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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Biang.	(Gabon)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil.	Mr. Costa Filho
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Ghana	Mrs. Hackman
	India	Mr. Ravindran
	Ireland	Mr. Mythen
	Kenya.	Mr. Kimani
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation.	Mr. Nebenzia/Mr. Chumakov
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America.	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 11.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Germany, Romania, Türkiye and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Silvio Gonzato, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity.

A total of 38 countries have purchased some 9 million tons of grain from Ukraine under the Black Sea Grain Initiative. As has been noted, not all of it has gone to the neediest countries but all of it has a humanitarian impact — the reduction of prices and the calming of market volatility. Ukraine's grain exports are not a food aid operation, but they operate as a huge lever on price, with positive ripple effects throughout the world. New security allegations are cause for grave concern to the Secretary-General, and many Member States are now worried that the deal is in trouble. It is therefore a privilege for me to brief the Security Council on this particular matter today.

Over the weekend, the Secretary-General heard from our Russian colleagues of their intention to suspend their participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the reasons for which I am sure they will share with us today. It would indeed be a grave abuse

of the Black Sea Grain Initiative if it were used in any way for military operational advantage. The United Nations has the solemn privilege of assisting the parties in implementing this unique arrangement. Acting as the secretariat, the United Nations is ready to investigate, along with the Member States party to the Initiative, any and all evidence presented, if requested.

The Joint Coordination Centre, which comprises representatives of all four signatories to the Initiative, has established and agreed processes for such incidents and accidents. When a ship's captain recently reported seeing a possible floating mine, the Joint Coordination Centre agreed by consensus to pause shipping. It allowed a Ukrainian tugboat, accompanied by a search-and-rescue vessel at a distance, to search the area. Nothing was found, and the Joint Coordination Centre decided to resume shipping the next day. I cite that as an example of the Joint Coordination Centre's functioning.

That is why Russia's intended suspension is concerning. There is a painstaking process in the Joint Coordination Centre to arrive at consensus on matters large and small, even when a hot war is raging. The Joint Coordination Centre has to be — and is — meticulously impartial. The corridor has been tranquil. The ships sailed, the food flowed, prices dropped and hope rose again.

I wish to stress three points related to the alleged connection between the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the Sevastopol attacks and damage to Russian military vessels and infrastructure.

First, to be clear: no military vessels, aircraft or assets belonging to any party are, or have been, involved in support of the Initiative. They are not required. In fact, they are prohibited from approaching closer than 10 nautical miles to the cargo ships, according to the procedures agreed by all parties.

Secondly, the corridor itself is just lines on a chart. When Black Sea Grain Initiative vessels are not in the area, the corridor has no special status. It provides neither cover nor protection for offensive or defensive military action. It is not a shield or a hideout. It is not a no-go zone. Those elements come into play when a ship passes through those lines on the sea.

Thirdly, turning to the alleged misuse of cargo vessels in the Initiative for military purposes, none were in the corridor on the night of 29 October, when the reported attacks took place. No vessel reported an

incident over the weekend. We are therefore ready to consider an inquiry into any evidence that is reported to us in the Joint Coordination Centre.

All sides decided, within the Joint Coordination Centre, that the Initiative would be entirely civilian in nature. Rather than escorts, as had been previously envisaged by some, or patrols, the safety of shipping is protected by the commitments of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Both commit not to attack ships and related port facilities, under paragraph C of the agreement signed in Istanbul on 22 July. We stand ready to discuss any concerns about the Initiative and its implementation. We continue to rely on the key contribution of Türkiye as mediator, facilitator and host.

The Joint Coordination Centre's operations are an open book — or perhaps I should say an open database. The journeys of cargo vessels in the Initiative can be tracked in real time on public websites. All parties share the same information about ships, cargo, inspection and destinations. The data for the 9.5 million tons of shipments to date has been accessed more than 70,000 times on the United Nations website.

The rigorous joint inspections, including by Russian inspectors and all parties to the Initiative, have combed through the storage holds, engine rooms and tanks of ships more than 800 times. The searches have come up with plenty of minor inconsistencies — missing paperwork, some sacks of rice swept from a previous cargo shipment, a crew member's passport wrongly recorded. More seriously, the Joint Coordination Centre's teams have battled to maintain a balance between safety and rigour when inspecting cargo that has been fumigated with toxic insecticide. The Joint Coordination Centre has recorded some 60 navigational deviations from the agreed corridors in more than 820 voyages facilitated by the Initiative. On more than 100 occasions, when problems have been raised, the Joint Coordination Centre process has been comprehensive and exhaustive. Corrective measures have been agreed by consensus. It is not the easiest format for countries at war to work with, but until now it has worked, to their great credit. However, in the days leading up to Russia's suspension of its participation, it is true that the process had been getting bogged down, owing to insufficient inspection capacity. Food for millions was stuck in a maritime traffic jam in the Bosphorus, visible from above. Ships' captains were calling in, desperate to get moved up through the queue. That meant that we lost time, the shipping industry lost money and we

were delaying food delivery. We need to get back to the status quo ante, when we were able to export those millions of tons.

I want to point out that some have questioned the value of this quite extraordinary effort. They have said that it is not enough, that the food is going to the wrong places and that it is the wrong type of food. Mark my words — when things go awry, as they are doing now, we can all see how much good it can do and has been doing. We insist, as we have all along, that the exports from both of these global breadbaskets — Ukraine and Russia — are vital. We need unimpeded exports from both. Of course, Ms. Grynspan will brief the Council in more detail, but let me also say very clearly that we hope and expect all Member States to work to support the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Russian Federation, also signed on 22 July, to ensure that their own food and fertilizer exports can expeditiously reach global markets. If we cannot get more fertilizer out, we face even worse shortages next year. For me, as the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the thought of even more global hunger next year is the nightmare that we face.

