods

In 2023, Australia contributed to the scale-up of WFP's Integrated Resilience in the Sahel programme, a large-scale innovative and integrated programme to boost resilience and adaptation of communities to ecosystem degradation, climate change and other vulnerabilities. The programme combines sustainable land and natural resource management and restoration activities, smallholder farmers value chains support and market interventions, and nutrition and home-grown school feeding programmes. Combined, these interventions aim to increase land productivity and farmer incomes while building resilience to increasing climate shocks and stressors.

France has a strong emphasis on supporting resilience beyond the humanitarian support to make sure they can recover and adapt, the contribution dedicated to resilience actions within the framework of food assistance amounts, in 2023 to approximately EUR 33 million (USD 35.64 million). These amounts still remain far below the amounts allocated to nutrition and general food assistance activities. France wishes to increase its action in terms of resilience, in

an integrative and holistic approach to the humanitarian-development nexus. Resilience action, which is very complementary to actions to combat food insecurity and malnutrition, aims to support the return to autonomy of vulnerable people in a crisis and post-crisis context. It mainly consisted in training and supporting small-scale farmers and breeders in maintaining and/or expanding their economic activities while making their activities resilient to climate change and its impacts.

Through the Accelerator, WFP is leveraging unprecedented advances in digital innovation – such as mobile technology, artificial intelligence, big data, insurance instruments and blockchain – and new business models to transform the way we serve vulnerable communities across the world. Luxembourg's contribution to the Innovation Accelerator enhances WFP's work in innovative resilience and livelihood programs, strengthening efforts to build sustainable futures for vulnerable communities.

Sweden remains a strong advocate of innovative development assistance. In light of the negative trend in global food security, Sweden has adapted its support to livelihood activities to further strengthen the links between humanitarian assistance and long-term development cooperation, including in the agricultural sector, in climate support and through cooperation with the private sector.

6. BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN 2023

Anticipatory and Timely Provision of Assistance

Anticipatory Action aims at establishing systems that enable early warning and early action in humanitarian crises situations e.g. drought or flooding caused by the climate crisis. Where it can be applied, it is an efficient, cost effective and dignified form of humanitarian action, which places affected people at the centre of action and provides them with agency to protect themselves and their means of living. As part of Denmark's "The World We Share" strategy for development cooperation, the country supports WFP in scaling up Anticipatory Action for food security in relation to climatic shocks on the Horn of Africa.

In light of continued logistical challenges in 2023, due to various factors including the post COVID-19 inflation and the war in Ukraine, the Republic of Korea provided timely support. MAFRA sent the 50,000 MT of rice as planned, and all targeted countries timely received rice by July 2023. Especially, the cargo of 167 containers for Syria timely crossed the Northern border before the UN resolution for UN Cross Border Operation was expired on 11 July 2023. This continuing successful practice supported the pipeline of food supply for the humanitarian operations in the countries.

Awareness-Raising in International Forums

Between 2019 and 2024, Spain is a member of the WFP's Executive Board. In addition, since 2012 Spain has supported the WFP's logistical base in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, which covers humanitarian crises in West Africa.

Switzerland made good use of its tenure in the UN Security Council to promote and defend the right to food as well as the prevention of and accountability against conflict-induced hunger; it co-chaired with Guyana the Group of Friends on Action against Conflict & Hunger and organized in May 2023 during the Protection of Civilians Week a UNSC Open Debate, five years after the adoption of the landmark UNSC Resolution 2417.

Disability Inclusion

For Finland, it was clear that food assistance for persons with disabilities was stronger, especially at country-level, where there was 1) management support, 2) dedicated budget for disability inclusion, 3) staff with dedicated time and objectives for it, supported by technical experts from the region/headquarters. Additionally, if the country had a network of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities linked to the humanitarian sector, this was a conducive factor. Since persons with disabilities are known to be harder hit by malnutrition and food security, disability inclusion is crucial for aid to be impartial (non-discriminatory and needs-based). The funding cuts in the sector threaten to roll back the slow progress being made.

