

FOOD ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE PRESS RELEASE

The 15th FAC Session was held via video conference on Friday 12 November 2021 under the Chairpersonship of Ms. Tara Carney, Director, International Humanitarian Assistance Operations Division (Canada).

Parties of the Convention, namely, Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Japan, Korea (Rep. of), Luxembourg, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United States of America participated in the session.

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

In addition to an update of the current grains, rice and oilseeds situation, the IGC Secretariat also highlighted recent developments in the IGC GOI Index showing steep y/y increases in the grains and oilseeds segments, reflecting tightening supplies in major exporters' inventories despite an increase in outturn as demand, especially from the feed industry, remained strong. As a relevant staple food, the outlook also included an update for the supply and demand outlook for pulses in major exporters.

The IGC Secretariat also updated the Committee on recent developments in the world freight market and its impact on delivering food assistance and highlighted challenges for the global supply and demand outlook for the next season, including high input costs, especially for fertilisers, as well as the potential impact of climate change on production prospects.

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

Concerning other agenda items, the Committee approved the 2020 FAC Narrative report^[1]. The report highlights that globally, emergency hunger worsened in 2020. According to the *Global Report on Food Crises*, approximately 155 million people in 55 countries/territories - or 21.5 percent of the population analysed - were classified in crisis condition or worse (or equivalent). This represents an alarming increase of nearly 20 million people since 2019, when almost 135 million people were facing acute food insecurity. The magnitude and severity of food crises in 2020 were mainly driven by protracted conflict and insecurity, economic shocks – related to the COVID-19 pandemic - and weather extremes which exacerbated pre-existing fragilities. In 2020, all FAC Parties fulfilled or substantially exceeded their commitments by collectively contributing over six billion three hundred thousand US dollars to the improvement of worldwide food security. Key responses were supported in collaboration with various agencies and programmes of the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, national governments in the developing world, and civil-society organizations. Geographically, food assistance was provided in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific region. Food assistance was provided as in-kind food distribution, cash-based transfers, food vouchers, fortified food programmes, school feeding programmes, work-for-food programmes, nutrition-targeted interventions, and much more.

Members also confirmed their intended minimum annual commitments for 2022 and discussed organizing the Committee's fourth joint FAC field mission in 2022.

The Committee appointed Mr. Andreas Papaconstantinou, Director for the European Neighbourhood and Middle East, Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations of the European Commission as Chairperson for 2022. Ms Lauratuulia Lehtinen, Director for Humanitarian aid and policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland was appointed Vice Chairperson.

[1] The 2020 FAC Narrative Report is available on the Food Assistance Convention website:
<https://www.foodassistanceconvention.org/en/reports.aspx>