

## B. Africa's food crisis as a threat to peace and security

### Deliberations of 30 June 2005 (5220th meeting)

At its 5220th meeting, on 30 June 2005, at which all members of the Council made statements, the Council included in its agenda, under the item entitled "Africa's food crisis as a threat to peace and security", a briefing by Mr. James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme.

The Executive Director asserted that the greatest humanitarian crisis the international community faced was the gradual disintegration of social structures in southern Africa due to hunger, AIDS, recurring drought and failing governance. He elaborated that HIV/AIDS had taken one million lives during the previous year and created 14 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa, in addition to undermining the capacity of communities to produce food and disrupting the educational and health systems. He believed that the prevalence of hunger served as an accurate barometer for the level of social instability, as hunger was both a cause and an effect of political conflict. He expressed regret that although hungry people had a right to assistance and food should not be used as a weapon of war, aid distribution was often politically motivated and food aid was in sharp decline. In his view, competition for limited food resources, population movements and large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees caused by hunger posed a threat to stability and security in the region. He noted that food aid had not only been a critical component in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts, but also a tool to restore social and economic stability, support education, help rebuild communities, and give people the means to safeguard their own welfare. With regard to the role of the Council in supporting humanitarian efforts, the Executive Director declared that the Council's focus on the issue of hunger transmitted a powerful message. In conclusion, he welcomed donor attention to emergencies not apparent to the public eye and thanked the Council for its support.<sup>37</sup>

Council members shared the concerns of the effects of the triple threat of food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and weakened governance, particularly to the countries of southern Africa. According to the representative of the Philippines, the briefing

reinforced the "incontrovertible link" between the maintenance of peace and security and development, and the representative of Brazil welcomed the opportunity for the Council to examine the correlation between famine and armed conflict.<sup>38</sup> In the view of the representative of Benin, peace and security were threatened by "protracted destabilization" in sub-Saharan countries as a result of the combined effects of conflicts, climatic conditions and the fight for survival and control of the meagre resources available.<sup>39</sup> Acknowledging that humanitarian challenges had not been taken up by the Council, the representative of Romania declared that the Council welcomed the opportunity to be informed of and to examine humanitarian challenges that could constitute "ominous threats" to regional peace, security and stability.<sup>40</sup> The representative of the United Kingdom held that the underlying causes of hunger were very complex, although there was no doubt that hunger had links both to governance and to the Council's principal concern of peace and security.<sup>41</sup> In the view of the representative of China, the Council should recognize the direct relationship between conflicts in Africa and the issue of food crises.<sup>42</sup>

The representative of the United Kingdom argued that the Council should be better at predicting and preventing conflict, and the representative of Benin suggested that the credibility of the United Nations, particularly of the Council, would benefit from enhancing its conflict-prevention capacities.<sup>43</sup> The representatives of Japan and Greece called for comprehensive remedies to address the complexity of the problem, while the representative of the United States held that the international community should develop flexible tools to accommodate the unique causes of each particular crisis.<sup>44</sup>

The representative of Benin emphasized that political disputes should not affect the delivery of

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<sup>37</sup> S/PV.5220, pp. 2-6 and pp. 18-22.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11 (Philippines); and p. 8 (Brazil).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11 (United Kingdom); and p. 14 (Benin).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12 (Japan); p. 13 (Greece); and p. 16 (United States).

humanitarian assistance, and the representative of Algeria believed that food should never become an instrument of war or diplomatic coercion.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 14 (Benin); and pp. 14-15 (Algeria).

A number of Council members expressed particular concern over the crisis in Zimbabwe, particularly with respect to the estimated 275,000 people recently left homeless, which had caused further deterioration of the humanitarian situation there.

## C. Peace and security in Africa

### Initial proceedings<sup>46</sup>

#### Deliberations of 25 September 2007 (5749th meeting)

By a letter dated 19 September 2007 to the Secretary-General,<sup>47</sup> the representative of France indicated that a debate on the topic “Peace and security in Africa” would be held in the Council on 25 September under the presidency of France and that the meeting would be chaired by the President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy. The letter also contained a concept paper aimed at guiding the discussion, including questions around the main challenges to peace and security in Africa and ways to meet these challenges, such as the promotion of effective partnerships between the United Nations and Africa.

At its 5749th meeting, held on 25 September 2007 at the level of Heads of State and Government,<sup>48</sup> the Council included the above-mentioned letter in its agenda. All Council members made statements, as did the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

<sup>46</sup> At its 5261st meeting, held on 14 September 2005 to consider the agenda item entitled “Threats to international peace and security”, the Council addressed the issue of peace and security in Africa and adopted resolution 1625 (2005) thereon. See section 53 (Threats to international peace and security) of the present chapter.

<sup>47</sup> S/2007/552.

<sup>48</sup> The Congo, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Panama, Slovakia South Africa and the United States were represented by their respective Presidents; Qatar was represented by its Emir; Belgium and Italy were represented by their respective Prime Ministers; Peru and the Russian Federation were represented by their Ministers for Foreign Affairs; the United Kingdom was represented by its Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; and China was represented by its Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. The President of Ghana made a statement in his capacity as Chairperson of the African Union.

The President of the Council (France) mentioned that this was the fourth summit of its kind, following similar summits in 1992, 2000 and 2005.

The Secretary-General then noted that although many African countries were facing peace and security challenges, there were some encouraging signs as well. While the United Nations was working with the African Union to better address conflicts, such as the development of an African standby force, he also intended to propose the strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs to make better use of good offices and of promoting the prevention of conflicts. The United Nations would remain committed to development and peacebuilding in Africa.<sup>49</sup>

Speakers praised the close cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and appreciated that the Secretary-General had given top priority to Africa, especially the Darfur crisis, and they all stressed the need to further enhance this partnership.

The representative of South Africa said that Africa’s capacity and resources to cope with conflicts was however missing despite Africa’s efforts to gain its own peace and stability.<sup>50</sup> This was echoed by many speakers who agreed on the need to promote capacity and institution-building in Africa so it could better respond to internal crises.<sup>51</sup>

While welcoming cooperation with the United Nations, African leaders held that primary responsibility for peace and security on the continent rested with African States.<sup>52</sup> The representative of

<sup>49</sup> S/PV.5749, pp. 2-3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 5 (Indonesia); p. 9 (Italy); p. 10 (Qatar); p. 12 (Russian Federation); p. 13 (China); and p. 17 (African Union Commission).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 3 (African Union); p. 4 (South Africa); p. 12 (Congo); and p. 17 (African Union Commission).