Flexible, Unearmarked and Multi-Year Funding

In 2023, Austria supported WFP's IRA with EUR 6 million. The IRA is WFP's emergency fund to respond to sudden onset emergencies, put in place preparedness activities, cover critical funding gaps as well as address unforeseen aggravations within ongoing and protracted crises. WFP allocated a total of USD 433 million from the IRA to 31 country operations in 2023, amongst others to the Palestine operation, meeting critical emergency funding needs; to Sudan, acting on the rapidly deteriorating food situation; to Afghanistan, covering the needs of the growing number of Afghan returnees; and to Mauritania, addressing the growing refugee emergency in the country.

Luxembourg supported WFP's Immediate Response Account (IRA) with EUR 1.15 million (USD 1.24 million), emphasizing the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Defence, Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade's commitment to flexible and predictable funding for rapid emergency response. As this contribution is part of a multi-year agreement (2022-2025), the IRA strengthens the principles of timeliness, predictability, and flexibility. Moreover, Luxembourg has made a long-term commitment towards flexible humanitarian funding instruments, such as UN OCHA's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPF) as well as IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF). Through these pooled funds, Luxembourg's Humanitarian Action supports not only a quick and efficient response to urgent crises but also maintains funding towards protracted and "forgotten" crises.

Given the continued negative trend in global food security in 2023, Sweden acknowledges the need for an even more efficient and targeted humanitarian response. This includes, inter alia, a high level of flexible funding and thus confidence between donors and operating agencies,

allowing for an agile response that can quickly adapt to a change in circumstances; sophisticated targeting to ensure a needs-based approach; and strong monitoring and control systems to ensure assistance reaches intended beneficiaries. It also means a stronger focus on prioritization of life-saving assistance to safeguard that humanitarian funds are allocated in line with the humanitarian principles, while working to strengthen synergies with long-term development funding including anticipatory action funding to reduce humanitarian needs. The developments in 2023, including examples of conflict and climate exacerbating food insecurity, further underline the need for all food security efforts to align with a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach.

Interdependence of Food Security

In 2023, France supported organisations providing food assistance with a concern of fighting against all forms of malnutrition. Nutrition is at the crossroads of intertwined issues such as health, universal health coverage, food systems, humanitarian affairs, climate change, gender equality and many more. It relates directly to the achievement of SDG2 and 3 and impacts the realization of 11 out of 17 SDGs. Nutrition is also documented to be one of the most effective development policies, since every USD 1 invested in nutrition can generate USD 16 in returns. As France will be hosting the summit Nutrition for Growth Paris in March 27 & 28, 2025, it will keep its commitment to fight all forms of malnutrition.

Localisation

Australia's International Development Policy (released 8 August 2023) commits Australia to supporting local leadership, solutions, and accountability, by working flexibly and innovatively, working with partner government systems, civil society organisations and providing multiyear funding through equitable partnerships. Australia promotes respect for local leadership and local solutions as a way of working across our strategies and programs, through the program cycle. We include a wide range of local actors such as partner governments, the business sector, local supply chains, and local CSOs including the media and churches. There is no single approach to how we fulfil this commitment. Each country context is different, and we will calibrate our approach to local circumstances, needs and priorities. Sometimes we will work directly with local partners and other times through intermediaries – considering issues such as the ability to work at scale, resourcing, the risk environment, geographic access, organisational capabilities such as safeguarding, reporting and M&E.

Increased difficulties in accessing people in vulnerable situations, the overall shrinking humanitarian space and – most of all – the support for local ownership advanced Austria's efforts to localise food assistance in 2023. Local partner organisations, community leaders and agents played a vital role in the planning and implementation of all programme activities. The knowledge of the region and people as well as the trust and reputation local partners enjoy amongst the population contributed to an inclusive and meaningful impact of all activities. While Austria has been strengthening localisation within its general humanitarian assistance for years, efforts to support this approach regarding food assistance were fostered in 2023.

Luxembourg equally continued to support activities aimed at preventing food insecurity, while building the capacity of national actors as first responders in crisis-affected countries, thus also reinforcing the localisation of the humanitarian response.

Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Approach

While Canada supports humanitarian partners to help meet emergency food and nutrition needs, without implementing long-term solutions to the underlying drivers of food insecurity, humanitarian assistance will not be able to keep pace with ever increasing need. In the past year, Canada piloted resilience building projects that implemented both emergency and development approaches, and promoted a stronger coordination between partners, which were both identified as best practices.