I particularly welcome the pledges from both Russia and Ukraine to donate food to support humanitarian relief operations in the world's hardest-hit and most hungry nations. It is a heartening sign that both sides recognize the special responsibilities they share. As I am sure Ms. Grynspan will explore and explain much better than I, when the Chicago Board of Trade opened today wheat prices jumped as a result of recent events. Each fraction of a percentage point pushes someone, somewhere over the line into extreme poverty. Insurers tell us that their premiums may leap by a quarter or a half for shipping crossing the Black Sea.

We are very encouraged by Russia's assurance — which is not merely a distinction, but an important fact — that it is not pulling out of the Initiative, as some have said, but is only temporarily suspending activities in the implementation of the Initiative. The Russian Federation has deployed a highly professional team at the Joint Coordination Centre for its implementation, and it is still there. We look forward to welcoming it back as a full and active participant as soon as possible in the fulfilment of reaching the goals that we have all agreed and signed up to. We have had many discussions, and the United Nations is ready to address concerns and listen to suggestions from all

sides as we approach the 120-day extension point on 19 November, when the Initiative can be renewed, with no one objecting.

Today emergency measures were taken to release some of the cargo from Ukrainian ports and inspect some of the 100 vessels that are queued up and ready to go. We need to continue fulfilling our commitments and acting in concert, as before. Our understanding is that the Initiative and commitments remain in force even during the suspension of Russia's participation. Today 12 ships sailed out of Ukrainian ports, and two headed in to load food. All those ships were previously inspected by the full membership of the Joint Coordination Centre. As an example, one ship headed south through the corridor is the *IKARIA ANGEL*, with 30,000 tons of World Food Programme (WFP) wheat for Ethiopia. Another, the *PANGEO*, passed inspection on its onward journey full of wheat destined for Yemen and Afghanistan, and the next WFP vessel is on its way.

I therefore have a simple message. Let us keep the supply line open. Let us keep the Initiative in action. Let us resolve our differences with all speed. The Initiative is too important to fail.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Grynszpan.

Ms. Grynszpan: We are meeting today in a context of acute and prolonged crisis. Aware of the gravity of the situation, the Secretary-General created the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance in March to deal with the impact of the war in Ukraine on developing countries. Our initial analyses were alarming and have not been proved wrong. Given the fact that Russia and Ukraine are two globally vital breadbaskets, as the war began, commodity prices that were already rising skyrocketed.

In March, the Food Price Index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recorded its highest level in history. The world was in no position to absorb the shock. Climate change and the coronavirus disease pandemic had depleted the capacity of most of the developing world to cope with such external shocks. It was the perfect storm — a cascading crisis that led to cascading inequalities. As a result, according to our estimates, more than 1.6 billion people, in more than 90 countries, were in a state of severe vulnerability to rising poverty,

hunger and debt. That was the beginning of a cost-of-living crisis of global proportions. Immediately, the Secretary-General focused on breaking the vicious cycle of rising prices and inflation by addressing food insecurity, the most urgent dimension of the crisis. As Mr. Griffiths explained very clearly, the Secretary-General's plan involved the parallel implementation of two initiatives — the Black Sea Grain Initiative and a memorandum of understanding on promoting the unimpeded export of Russian food products and fertilizers to world markets. As we all know, together with Türkiye, a key player in the effort, we signed the two agreements in Istanbul on 22 July.

The impact of the two agreements has been made clear in a short period of time, with massive global welfare effects. Grain exports from Ukraine and the Russian Federation increased substantially. Wheat exports from the Russian Federation tripled between July and September, while wheat exports from Ukraine more than quadrupled over the same period of time, resulting in lower food prices in international markets and improved access to food for humanitarian actors. More than three-quarters of all the maize and wheat for human consumption went to the developing world, including 20 per cent of wheat for least developed countries. The FAO Food Price Index has declined for six months in a row by about 16 per cent. According to World Bank models, that decline may have prevented more than 100 million people from falling into poverty. However, we are still below the volumes traded by Ukraine and Russia for the same period in 2021, and uncertainty with regard to the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative is now causing prices to rise again. As Mr. Griffiths said, wheat futures rose by more than 6 per cent just today.

Furthermore, fertilizer prices are still two and half times their 2019 level, producing a fertilizer crunch in which farmers, especially smallholder farmers from the developing world, have been priced out of production. In North America, fertilizers represent less than 10 per cent of total production costs, whereas in West Africa they represent 50 per cent.

The International Fertilizer Association forecasts a decline of between 18 and 23 per cent in fertilizer use in sub-Saharan Africa this year. For that reason, we know that today's crisis of affordability may become tomorrow's crisis of availability of huge proportions, drawing other staples such as rice into the crisis.

Therefore, we have been focusing in recent days on solving the fertilizer crisis. Ensuring access for fertilizers from the Russian Federation to key markets is an important part of that. We have dedicated a lot of effort to finding solutions to the constraints we still face.

What we have called the chilling effect of the sanctions on the private sector — overcompliance, reputational risks and market avoidance — are still real obstacles. Transaction costs on insurance premiums, financial payments, shipping costs and transport costs for Russian food and fertilizer exports are very high, leading to continued high global food and fertilizer prices.

