

Famine Mitigation and Prevention Compact

December 2021 – December 2022



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Background

Deeply concerned over the setbacks in the global fight against hunger, that the world is not on track to reach SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and as the risk of multiple famines loom, we, the world's leading humanitarian and development agencies on the frontlines responding to the global hunger and nutrition crisis, convening in Rome on 9-11 November 2021, commit to spearhead collective advocacy efforts to tackle the global hunger and nutrition crisis by endorsing this Famine Mitigation and Prevention Compact.

This Compact reflects a shared vision and joint commitment to scale up collective advocacy action over the next twelve months **to prevent and mitigate famine and starvation**. It commits us to raise alarm bells and share emerging stories from the ground, in every possible place, to ensure the tragedy unfolding gets the ATTENTION and ACTION it deserves. WE MUST REACH ALL THOSE WHO NEED US NOW.

Our Shared Understanding

Recognising that access to sufficient, healthy, and nutritious food is a human right and that famine and malnutrition takes a profound toll on individuals, communities, and nations; from lost lives, reduced productivity and lost or diminished human capital of communities and nations. Women and girls bear the greatest burden of hunger crises and face increased risk of violence and exploitation. Girls and boys under five years and pregnant and lactating women, including adolescent girls, have specific nutritional requirements, which mean these groups are particularly vulnerable to long-term and intergenerational impacts on health, development and well-being during food crises. **Standing by while hunger and famine devastate the lives of millions of people around the world is inhumane, irresponsible and constitutes a failure to fully meet the humanitarian imperative.**

We are seeing the devastating impact that the **four “Cs” - Conflict, Climate, COVID-19 and rising costs of food** – are having on the most at-risk people, pushing millions to the brink of starvation. Conflict remains the main driver of this severe hunger crisis, causing high levels of forced displacement, destruction of livelihoods and increased protection risks. However, we are now witnessing how climate is not only compounding the impacts of conflict but also emerging as a direct driver of famine-like conditions in some parts of the world. Combined with the effects of macroeconomic crises- such as that precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, rising costs of food and transportation and disruptions to essential services, such as malnutrition treatment and other health services- we face growing challenges to our collective goal of preventing famine.

We recognize that the four “Cs” have hit communities extremely hard in the areas where WFP and its NGO partners are operating. This presents us with both a moral obligation and humanitarian imperative to scale up our collective advocacy efforts to prevent and mitigate their impact on communities’ food security and nutrition needs.

Currently, up to 283 million people are acutely food insecure or at high risk in 80 countries around the world. Of greatest concern are the **45 million people** who are teetering on the very edge of famine (IPC 4/Emergency) **in 43 countries**, with significant risks that the slightest shock could push them into IPC 5. In the face of skyrocketing needs, we must do everything we can to avert a massive loss of life and lay the groundwork for ending hunger crises once and for all.

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(December 2021 – December 2022)

Lack of political will and funding shortfalls are resulting in the loss of lives, without urgent action this will only get worse.

We are deeply concerned that a lack of political will and funding shortfalls are holding us back from addressing catastrophic levels of hunger in Yemen, South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Madagascar.

Often, countries experiencing pockets of famine have been locked into a protracted food crisis for years, which highlights the structural and systemic nature of the problem. As such, a solely reactive approach to preventing and mitigating famine is not sustainable in the long run. We urgently need new ways to address famine, ones that tackle the root causes of hunger crises and increasing action on prevention, preparedness and building resilience to shocks and stressors. This, in turn, requires strengthening food security governance processes, increased accountability, political solutions, and the combined efforts of a wide range of stakeholders across the triple nexus.

We cannot wait for people to reach IPC 5, or for famine to be declared, for us to act. WE MUST SCALE UP OUR RESPONSE NOW, as a formal famine declaration means thousands of people are already dying of hunger.

A declaration of famine should be seen as a sign of collective failure. Action must come much sooner while we can still prevent famine.

We fully believe that increased, front-loaded, flexible and unearmarked funding is required NOW for WFP and its international and national NGO partners to avert famine and save lives and livelihoods.