The framework for strategic partnerships with Danish civil society organisations encourages nexus-approaches by providing civil society partners one single allocation of funds that covers both humanitarian and development action. This allows for a holistic, adaptive and integrated approach to programming and food assistance interventions. Denmark continues to support local leadership and capacity building of local actors across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus and in climate -and environmental action. Denmark works to develop more suitable, direct funding modalities for local actors and communities in fragile and conflict-affected settings. During 2023, a new budget item for the Danish Finance Act was agreed that is aimed at ensuring funding for nexus action in relation to humanitarian crises and in that way reduce humanitarian needs and strengthen resilience, with a special focus on climate-related challenges.

Luxembourg continued to support its partners in addressing the needs of vulnerable people, aiming to strengthen a coordinated and coherent humanitarian, development, and peace nexus, while ensuring a clear distinction between these three pillars is maintained in fragile contexts.

School Meal Coalition

Acute hunger in the world remains persistently high, while at the same time, funding for food and nutrition is decreasing. This calls for innovative approaches in order to do more with less. Finland is advocating for the school meals initiative as an innovative approach to counter the worsening food and nutrition situation in the world. The initiative has been widely successful, and Finland welcomes all the partners to take part in its work.

In 2023, France has made school feeding high on the international agenda by not-only supporting school feeding projects but also by co-chairing the School Meals Coalition with Finland and Brazil. This coalition has kept on growing by welcoming new members (90 in total by the end of 2023). Over the past two years, school meal programs have generated employment opportunities, primarily for women, in many countries. Climate-friendly school meal programs have been a significant focus in global and regional meetings. France welcomed the School Meals Coalition First Global Summit in Paris on 18-19 October 2023. Therefore, France will keep promoting improved and more nutritious diets, emphasizing the strong connection between schools and local food production, leading to more sustainable food systems.

Strategic Partnerships

In 2023, Austria advanced its efforts to address chronic hunger and malnutrition through the establishment of a strategic partnership with WFP. Between 2023 and 2025, Austria will provide up to 18 million of FAC-eligible food assistance per year, to respond the most pressing food and nutrition needs more effectively and efficiently. Apart from the increased financial contribution, this partnership allows Austria to be even more strategic in its prioritisation of needs and create longer term synergies of its food assistance efforts.

In 2022, a new Organisation Strategy for Denmark's partnership with WFP was published. It outlines strategic considerations and specific goals for Denmark's engagement with WFP for the period 2023 – 2025. It forms the basis for Danish financial contributions and is the platform for dialogue with WFP. The Strategy presents Danish priorities for WFP within the framework established through WFP's own Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025. The four priority areas for Danish core contributions to WFP during the period 2023 - 2025 are: Fight food insecurity. Advance climate adaptation and anticipatory action in WFP's food assistance programmes. Roll out humanitarian - development - peace nexus approach to food security. Enhance organizational effectiveness, contributing to UN reform, curbing corruption and scaling up innovation. Cross-cutting issues are gender and localisation.

In 2023, Luxembourg, in partnership with the Innovation Accelerator of World Food Programme and supported by the Austrian Development Cooperation, launched the Humanitarian Innovation Accelerator Programme (HIA). This initiative aims to bolster the capabilities of humanitarian actors by fostering innovative solutions to address complex challenges in difficult contexts. During a live pitch event on 29 June 2023, eight of the most promising products and services proposed through a call for proposals were showcased. The winners were officially announced mid-March 2024 and have since benefited from an acceleration programme designed to connect innovators with funding, knowledge, and networks to scale their solutions sustainably and effectively.

Slovenia's bilateral response to humanitarian emergencies in 2023, related to food assistance, was to a large extent based on Strategic partnerships with Caritas Slovenia. The three-year partnerships (2021 - 2023) enabled increased flexibility in improved cooperation with local partners. It also facilitated voucher-based assistance in Ukraine and Syria (in the total amount of EUR 200,500 (USD 215,591) as well as direct food distribution in Ukraine and Morocco (in the total amount of EUR 107,015 (USD 115,070).