Specific actions are yielding some results for our efforts. Fertilizer currently stored in ports and warehouses in European ports are being donated for humanitarian needs in Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America, with the direct engagement of the World Food Programme. We anticipate that the first shipment of fertilizers will depart for Africa in the first week of November.

In relation to the United Nations efforts to facilitate unimpeded access to food and fertilizers from the Russian Federation, there has been very intense engagement with the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom and other countries and private sector actors, who have issued critical clarifications and high-level political statements. We welcome those efforts.

But even with clear exemptions to the sanctions, there is still a lot of work that remains to be done, including on further clarifying exemptions for food and fertilizer within the different sanctions regimes, addressing indirect constraints to food and fertilizer trade and improving the private sector's willingness to engage.

We urge all parties to make every effort to resume and extend the Black Sea Grain Initiative and implement both agreements to their fullest extent.

The United Nations is fully committed and will spare no effort to continue to work with all parties to ensure that we reach that goal. As the Secretary-General said in his statement on Saturday, "We do not underestimate the challenges, but we know they can be overcome".

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Grynspan for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia requested this meeting today in connection with the actions by the Ukrainian side on the Black Sea that pose a direct threat to international peace and security.

On Saturday, 29 October, at approximately 4 a.m., under the cover of the humanitarian corridor created for the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Ukrainian armed forces launched massive air and sea strikes against the vessels and infrastructure of the Russian Black Sea Fleet and Sevastopol. The attacks involved nine unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and seven unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs), all of which were destroyed by our navy. The Russian vessels that were attacked were ensuring the safety of the grain corridor used for exporting food from Ukrainian ports.

Russian specialists found and retrieved the UUV debris and conducted an analysis of their Canadian-made navigation modules. The information restored from their memory shows that those UUVs were launched from the coast near Odessa, whence they moved along the security zone of the grain corridor and subsequently turned in the direction of Sevastopol in the Russian Crimea. The coordinates of one of the UUVs showed that its starting point was in the grain corridor security zone in the Black Sea, which may indicate that the UUV was launched from one of the civilian vessels chartered by Kyiv and its Western patrons to export agricultural products from Ukrainian seaports.

According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, Kyiv initiated that terrorist attack, under the leadership of British specialists, in Ochakiv port in the Mykolayiv oblast of Ukraine. Another noteworthy fact is that an American intelligence-gathering RQ-4B Global Hawk UAV was seen in the Black Sea airspace off the Crimean coast on Saturday.

That act by Kyiv is a gross violation of the Istanbul agreement of 22 July and basically puts an end to the agreement's humanitarian dimension. It is obvious now that the Ukrainian side is using the Black Sea grain corridor for military and sabotage purposes.

Given that situation, the Russian side cannot guarantee the safety of civilian vessels participating in

the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We do not know what other terrorist attacks Kyiv is plotting with the help of its Western sponsors. That is why we had to suspend the implementation of the Grain Initiative on 29 October for an unspecified period of time and instructed our representatives in the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul to that effect.

However, according to the information we received, the work of the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul continued without the participation of Russian experts. In particular, on 30 and 31 October the representatives of Türkiye, the United Nations and Ukraine agreed on the passage of 12 vessels from Ukrainian ports to Türkiye, four vessels from Türkiye to Ukraine and 40 vessels from Türkiye to the Mediterranean.

It is our understanding that the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which Russia, Türkiye and Ukraine agreed on 22 July under the aegis of the United Nations, may not be implemented without Russia's participation. Therefore, we do not consider the decisions made without us to be binding.

At the same time, given the misuse of the humanitarian corridors and the fact that the Black Sea remains an area of hostilities, we cannot allow the unimpeded passage of vessels without our inspection. We will have to take our own measures to control what the Joint Coordination Centre authorized without our consent. We will provide details on our conclusions and approaches to that end in the near future.

The statements by our Western colleagues that we heard today alleging that our measures pose a threat to food security are nothing more than an attempt to shift the blame in order to spare the Kyiv regime, which is allowed to do anything, even the most dangerous things, by its Western sponsors. That includes nuclear blackmail via strikes on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, preparing dirty bomb provocations, targeted attacks on civilian infrastructure, including the Crimean bridge, and the repression of peaceful people in the territories under its control.

How can they whitewash their protégés when they feel complete impunity and they use a humanitarian corridor under United Nations protection for their subversive terrorist purposes? What Russian propaganda can they invoke? The fact is that it is the Kyiv authorities and not Russia that jeopardizes the functioning of the humanitarian corridor, while

showing their complete disdain for any agreements, even those made under United Nations auspices.

In the course of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, more than 70 vessels were detained, some of which were removed owing to systematic violations of the rules of navigation in the grain corridor and attempted smuggling in secret, specially equipped containers. Ukrainian social media openly discusses the opportunities that the initiative opened for the smuggling of arms and fuel through vessels returning to Ukrainian ports via the grain corridor. We also saw attempts to artificially accelerate the inspection process for dry cargo ships within the framework of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Washington and Brussels hypocritically accuse Russia of provoking world hunger, but they fail to mention that their sanctions block not only Russian agricultural exports of 30 million tons of food and 25 million tons of fertilizer, but also our provision, free of charge, of 500,000 tons of grain and 286 tons of fertilizer to countries in need. For our part, we have been working with integrity and honesty in order to ensure the export of Ukrainian food, which was dispatched on a commercial basis and is not being sent to the needy, as the Secretary-General had promised, but to the European Union and other developed States. Thanks to the critical efforts of Russian experts, the Black Sea traffic was increased to the impressive level of approximately 1 million tons weekly, while progress on the Russia-United Nations memorandum to normalize the export of our foodstuffs is nearing zero. We should have expected such an approach from our Western partners in the Security Council, as we recall that those are the same delegations that did not allow the adoption at the end of July of a joint Security Council product that would have welcomed both Istanbul arrangements and actively tried to delete from the text every mention of the Russian part of the package.

