



JOINING FORCES
For All Children

Joining Forces Africa
Policy Brief

There is no reason for Food Insecurity in the 21st Century



ChildFund
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 **SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES**
INTERNATIONAL

Terre des Hommes
International Federation

World Vision

“I would like the government to lower food prices. In the past I often ate fish with rice but now I have to eat my rice with beans. Everything is expensive, price of rice, fish, oil even bread has increased. Previously, when we went to the market, we brought some money back home, but today, it's barely enough to buy our food supplies. All this has a negative impact on my studies.”

Minetou, 11 year old girl from Mauritania

Escalating and protracted conflicts, climate change, and the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 are driving the shocking rise in global food insecurity and malnutrition seen in many parts of the world today. Approximately 282 million people in Africa are undernourished - an increase of 49 million from 2019.¹ COVID-19 has directly killed hundreds of thousands of people around the world and continues to take a deep toll on the food security, nutrition and livelihoods of millions of vulnerable people on the African continent, particularly women and girls. Without sufficient access to resources to recover from COVID, African countries are experiencing a continued socio-economic fallout from COVID-19, resulting in sharp declines in African households' incomes due to job losses and reduced livelihoods for millions. Declining remittances are also leading to steep increases in poverty and hunger, particularly in low-income developing countries. Currently, **an estimated 113 million people in 15 African countries require urgent humanitarian assistance in 2022.** Those living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts are at heightened risk, particularly across West, South and East Africa.

The Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) report released last week indicate that there are 59.1 million internally displaced people across the world at the end of 2021, 53.2 million IDP's as a result of conflict and violence, and 5.9 million as a result of disasters. Children constitute 25.2 million of the internally displacement². Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for more than 80 per cent of all internal displacements triggered by conflict and violence worldwide in 2021. The regional total was 4.7 million higher than the figure for the previous year, driven mostly by conflict in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burkina Faso, Somalia and the Central African Republic (CAR). Conflict and violence triggered

11.6 million internal displacements in sub-Saharan Africa, the highest figure ever recorded for the region.

All of these issues were pressing before conflict broke out in Ukraine – which is already significantly increasing food prices and disproportionately impacting many countries in Africa. While 63.4% of wheat consumed across the African Continent is imported,³ several African countries are almost completely dependent on wheat imported from Russia and Ukraine, including Somalia (100%), Benin (100%), Egypt (82%), Sudan (75%), DRC (69%), Senegal (66%), and Tanzania (64%).⁴ These countries and others that depend on imported wheat will see huge price increases, making food very difficult to access for the world's poorest, and driving up food insecurity and the risk of famine for these populations. The increased cost and disruption of fertilizer supply will also mean that the current crisis will not only result in short-term food shortages but will have long-term effects on countries ability to grow and harvest crops. The impact of the conflict in Ukraine is also increasing the costs for humanitarian operations – WFP estimates its food procurement costs have increased by 44% since the start of the Ukraine crisis and UNICEF estimates that the cost of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) for the treatment of acute malnutrition will rise by 16% over the next six months.⁵ Unless quick action is taken, decades of development gains will be rolled back and millions of lives will be lost, posing a significant threat to achieving the AU Agenda 2063 and its vision of 'The Africa we Want', including the Pan African Vision of "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena

The impact of these converging catastrophes is disproportionately felt by women and girls – who make up 60 percent of acutely food insecure people globally. Women and girls already eat last and least, so the

¹ Kathryn Reid, 'Africa hunger, famine: Facts, FAQs, and how to help', World Vision (blog), (22 February 2022). <https://www.worldvision.org/hunger-news-stories/africa-hunger-famine-facts>

² IDMC | GRID 2022 | 2022 Global Report on Internal Displacement (internal-displacement.org)

³ Josefa Sacko and Ibrahim Mayaki, 'Impact of Russia-Ukraine Conflict', Africa Renewal (2022). <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/may-2022/impact-russia-ukraine-conflict>

⁴ Katharina Buchholz, 'The Most Vulnerable Countries Amid Wheat Shortages', Statista Infographics, (5 April 2022). <https://www.statista.com/chart/27181/least-developed-countries-dependent-on-wheat-from-russia-ukraine/>

⁵ UNICEF. 'Child Alert: Severe wasting', (2022). <https://www.unicef.org/child-alert/severe-wasting>

combined impact of diminishing resources and limited decision-making power, mean this crisis will deepen the systemic inequality that holds women and girls back from realizing their right to good nutrition. When women are not well-nourished, the impacts on both them and their children are devastating, including increased maternal and infant mortality, perpetuating intergenerational cycles of malnutrition that will be felt for generations to come. Food insecurity also puts women and girls at greater risk of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and child marriage – and increases their unpaid care load.