We, the undersigned, are calling for **more than USD\$ 6.6 billion** to prevent and mitigate the worse impacts of severe food insecurity for people living in emergency (IPC 4) and catastrophic (IPC 5) levels of hunger through food, cash, nutrition, and livelihoods assistance to reach **45** million people in the **43** countries.

In addition, to tackle acute food insecurity and to prevent more people from slipping into IPC 5, donors must commit to fully funding country-specific Humanitarian Response Plans.

Promote humanitarian access, respect for international humanitarian law and protection of civilians and humanitarian workers

Restricted access to people in need is affecting the ability of humanitarian actors to provide lifesaving assistance to food insecure populations. As such, we reaffirm our commitment to advocate for adherence to the humanitarian principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, and Independence. We also urgently call on all parties to promote and facilitate rapid, unimpeded, impartial, safe humanitarian access, to respect International Humanitarian Law, and to protect civilians and humanitarian workers.

Our Commitment for Collective Advocacy Action

We know that the price of doing nothing in the face of growing famine risks will inevitably be measured in terms of lives lost, people displaced, human potential diminished, and livelihoods

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destroyed. Informed by this, we have agreed to a shared agenda for collective advocacy action that:

1. Brings urgent and immediate public and political attention to the **45million people in IPC 4 and IPC 5** who may face starvation if their immediate needs are not met on a priority basis.
2. Helps create an enabling environment to mobilise financial commitments that are flexible, unearmarked and front-loaded to facilitate action and avert a catastrophe. In particular, there is an urgent need for more funding to reach local and national organisations responding at the frontlines of the crisis.
3. Advocates for states and other parties to the conflict to adhere to human rights and International Humanitarian Law to ensure rapid, unimpeded, impartial, safe humanitarian access and protection of civilians and humanitarian workers.
4. Reinforces a system-wide shift towards greater investment in prevention, preparedness and anticipatory action and working across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.
5. Advocates that the emergency response to famine seeks to contribute to reduced humanitarian needs over the longer-term, through increased investments in social protection, resilience building, climate change adaptation, environmental sustainability, improved nutrition and livelihoods, inclusive and sustainable food systems, and social cohesion and peacebuilding (as appropriate). This will help lay the foundations for stronger national systems, including social protection systems, more effective and cost-efficient emergency responses, support for ‘building back better’ and addressing the root causes of fragility and conflict.
6. Highlights the differential impact of the crisis on women and girls and ensures a gender-lens throughout our collective advocacy and campaign work.
7. Engages with local and national organisations-including faith-based groups and local women’s organisations to build a collective advocacy agenda that is informed by the expertise, experience, and knowledge of local and national actors.
8. Advocates for the translation of relevant existing global commitments- including the G7 Compact on Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG2 (Zero Hunger), the Food Systems Summit, Paris Agreement on Climate Change and follow up commitments, including the Glasgow Climate Pact, the Agenda for Humanity (including the Grand Bargain)- into concrete improvements in food security for the most food insecure people.
9. Advocates (in alignment with UN Security Council Resolution 2417 and other existing mechanisms and commitments) to end the use of starvation as a method of war, protect vital infrastructure and food systems and provide full and unhindered humanitarian access by governments and parties to conflicts to ensure that civilian populations can safely access life-saving assistance. Acknowledging the importance of political engagement at all levels, accountability of all parties to prevent and respond to hunger crises and the role of humanitarian diplomacy in achieving the same. This includes advocating for ceasefires and addressing bureaucratic barriers that impede actors from being able to operate.
10. Ensures that civil society and community voices, including those of women and children, are elevated in all key moments and venues where decisions on mitigating and preventing famines, food insecurity and malnutrition are made.
11. Ensures collaboration with all stakeholders and at all levels, processes, and platforms that are needed to achieve our collective advocacy objectives.

Famine Mitigation and Prevention Compact

(December 2021 – December 2022)

12. Recommits to investing in and strengthening early warning and food security information systems to enhance anticipatory action.
13. Actively seeks direction and input from affected communities and local and national organisations, including local women's organisations, serving them to build a collective advocacy agenda driven by their expertise, experience, knowledge, and the change they want to see in their lives.