We are surprised that the leadership of the United Nations failed not only to condemn, but even to express concern about the terrorist attacks carried out under the cover of the humanitarian corridor. First, the Secretariat promptly reclassified the grain deal from a humanitarian to a commercial project, and now it is turning a blind eye to its being used for military purposes — to say nothing of the lack of concrete results with regard to Russian agricultural exports, which account for a significant share of global markets and are crucial for food security.

The Saturday terrorist attack in Sevastopol that directly involved the grain corridor was a step to undermine the grain deal. First the Ukrainian side refused to allow merchant ships to leave the ports, which had been mined by Ukraine itself, through the corridor we opened in an attempt to exert political pressure on Russia and take advantage of this situation. Now Ukraine is using the grain corridor for military purposes.

This situation compels us to provide some clarity. What do the beneficiaries of the Black Sea Grain Initiative actually want? If one wants to ensure food security and assistance for the poorest countries, everything is in place. By the end of this year, our agricultural sector could provide approximately 30 million tons of grain for export, primarily wheat, with a view to bringing this up to 50 million tons, given the current harvest. Even under the conditions of a grain deal that has gone wrong for us, we have sent approximately 10.5 million tons of grain, three quarters of which is wheat, to countries in Asia and Africa. In the next four months, Russia is also ready to provide its grain at affordable prices, in addition to 500,000 tons of food to the poorest countries free of charge, as well as 300,000 tons of fertilizer still detained in European ports.

However, if the goal is to prevent Russian food from accessing global markets and to let Ukraine use the cover of the Black Sea Grain Initiative to engage in smuggling, sabotage and acts of terror, that is entirely different. Please choose the desired path for our dialogue.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): Here we are again, gathered at Russia's request, to endure another episode of its disinformation campaign. We regret that Russia is again using the Security Council as a platform for propaganda.

Russia's accusations against the United Kingdom and Ukraine on Saturday, 29 October, are not supported by any concrete evidence and are completely unfounded. They are another clear illustration of Russia's strategy of distorting reality and continuing to make outrageous allegations. This is a strategy carefully designed to divert the attention of the international community from a simple fact — Russia's sole and exclusive responsibility for the war of aggression it is waging against Ukraine.

In the face of these new allegations, no one should be fooled by Russia's objective. For several weeks now, Russia has been looking for a pretext to withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Since Saturday, we now know the pretext it chose to invent.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative is a success. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's investment and T rkiye's contribution. As the Secretary-General recalled in his statement on Friday, 9 million tons of grain and other food products have been exported by sea since 22 July. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations confirmed that wheat prices have fallen as a result of the resumption of exports. Every effort must therefore be made to ensure that the initiative continues.

Let us be clear —the Istanbul agreements are producing the expected effects. By deciding to suspend its participation in the implementation of those agreements, Russia is choosing to impose food insecurity and malnutrition on the entire world and, in particular, on developing countries that rely heavily on Ukrainian exports. It has made the deliberate choice to use hunger as a means of pressure and a weapon of war. It is cynically gambling with the fate of millions of people who will be affected by the effects of the drop in harvests in 2023 and 2024.

This blackmail must stop. It is urgent that exports through the Black Sea continue. We call on Russia to return to respecting the agreements reached on 22 July. France will continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard. France will also continue to work with its European partners to implement the solidarity corridors that have enabled the export of nearly 13 million tons of grain and other food products. Together with our partners, we will continue to make the necessary efforts to ensure that Russia's lies do not prosper.

I would like to conclude by reminding the Council that Russia will not be able to absolve itself of its responsibility for the crimes committed in Ukraine over the past eight months. Those crimes that are widely and solidly documented.

Mr. Ravindran (India): Let me also join other in thanking Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, for their briefings on the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative and cooperation by the parties have provided a glimmer of hope for peace in Ukraine. The agreements, a result of the Secretary-General's efforts, were aimed at averting a global food crisis and ensuring food security. The initiative resulted in the export of more than 9 million tons of grains and other food products out of Ukraine. We believe the exports contributed to lowering the prices of wheat and other commodities, as evident from the drop in the Food Price Index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

We believe that the suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative is expected to further exacerbate the food security, fuel and fertilizer supply challenges faced by the world, particularly the global South. India therefore supports the Secretary-General's engagement with the parties on the renewal and full implementation of the Initiative, including facilitating exports of food and fertilizer from Ukraine and Russia.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative and its successful implementation over the past four months are consistent with our long-standing position that diplomacy and dialogue are the only solution to ending this ongoing conflict, which has resulted in serious consequences for the region and beyond. We continue to support all efforts, including those of the Secretary-General, to end the conflict.

Let me end by reiterating that the global order is anchored in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States.

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Secretary-General Grynspan for their briefings.