East Africa

In Eastern Africa, more than 31 million women, men, girls, and boys are facing high levels of food insecurity; between 12 – 14 million of whom are highly food insecure in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia alone. As the fourth consecutive and worst draught drags on, people in East Africa are among the most vulnerable to famine, with 45-55 million people estimated to be in crisis, emergency, or catastrophic levels of food insecurity.⁶ While conflict is the leading driver of hunger globally, this driver is particularly significant in East Africa as every country in East Africa is either in conflict or neighbouring a country in conflict. Conflict and weather shocks have resulted in multiple instances of large-scale displacement in northern Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and areas of South Sudan. Humanitarian needs in these countries are immense and the impact on children, including safeguarding risks, is alarming.

The region has also endured substantial climate shocks, undermining people's ability to feed themselves. Due to poor rainfall and low crop production, 3.4 million Kenyans are facing acute food insecurity. Cumulatively, there has been below average rainfall across most of the country, resulting in below-average crop production activities and below average regeneration of forage. Livestock bodily conditions are also below average across most pastoral areas. More than 8.3 million people in South Sudan needed humanitarian assistance one year ago. This number has increased to 8.9 million as of February 2022. In this period, the number of children

in need of humanitarian assistance has also increased from 4.3 million to 4.6 million. Many people in Upper Nile State are in dire need of food assistance mainly due to the floods and localized conflict that disrupted agricultural activities and the harvest. In March, WFP and FAO in a joint statement, indicated that the estimated number of people in Sudan who will require food aid will double to 18 million. This is attributed to shrinking access, affordability and availability of food. An estimated 9.8 million people in need have been assessed as acutely food-insecure and will require food assistance.

We are deeply concerned for millions of children in East Africa, who are enduring a devastating hunger crisis. About 5.7 million children are acutely malnourished in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, alone, while 1.6 are extremely malnourished. The numbers of acutely malnourished children in the region are already increasing at an alarming rate – Somalia has already experienced a 51% increase in admissions for the treatment of severely malnourished children since the beginning of 2022.⁷ Children who are acutely malnourished are 11 times more likely to die than children who are well nourished. History in this region has already demonstrated this increased vulnerability among malnourished children as half of those who died in the 2011 Somalia famine were children under five.⁸

Western and Central Africa

In Western and Central Africa, 27.3 million people are going hungry today and in need of urgent emergency food assistance. More than 38 million people are projected to be acutely food insecure by June 2022⁹, representing an increase of more than 40% in one year. UN estimates 6.3 million children aged 6-59 months will become acutely malnourished in the same period¹⁰. In fact, acute malnutrition among children under five has increased by over 27% since last year and more than 62% since 2018.¹¹ The situation is aggravated by a high prevalence of chronic malnutrition in children under five, further inhibiting their physical and cognitive development and increasing the risk of mortality in children with concurrent acute and chronic malnutrition.

⁶ FEWS NET, 'East Africa Key Message Update: Scale of Food Assistance Needs in East Africa Continues to Outpace the Humanitarian Response', Situation Report (2022). <https://fews.net/east-africa/key-message-update/february-2022>

⁷ Global Nutrition Cluster, 'Somalia Nutrition Cluster Key Message on Risk of Famine', (24 April 2022). https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/somalia_nutrition_cluster_key_message_on_risk_of_famine.pdf

⁸ UN, 'Somalia Famine Killed Nearly 260,000 People, Half of Them Children – Reports UN', UN News, (2 May 2013). <https://news.un.org/en/story/2013/05/438682-somalia-famine-killed-nearly-260000-people-half-them-children-reports-un>

⁹ OXFAM, 'West Africa Faces Its Worst Food Crisis in Ten Years, with over 27 Million People Already Suffering from Hunger', *Oxfam in West Africa*, (5 April 2022). <https://westafrica.oxfam.org/en/latest/press-release/west-africa-faces-its-worst-food-crisis-ten-years-over-27-million-people>

¹⁰ WCA Nutrition Working Group, 'Joint Note on the Nutrition Situation in the West and Central Africa Region', (March 2022). <https://www.unicef.org/wca/reports/joint-note-nutrition-situation-west-and-central-africa-region>

