

Dear Leaders of the G7 and Ireland as the upcoming Presidency of the European Union,

The **impact of the crisis in the Middle East** is being felt far beyond the countries in the region. As you know, rising fuel, natural gas and fertiliser prices are affecting all countries, but if action is not taken immediately, this **could turn into a multi-year calamity for low and middle income countries** and the world's poorest communities.

Impact on Global Hunger and Poverty:

The UN Development Program estimates that **30 million people will be pushed into poverty** as a result of higher fuel and fertilizer prices. The IMF, World Bank and World Food Programme (WFP) have warned that this crisis will lead to rising food prices and food insecurity. WFP estimates that an **additional 45 million people are at risk of hunger** if the crisis continues into the summer, the majority in Africa and Asia. This would bring the number of people facing acute food insecurity globally to a record 363 million people. We know that even short bouts of malnutrition can have life-long consequences for a child's health, education and earning potential.

According to the FAO, **agrifood systems are affected by this crisis in four ways:**

- food import disruptions;
- increased food prices due to higher energy prices;
- higher agricultural input costs coming just as planting season is underway in many parts of the world, which could reduce farmer livelihoods and lower future yields;
- and lower remittances from workers in the Gulf economies affecting household food security in Asia and Africa.

We call on you to **act with urgency to coordinate a global response** to mitigate these risks, **save lives and build resilience.**

In the Immediate-term

To **stabilize supply chains and protect vulnerable populations** in the short term, the response must include targeted cash transfers, financial assistance for farmers, the identification of alternative trade routes, market monitoring to ensure equitable and fair trade, targeted support for import dependent countries, and engagement with local blenders, processors and distributors to ensure transparency and accountability. Additionally, action must be taken to protect access to nutritious food and to make available Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) for at-risk children— supported by robust treatment services, strengthened last-mile delivery systems, and resilient local production capacity.

Over the Medium to Long-term

We call on you to **invest in sustainable and resilient agrifood systems** by diversifying food import sources, strengthening regional coordination and contingency planning, investing in smallholder agriculture, strengthening local and regional food systems to deliver affordable, healthy and diverse diets, diversifying fertiliser production sustainably, and scaling up renewable energy. Countries should be prepared to manage the impact of persistent price volatility,

including through expanding social safety net programmes. There are mechanisms in place through the IFIs and the UN agencies to move with speed, including through countries' Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plans, the IFIs' crisis response windows and the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty.

Provide Debt Relief and Unlock Fiscal Space

This is the third global food crisis in six years. Low and middle income countries are still recovering from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. These exogenous economic shocks have depleted the fiscal capacity to respond and many low income countries face unsustainable debt. Over the last five years **debt service costs have increased by 91% leaving 32 countries in (or at high risk of) debt distress** and US\$471.52 billion debt service costs in low- and middle-income countries in 2024. Kenya, for example, has no fiscal space to offer citizens relief beyond the VAT cut it has already deployed. The G7 should spearhead initiatives to unlock fiscal space using the IMF's instruments such as the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust, which provides immediate debt service relief grants for low income countries when there is a shock, and its temporary "Food Shock Window." The G7 should also consider a new Debt Service Suspension Initiative to support countries with fiscal breathing space during the crisis.

Action is Needed Now

ODA cuts in the last two years have dramatically worsened already constrained fiscal space to manage shocks, while fossil fuel companies reap superprofits. As we approach summer and the potential of a "super" El Niño, there is no time to waste. Action at scale is needed now to prevent a devastating increase in malnutrition, hunger and poverty. Delayed action could spillover into next year's growing season and further worsen global food security.

We urge you to mobilize a swift, robust and coordinated response.

Alliance to End Hunger
Canadian Foodgrains Bank
Caritas Internationalis
Caritas Nepal
Concern Worldwide
Global Citizen
Global Health Advocates
One Acre Fund
ONE Campaign
Power Shift Africa
Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM)
Results Canada
SDG2 Advocacy Hub
Shamba Centre for Food and Climate
Sharing Strategies