Ireland deeply regrets the decision by the Russian Federation to suspend its involvement in the Black Sea Grain Initiative. That deal is vital to ensuring the export of much-needed grain and fertilizers to address the global food crisis, exacerbated by Russia's war against Ukraine. In the words of the Secretary-General, the agreement is a ray of hope in a world darkened by global crises. Its continued implementation could not be more urgent.

In turning its back on the deal, Russia could exacerbate the situation for millions of people across the world already at risk of starvation. The fact that Russia suspended its participation as winter sets in is

particularly cynical, with many millions facing the all-too-real possibility of being plunged into acute food insecurity as a result. As always, it is the most vulnerable who will pay the highest price. We urge Russia to reconsider that decision and immediately resume its participation in the life-saving initiative so as to enable food to reach those who need it most.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative should continue to play an important role in alleviating global food insecurity in the months ahead. Concerted action is needed to ensure that the grain sitting in Ukrainian silos can continue to be exported through its Black Sea ports and onward to markets, to reach populations in desperate need in places already devastated by hunger, such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen and Lebanon.

Ireland therefore strongly supports the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative next month. We urge all sides to engage in good faith to bring about the renewal of the deal, thereby continuing to improve access to food for millions of people across the globe.

To that end, Ireland fully supports the work of the Secretary-General to find a solution to this most pressing crisis. We are confident that, just as they did when they agreed the deal in July, the sides can once again come together in a spirit of dialogue to overcome any remaining obstacles and save this life-sustaining initiative from the brink.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan for their briefings.

We regret the news that the Russian Federation has withdrawn from the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The world is hungry. That development makes life harsher for millions who are not party to the war in Ukraine. It undermines global food security, particularly in the most fragile countries and regions.

The operationalization of the Black Sea Grain Initiative was a credit to the humanitarian diplomacy between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, using the good offices of the Secretary-General and the Government of Türkiye. We cannot overstate its importance to the world. It enabled approximately 9 million tons of Ukrainian grain to be exported. Partly as a result of its impact on markets, the Food Price Index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations declined to 136.3 points last month, which is considerably lower than the record high of

159.7 points in March. The lowest level since February, when the conflict in Ukraine started, has been reached. The same Food Price Index shows that the cost of global food staples declined by about 8.6 per cent in July, almost 2 per cent in August and a little more than 1 per cent in September. Cumulatively, that has helped to improve global access to food, particularly for the most vulnerable.

With that welcome trend in mind, we do not believe that the reported drone attack on the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol on 29 October is likely to endanger global food security. We therefore call for immediate action to deploy a United Nations fact-finding and verification mission to report on any armed or blockading actions related to the war in Ukraine that endanger global food security.

Last week, on 26 October, during a Security Council briefing on Article 100 of the Charter of the United Nations, our delegation highlighted the need for heightened respect for the good offices and fact-finding capabilities of the Secretary-General (see S/PV. 9167). Today's discussion starkly illustrates why our recommendations must be adopted. If the past 10 months are any guide, the members of the Council will now be subjected to claims and counter-claims about the Sevastopol drone attack. The claims will not be verifiable, and the chances of Security Council action will therefore be limited, if not impossible. It will also sustain an unfortunate trend of the Council being used primarily as a platform for propaganda, and not for deliberation that furthers its mandate to protect international peace and security.

General Assembly resolution 46/59, of 1991, recognizes the need for the Security Council to have knowledge of all relevant facts in performing functions relevant to its mandate. It further recognizes the Secretary-General's fact-finding capabilities and requires him to monitor the state of international peace and security, making use of the information-gathering capabilities of the Secretariat. We would welcome the Secretary-General establishing a fact-finding mission on the drone attack to better inform the Council.

One of the reasons for the ongoing food insecurity is the volatility in insurance costs for the shipping of foodstuffs owing to the extensive misinformation and disinformation that characterize the war. A fact-finding mission would, at a minimum, provide more accurate

signals to the food and financial markets with regard to threats to the shipping of foodstuffs from Ukraine.

Finally, we once again propose that the parties to the conflict, their allies and their partners make use of the Secretary-General's good offices for the mediation and resolution of the conflict in Ukraine and in stabilizing the wider European security order. In addition, we reaffirm Kenya's commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and, as such, our respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Secretary-General Grynspan for their briefings today.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative is vital to global food security. The United Nations estimates that it has indirectly prevented 100 million people from falling into extreme poverty. More than 60 per cent of wheat exported under the deal went to low- and middle-income countries, including Ethiopia, Yemen and Afghanistan, via the World Food Programme.

Russia's suspension of the initiative over the weekend has meant that more than 100 ships were blocked from seeking permission to enter Ukrainian ports to load grain. Every day, an average of 100,000 tons of grain is exported under the initiative. That is enough to feed 5 million people for a month. Should Russia's suspension of the agreement continue, the severe impact is clear.

Recognizing the global food crisis, the United Kingdom has not placed sanctions on food or fertilizer exports from Russia to third countries. We have worked hard and continue to do so in order to ensure that there are mitigations in place to prevent indirect effects resulting from the sanctions. And we note that there has been no decrease in Russian grain exports since the start of its war on Ukraine.

Russia claims that it suspended its participation in the Grain Initiative owing to an attack on its Black Sea fleet, falsely asserting that those vessels were involved in the implementation of the deal. As we heard from Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, no military vessels or assets are involved in supporting the Initiative. What Russia neglects to mention is that its Black Sea fleet is illegally occupying Ukrainian waters and bombing Ukrainian towns. The global impact of Russia's war on Ukraine has already been profound. Ending the Grain

Initiative would unleash the unprecedented wave of hunger and destitution that the Secretary-General's Global Crisis Response Group warned us about in June. We therefore urge Russia to renew its cooperation under the agreement so that shipments of grain can continue as before, and to work with all the parties to renew the Black Sea Grain Initiative this month.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), for the information they have shared with us.