¹¹ Ibid



According to FAO, food prices increased by 20-30 % over the past five years in West Africa. As food prices continue worsening, in some countries this increase is 50% higher than the five-year average (Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone). In Mali, sanctions in response to the government delaying elections are further increasing the cost of food and pushing food security out of reach for the most vulnerable.¹² In Niger, cereal production fell by almost 40%, in Mali by 15% and in Burkina Faso by 10% - making these countries more dependent on imported cereals, most of which are produced in Russia and Ukraine, meaning that prices for cereals will skyrocket.¹³

Growing insecurity, particularly in the Central Sahel, Lake Chad Basin and Northwest Nigeria, further aggravates and already fragile and precarious situation. Over the past 3 years, the sharp increase¹⁴ in armed attacks on communities, schools, health centers and other public institutions and infrastructure has disrupted livelihoods and access to social services. Currently, more than 5,574 schools are closed or non-functional in the Central Sahel alone, one in eight primary school aged children in Mali do not attend school and of those enrolled, only one third

are girls. As a result of this limited access to education in the Central Sahel, girls and boys of all ages are in heighten number of risks of violence, exploitation rights violation. Worst still, with families facing mounting food insecurity, girls are increasingly called upon to care for younger siblings so parents can work or seek food, forcing them to miss or drop out of school. As a result, girls' education is likely to be further deprioritized, exacerbating the gender gap in education. Loss of access to education jeopardizes girls' immediate protection, and increases their exposure to GBV and other harmful practices including CEFM and female genital mutilation/cutting. It also undermines their long-term wellbeing and future prospects. Insecurity is compounding chronic vulnerabilities including high levels of malnutrition, childhood illnesses, and poor access to clean water and sanitation as well as health facilities. Growing insecurity has triggered massive population displacement – with more than 5.5 million people internally displaced in the region in January 2022 - increasing protection risks, pressures on livelihoods and emergency coping strategies. Over time, insecurity (real or perceived) leads to a shift in access to land, land use and households' strategies: remote monitoring systems illustrate the decrease of cropping areas; surveillance mechanisms demonstrate that animal and herders' movements are now primarily determined by the security situation, prior to resources availability. Political instability in the Central Sahel and in Guinea has further deteriorated the situation. Although functioning of key logistical chains has been maintained, the level of uncertainty on the markets, changes of rules and regulations on individual movements have had an impact on population access to basic services and humanitarian aid.

Southern Africa

In the Southern Africa region, 36 million people are in crisis or higher (IPC 3+) levels of food insecurity, as of February 2022.¹⁵ The region has experienced multiple climate shocks, including three cyclones and two storms (which destroyed 550,000 hectares of crops in Mozambique and Malawi), with some areas also experiencing drought and prolonged dry spells. These climate change induced extreme weather events, combined with price increases for wheat, sunflower, and petroleum fuel are already exacerbating food insecurity in 2022. In some

¹² ACAPS, 'Global Risk Analysis - March 2022', (March 2022). https://www.acaps.org/sites/acaps/files/products/files/20220324_acaps_global_risk_report_march_2022.pdf

¹³ FAO (2022), The importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for global agricultural markets and the risks associated with the current conflict. Rome, 2022. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.fao.org/3/cb9013en/cb9013en.pdf](https://www.fao.org/3/cb9013en/cb9013en.pdf)

¹⁴ According to data collected by ACLED, nearly 30,000 people lost their lives in over 5,700 violent events in 2021 in West and Central Africa. This represents a nearly 20% increase compared to 2020, and an over 60% increase compared to 2018, highlighting the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the region.

¹⁵ IPC, 'SADC: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Regional Snapshot as of February 22, 2022', (22 February 2022). <https://reliefweb.int/report/angola/sadc-ipc-acute-food-insecurity-regional-snapshot-february-22-2022>

of the worst-affected areas, the harvest is expected to be up to 25 percent below normal. Harvesting of main season cereals is underway under mixed conditions as persistent dryness has resulted in below-average yields in parts of Angola, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe and continues to cause concern in many parts of the subregion. Poor conditions in Madagascar are especially conducive to a nutrition crisis, leaving nearly 1.5 million people experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity and 500,000 children under five at risk of acute malnutrition. In southern Angola, the 2020/2021 agricultural season faced one of the worst droughts in the last 40 years, negatively impacting livelihoods and food security.¹⁶ Due to the consecutive droughts over the past two agricultural seasons, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes are likely to persist until at least May 2022, however in Namibe, Cunene, and southern Huíla where production prospects are very poor, households will continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes from June to September. There is also concern in parts of Mozambique and Malawi impacted by the passage of Tropical Storm Ana, Tropical Depression Dumako, and Tropical Cyclone Gombe.

