

## Joint Interfaith Statement for World Food Day, 16 October 2021

### Pray and Act Against Hunger

As people of faith, we join in committing to pray and act against hunger at this time when 811m people worldwide go to bed hungry each night, hunger has increased globally by 25% since 2019, and across the globe more than 41m people—around half of them children—are at risk of falling into famine in 43 countries.

The converging causes of this crisis include conflict and violence, poverty and inequality, disasters and the impacts of climate change – compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic which has disrupted food production and supply chains, and reduced incomes. Vulnerable households in almost every country are affected. Reduced quality and quantity of food intake compromises people's nutrition and threatens to reverse hard won gains in poverty reduction, nutrition status and health, threatening the cognitive and physical development of young children, with lasting impact on nations for generations to come.

Even in the worst-affected countries, famine is preventable. We must act immediately in order to prevent the needless deaths of tens of thousands of children. Hunger forces people, including children and their families to make dangerous survival choices.

We know from past emergencies, such as the 2011 Somalia Famine in which some 258,000 people are estimated to have died, that around half perished before a famine declaration was made, and half of all those that died were children under 5 years of age.

We therefore call for:

- Urgent disbursement of the US \$7.0 billion committed in the G7 Compact on Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises into the hands of those that need it, targeting the 41m people in Emergency and Catastrophe/Famine levels of food insecurity, with a focus on meeting the nutrition needs of children in their first 1000 days, and ensuring that resources are not diverted from the 35 humanitarian response plans which are already underfunded.
- Unconditional principled humanitarian access to all populations affected by conflict, famine risk and acute food insecurity.

In addition, we will collaborate to influence longer term policies, financial commitments and actions that are needed to address the underlying issues driving hunger and food insecurity, especially for greater focus and investment in:

- Peace-building and social cohesion;
- Climate change action, including mitigation, adaptation and addressing loss and damage for those most affected;
- Sustainable food systems, focusing on agro-ecological and human rights based approaches to food security and food justice; and
- Social protection and livelihoods support, and pandemic assistance that promotes a green recovery.

We call for a consolidated, long-term global approach to address hunger, which includes the necessary political, technical and funding mobilization to support efforts to prevent and adequately respond to food insecurity.

We believe that our world has enough for all, and that famine and hunger anywhere represents a collective ethical and moral failure. We invite all people of goodwill to join us in accepting this responsibility, preventing more people from going hungry and in seeking justice for the most vulnerable people.



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