Mexico regrets Russia's announcement to temporarily suspend the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, a diplomatic initiative that has been instrumental in many ways, three of which I will highlight today. First, the signing of the agreement in July enabled a resumption of exports of corn, wheat and other foodstuffs, and as has been shown by the Food Price Index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and confirmed by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, it has also helped to stabilize prices. Secondly, the export of more than 9 million tons of grain and other products has helped to mitigate, at least to some degree, the food insecurity plaguing mainly developing countries, especially those that are already facing critical levels of food insecurity. Thirdly, as we have pointed out on numerous occasions, the agreement represents an achievement for diplomacy and mediation. It shows that constructive dialogue is possible, even in times of war, and that the United Nations is shouldering its responsibility in that regard.

We therefore echo the Secretary-General's call to the parties to resume and extend the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We also urge the full implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed with the Russian Federation and call on all the relevant actors to remove the obstacles to the implementation and full execution of both agreements.

As we have seen, improving the availability of fertilizers and access to them is essential for the agricultural sector and consequently the economy as a whole. The sowing seasons for the next two years or so largely depend on it. If the necessary products are not made available in time, the subsequent effects on production levels and the increase in global prices would be catastrophic. And there is no doubt that if

the Black Sea Grain Initiative stops, the least-favoured countries will once again pay the highest price and the poorest segments of the world's populations will feel the effects the hardest.

Mexico reiterates its unwavering support for the Secretary-General's efforts to engage with the parties in order to renew and strengthen the Black Sea Grain Initiative and acknowledges Türkiye's role in facilitating the signing of the agreement in Istanbul. Diplomacy and mediation are the instruments needed to achieve a negotiated solution — an urgent truce — in order to put an end to the war, as well as the human suffering and grave economic consequences it has caused.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I thank Mr. Griffiths and Ms. Grynspan for their briefings and for so clearly outlining the benefits of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which Russia is apparently ready to deny to vulnerable people in low-income countries around the world. Russia's announcement that it is suspending its participation in the United Nations-brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative is deeply concerning and fundamentally irresponsible. We urge Russia to keep that essential and life-saving arrangement functioning and allow food exports to move to the world market to reach the countries that need them most.

At the beginning of this year, as has already been pointed out, conflict, the coronavirus disease pandemic and the effects of the climate crisis had already driven more than 190 million people into acute food insecurity. Then President Putin launched his brutal assault on Ukraine. Now, according to the World Food Programme, a further 70 million people may fall into food insecurity. Yet while partners across Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe are working together to increase the resilience of global food systems, Russia is once again demonstrating its willingness to weaponize food. Its actions directly affect low- and middle-income countries by raising global food prices and exacerbating already dire humanitarian crises and global food security.

The United States, along with other Council members, welcomed the United Nations efforts led by the Secretary-General and Türkiye to bring the deal to fruition. At a dark time of war, the deal showed the value of diplomacy and the commitment to addressing a problem with global implications for food security. The Black Sea Grain Initiative has helped to stabilize

and lower global food prices to pre-war levels. It has facilitated the transfer of more than 9 million tons of grain and other food products from Ukraine — enough food to feed tens of millions of people. It has also enabled the World Food Programme to get desperately needed food aid to vulnerable populations. That includes exports of corn and wheat to parts of the world where people need it most. Two thirds of the wheat exported under the Initiative has gone to developing countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Any action by Russia to disrupt those critical food exports is essentially a statement that people and families around the world should pay more for food or go hungry and face higher rates of malnutrition and death. We urge the Government of Russia to resume its participation in the Initiative and extend it in order to ensure that people around the world continue to benefit from it. And we stand ready to support the United Nations in its efforts to extend and expand the deal.

Since February, the United States has provided more than \$6.1 billion in humanitarian assistance and \$2.3 billion in development aid to combat global hunger and strengthen food security. We understand that the Russian Government has announced its intention to donate 500,000 metric tons of grain to countries in need. That would be a welcome step, albeit grossly overdue, but it cannot come at the cost of blocking vastly larger quantities of food exports from Ukraine.

Our Russian colleagues would have others believe that the United States has not been doing enough to facilitate food exports from Russia, whereas in fact the United States has already excluded food and fertilizer from our sanctions on Russia. We will continue to provide guidance as needed to ensure that food gets to its proper destination, because we are committed to addressing food insecurity globally.

Our Russian colleagues also neglected to mention today that there have been three Russian attacks on the Ukrainian ports of Pivdennyi and Odesa since the grain deal was signed. One of those attacks occurred just one day after the agreement went into effect.

Let me be perfectly clear: as we have said many times before, there is only one way to solve the many food supply chain disruptions that the conflict has caused — Russia must end its war and withdraw its troops from Ukraine.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Secretary-General Grynspan for their informative briefings.

The war in Ukraine is yet another stark reminder of how humanitarian suffering in one part of our globalized world translates into more suffering in other parts. In Ukraine, the approach of winter, the attacks on infrastructure and the shifting front lines pose new risks to civilians, when the human toll has already been enormous.