Conflict remains a key driver of food insecurity and malnutrition in the region. Conflict in Mozambique and DRC remains volatile and continues to negatively impact livelihood activities. According to UNHCR, militia attacks reported this year have caused the displacement of around 24,000 people within the Nangade district of Cabo Del Gado, Mozambique in which already over 700,000 people remain displaced.¹⁷ Meanwhile, in DRC, around 140,500 people were displaced due to continued conflict in Ituri between December and February, and another 22,700 people were displaced in North Kivu. Displacement is a main driver of hunger, as people lose their livelihoods when they are forced to move, and accessing food is a major challenge for refugee and internally displaced populations.

Joining Forces' response to the food crisis on the African Continent

The Joining Forces Alliance in Africa believes that famine and malnutrition are preventable and have no place in the 21st century. This is not the first time the world has faced this situation. As we learned from the large-scale famine in Somalia in 2011, failure to act quickly on early warnings of famine and

restricted humanitarian access left 260,000 people dead, half of whom were children. The collective failure to act on early warnings led to thousands of preventable deaths. We cannot let this happen again. Our experience in 2017, the last time we faced famine risks at a similar scale, demonstrated the power of collective action, when famine was largely held at bay due to a massive, sustained and collective humanitarian response and improved access.¹⁸

Social protection is among the best documented and most cost-effective ways to promote equity, reduce vulnerability, invest in human capital development, and protect people's food security and nutrition status when disaster hits, particularly for the extreme poor. Multipurpose cash transfers are particularly effective and efficient in supporting vulnerable families to meet immediate needs in contexts where multiple, overlapping shocks are the norm.¹⁹ Both short-term and long-term measures to respond and prevent famine must prioritize the realization of human rights, support peaceful resolution to conflict, address the impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable people and countries, and transform food systems to be more inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

Urgent and intensified efforts are needed to intervene early to protect children from wasting while ensuring early detection and treatment for those who become wasted. A coherent multi-sector response is needed by scaling up treatment to prevent death, but also addressing the multiple underlying vulnerabilities that are causing this spike in food insecurity and malnutrition, including drivers such as inadequate diet and care practices for infants and young children, poor maternal nutrition, high disease burden, inadequate WASH, and harmful gender and social norms.

In response to this hunger crisis, World Vision has launched a Global Hunger Emergency Response, which covers 24 countries, 15 of which are in East, West, Central, and Southern Africa. Strong collective action is needed immediately to urgently curb malnutrition of children under five and to protect the livelihoods of the most vulnerable households. Terre des Hommes (TdH) Foundation is monitoring the food and nutrition situation through its teams in 9 countries in Africa. TdH is currently working in the North and Boucle du Mouhoun regions in Burkina Faso with screening activities, referral of cases of

¹⁶ FEWS NET, 'Crop Losses in Southwestern Angola from Consecutive Droughts', (April 2022), <https://fews.net/southern-africa/angola>

¹⁷ UNHCR (2022). One year after Palma attacks, thousands continue to flee violence in northern Mozambique. 22nd March, 2022. Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/briefing/2022/3/623991b34/year-palma-attacks-thousands-continue-flee-violence-northern-mozambique.html>

¹⁸ Daniel Maxwell, et al., 'Facing Famine: Somali Experiences in the Famine of 2011', *Food Policy* 65 (2016): 63–73.

¹⁹ World Vision, 'There Is No Place for Famine in the 21st Century', (11 April 2022). <https://www.wvi.org/publications/policy-briefing/there-no-place-famine-21st-century>

malnutrition, prevention at community level and support for health centers. The livelihoods of the population are also strengthened. Actions to prevent malnutrition and support the health system are also being deployed in the Segou region in Mali and a pilot project for integrated treatment of malnutrition through digital health is currently undertaken. In Kenya, TdH is seeking funding to respond to the nutritional crisis in Garissa County. Plan International is working in countries affected by the worsening food crisis, by scaling up responses such as food distributions, cash and voucher assistance, school meals, malnutrition screening and nutrition supplementation. In addition to lifesaving interventions, Plan International is stepping up livelihood protection and support activities such as livestock supplementary feeding, kitchen gardens, seed and other agriculture input provision. A hunger Appeal for the Horn of Africa and Central Sahel has recently been launched to raise funds for the most affected countries. This is in addition to the ongoing operations in Mozambique and South Sudan. With its special emphasis on preventing and tackling the distinct impact of food insecurity on girls, adolescent girls and young, Plan International is also increasing its response to gender responsive child protection, gender-based

violence prevention, early childhood development and sexual and reproductive health and rights services and for critical school feeding programmes.