Given the central role of both Ukraine and Russia in the global food supply chain, local events there often have an immediate short-term effect on commodity prices worldwide. Those short-term price movements then affect the long-term food security of people around the world. As we have highlighted before, those effects are particularly devastating on the most vulnerable communities in Africa and the Middle East.

In July, the two agreements reached sought to address the short- and medium-term food security impacts of the crisis. The United Arab Emirates welcomed the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the memorandum of understanding agreed between Russia and the United Nations to facilitate the export of fertilizers, which have undoubtedly helped to alleviate pressure on global food supplies and prices.

The attacks over the past weekend on Russian vessels in the Bay of Sevastopol and the suspension of Russia from participation in the Initiative have already led to price hikes in the market and can jeopardize grain supply for the most fragile countries.

It is important to remember that the Black Sea Grain Initiative does not operate in a vacuum — it is a delicate undertaking that relies on the smooth coordination of a number of direct and indirect stakeholders, including ship owners and operators and insurers. Underlying all of that are the assurances by the parties of a safe and secure environment for all vessels engaged in the Initiative. It is vital that all parties maintain trust in the mechanism.

Changes to any part of that delicate construct, however, will result in ripple effects throughout the entire chain. They affect both food and fertilizer exports and lead to real-life consequences in the places that are most in need of those commodities. With more than 100 vessels registered to be inspected by the Joint

Coordination Centre at a moment of persistent global food insecurity, we urge all stakeholders to address their differences, eliminate uncertainties and re-engage with the process.

We also underline the importance of agreeing to a solution for the export of ammonia — a key component of fertilizers — in order to prevent an even more catastrophic global food crisis next year. I commend the Secretary-General and others for their efforts in that regard.

Over the past few months, the United Arab Emirates has underlined the importance of ensuring that commodities freed for export by the agreements reach those most in need. To date, as Mr. Griffiths informed us, 9.3 million tons have been shipped via the Joint Coordination Centre established by the Grain Initiative, approximately three quarters of which consisted of corn or wheat.

Beyond easing the strain on food markets, the agreements notably signalled that positive outcomes were possible with constructive engagement, even while the conflict escalated in rhetoric and on the ground. We commend the significant efforts of all parties that resulted in those agreements and reiterate that their full implementation, expansion and extension will have a beneficial impact on global food security.

In addition to Ukrainian civilians, the victims of the war have been the women, men and children of the global South. They are the ones impacted by limited access to food, high commodity prices and the refocusing of international attention and resources elsewhere. The latest developments only widen that gap, and we therefore need to redouble our efforts to protect those whose lives have been upended by the war, both in Ukraine and the rest of the world.

As the conflict extends into its eighth month, we once again stress the importance of de-escalation and finding the right diplomatic off-ramp as soon as possible. It is vital to identify and build on areas of convergence, including to address the global impacts of the conflict, and to work towards bringing it to a peaceful end. For a sustainable peace to be achieved, there is no alternative to a cessation of hostilities throughout Ukraine and engagement in dialogue in good faith in order to bring about a diplomatic resolution. The United Arab Emirates is committed to doing whatever it can to facilitate dialogue with key stakeholders to address that urgent matter.

Mrs. Hackman (Ghana): I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Rebecca Grynszpan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, for their briefings on the status of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Today's meeting provides us with an opportunity to assess the benefits and challenges of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, brokered by Türkiye and the United Nations, to resume stalled food and fertilizer exports from the Russian Federation and Ukraine to the rest of the world. The Black Sea Grain Initiative is important for addressing global food security challenges and symbolizes a major diplomatic breakthrough in the ongoing war in Ukraine. It demonstrated the ability of the warring sides to reach agreement through dialogue and cooperation — at least on humanitarian matters — and gave hope for the future.

The international response to the signing of the deal in July reflected a clear demand for the timely and unobstructed supply of grains from Ukraine to other parts of the world in order to help address the exceptionally high food prices. As we heard from our briefers, a little more than 9.5 million tons of grain, including corn, wheat, barley, rapeseed and sunflower seeds, have been exported under the Initiative, to both higher- and lower-income countries.

We also note that shipments under United Nations food aid programmes to Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, Syria and Yemen have been made possible under the Initiative, repelling the spectre of hunger for millions of people. It is also clear that global markets had begun to respond positively to the exports, with steady monthly decreases in global food prices.

In that context, and in the wider interest of all humankind, we urge the Russian Federation to reconsider its decision to suspend its involvement in the Initiative. The full commitment of all parties to the implementation of the grain deal is crucial to avoid a reversal of the notable gains and a rebound of food price hikes. We fear worsening times if nothing is done to restore the full operationalization of the Initiative, especially as we enter the winter season.

We call on all Security Council members and the international community to support the intensified engagements of the Secretary-General and Türkiye in that regard and urge the parties to work closely and collaboratively to find a way out of the current

stalemate. We also call for close cooperation through the Joint Coordination Centre on immediate next steps, including the inspection and granting of safe passage to vessels already in the demarcated humanitarian corridors of the Black Sea.

We call on the parties to refrain from taking unilateral actions that are likely to upend the full resumption of the Grain Initiative and its possible renewal in November, when it is expected to expire. In keeping with the humanitarian objective, equal efforts must also be made to facilitate the export of Russian fertilizer and other agricultural products that are critical to agrarian economies.