As part of its Family Strengthening Programme, SOS Children's Villages is reinforcing the capacities of more than 5,630 families and communities in West, Central and North Africa. These interventions help to reduce the risk of food insecurity by increasing the revenue of vulnerable families who are able today to provide food to all members of their households including children.

JOINING FORCES CALL TO ACTION

National Governments Should:

- Strengthen access to and delivery of quality essential services for the most vulnerable, including food, nutrition, health and improved water and sanitation, and establish accountability mechanisms to ensure the most vulnerable children and families are able to safely and equitably access those services.
- Bring degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2030, in line with the Bonn Challenge using sustainable and simple approaches such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration²⁰.
- National Governments should strengthen and/or establish national child-sensitive and gender-transformative social protection systems, ensure adequate budgetary allocations and put in place accountability mechanisms to ensure the most vulnerable women and children receive transfers of sufficient size and duration to meet lifesaving food and nutrition needs.
- Allocate and Ring face Nutrition budget to ensure resources are available and tailored to address malnutrition in Children under five and address prevention interventions at community level.
- Invest in simple technology to improve surveillance, mapping and reported of vulnerable areas and population to aid emergency responses.
- Social protection systems should be used to protect jobs, wages, and livelihoods for the poorest families, as well as to help households avoid negative coping strategies that increase the risk that children will be forced into labour, begging, or other forms of violence and exploitation, such as early marriage.
- Ensure all COVID-19 response efforts adhere to key humanitarian standards, including Minimum



²⁰ Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is a low-cost land restoration technique used to combat poverty and hunger amongst poor farmers by increasing food and timber production and resilience to climate extremes. World Vision has demonstrated ongoing experience implementing FMNR in over 27 countries. World Vision, 'Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration: A Holistic Approach to Sustainable Development', (3 December 2019). <https://www.wvi.org/publications/world-vision-european-union/farmer-managed-natural-regeneration-holistic-approach>

Standards for Food Security and Nutrition, the Minimum Economic Recovery Standards, and the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

- National Governments should deliver on nutrition commitments already made, including the commitments made at the Nutrition for Growth Summit, ensuring prioritization of resources where they will save the most lives, including the treatment of malnourished children and social protection mechanisms.
- National governments to take steps to implement the 2022 AU theme of the year: "Strengthening resilience in nutrition and food security on the African continent - strengthening agrofood systems, health and social protection systems for the acceleration of human, social and economic capital"

Parties to the Conflict Should:

- Adhere to International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law including cease attacks on civilians, especially children, and on civilian infrastructure
- Facilitate the safe provision of principled humanitarian assistance to affected populations to ensure the timely delivery of lifesaving aid.

Donors Should:

- Mobilise additional, comprehensive humanitarian funding to address urgent and growing humanitarian needs. At present, despite the gravity of the situation, the humanitarian response in Africa remains largely unfunded.
- Take diplomatic action to prevent famine, protect civilians and ensure humanitarian access in conflict situations, now and in the future.

- Donors should urgently work with other G20 members to deliver on the G20 Leader's commitment to rapidly mobilize comprehensive and coordinated policy response to COVID-19's direct and indirect impacts.
- Donors should deliver on nutrition commitments already made, including the commitments made at the Nutrition for Growth Summit, ensuring prioritization of resources where they will save the most lives, including the treatment of malnourished children and social protection mechanisms.
- Donors should also work to provide additional funding to protect communities most at risk from the spike in world food prices generated by the Ukraine crisis.
- In order to help African countries, cope with the economic impacts of COVID and the crisis in Ukraine's direct impact on food security, debt financing initiatives should be bolstered, and allow flexible repayments, grace periods, and ensure timely delivery, particularly for low-income, high debt countries and sustain development funding as well.
- Sex- and age-disaggregated data about food security needs, including information about the needs of school-age children and adolescents, is essential to meeting their age- and gender-specific needs, particularly of adolescent girls.
- Support should be provided to locally-led responses wherever possible. Local organizations, including youth-led organizations, need direct, flexible and increased funding and to have a central role in decision making about the response.

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