Finally, we call for concerted international efforts and diplomacy to end the war. It is in our common interest to support a peaceful settlement of the conflict and avoid divisive approaches that tend only to aggravate the hostilities and prolong the war. We urge for a resumption of dialogue in order to reach a comprehensive and mutually acceptable settlement of the conflict.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Secretary-General Grynspan for their briefings.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative is an important food-export arrangement that was reached through repeated consultations between the United Nations, Russia and Ukraine. Since the signing of the agreement nearly four months ago, more than 9.5 million tons of Ukrainian food products have been shipped to other parts of the world by more than 400 ships, which has played a positive role in curbing the rise of global food prices. As Secretary-General Guterres said, the agreement is a beacon on the Black Sea — a ray of hope for millions of people hit by the food crisis. It is not easy to open a food export route in a war zone, which requires the parties concerned to maintain political input, strengthen communication and coordination, strictly implement the provisions of the agreement and jointly cope with the difficulties and challenges that may arise in its implementation.

China notes Russia's recent announcement of its decision to suspend its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative due to attacks on its Black Sea Fleet and civilian vessels in Sevastopol. China also notes the response of Ukraine, the United Nations and other relevant parties. We hope that the parties concerned will remain in communication, rebuild mutual trust

and find a solution that addresses the concerns of all parties. We also hope that the Secretary-General will continue to play an active role in that regard. Russia's grain and fertilizer exports are equally important to the international market and the memorandum of understanding signed by Russia and the United Nations should be effectively implemented. As the Secretary-General has repeatedly pointed out, this year's food crisis is primarily one of distribution caused by high food prices. However, if fertilizer exports do not recover, next year we will be facing a supply crisis caused by food shortages, which will be even more severe. The relevant countries must confront and eliminate the negative impact of all-out and indiscriminate sanctions on normal international trade, take concrete measures to remove the real obstacles to Russia's export of its grain and fertilizer and completely abandon wrongful practices that politicize and weaponize economic and trade issues.

Compounded by conflict and sanctions, the negative spillover effects of the Ukrainian crisis have spread across the globe. Countries around the world have all felt their enormous impact, and vulnerable developing countries are in a particularly difficult situation. A prolonged, expanded and complicated conflict is in no one's interest. We must work hard to overcome differences, fully pursue cooperation and make tangible efforts to manage the escalation of the crisis and prevent its spillover effects. Dialogue and negotiations are the only realistic way out of the Ukrainian crisis. A Cold War mindset, bloc politics, division and confrontation, isolation and suppression will not bring about peace.

China has noted that Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov publicly stated to the media on 30 October that his country was ready to engage in dialogue with Western countries to ease the current tensions. We hope that the relevant parties will respond positively and that all the parties will meet each other halfway to open the door to dialogue and negotiations as soon as possible. China has been actively promoting peace talks and will continue to play a constructive role in resolving the Ukrainian crisis and safeguarding world peace and stability.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Gabon.

I thank Mr. Griffiths and Ms. Grynspan for their briefings.

The signing, on 22 July, of the Black Sea Grain Initiative agreement under the auspices of the United Nations and Türkiye was a source of hope for the world amid a crisis, economic uncertainty and food shortages, with a genuine risk of food insecurity for many vulnerable countries and regions — even if not all of the grain has gone to the neediest countries, as Mr. Griffiths mentioned in his briefing. The agreement was a positive sign that discussion remained possible amid a deadly war and that such diplomatic success could have a domino effect and lead to other such successes. Those hopes and positive signs have been undermined today by the suspension of the Initiative, casting a shadow on several fronts, particularly that of food security for the many populations that depend on those supplies. The implementation of such an agreement requires the full commitment of all the parties and full respect for the agreed guarantees. My country urges them to use the same channels that were used to negotiate and finalize the agreement in order to address issues related to its implementation and ensure the unhindered continuation of exports and a resumption of the agreement.

According to the most recent statistics of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the agreement has clearly had a positive effect by stabilizing and reducing food prices. The benefits are also economic, thanks to the renewed port activities resulting from the resumption of maritime transport at Ukrainian ports involved in the Initiative. The goal is to export the nearly 25 million tons of grain stored in Ukraine, as well as fertilizer and other food products covered by the agreement. The world is facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, which has deepened this year and leaves millions at risk of being left by the wayside. In that regard, it is the responsibility of both the parties not to thwart the process of implementing the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

In conclusion, my country reiterates its call for restraint and de-escalation and calls on the parties to refrain from any unilateral action that would jeopardize the quest for a diplomatic solution to the current crisis in Ukraine.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Ms. Grynspan for their detailed information.

Over the past nine months, since Russia decided to go against reason and against everything in common we have built together, there has been only a single piece of good news — the Black Sea Grain Initiative. It was welcomed worldwide, and the active role played by the United Nations and Türkiye was duly appreciated. It was widely seen as a moment of diplomacy — a beacon of hope in an ocean of despair. Since then, exports have brought much-needed relief everywhere. The world understood what stood between it and food on the table, and that was the war in Ukraine. Arrangements were needed and arrangements were made, and they have prevented some 100 million people from falling into food insecurity, hunger and poverty.

As we know, the mechanism has worked seamlessly. It should therefore be reactivated and maintained. There was, and is, no reason to suspend it. Russia's decision to suspend it, excluding itself from yet another of its international commitments, throws us back in time, and we do not need to be reminded of its consequences. They are already being felt. As a result, markets will become nervous and distressed. Prices will spike again. The needy will suffer, and the hungry will have to wait.

Suspending the deal is a statement telling the world that, while there is plenty of food and all the means exist to make it available, someone has decided to oblige families around the world to pay more for food or risk going hungry. Inflation is already unusually high, and the situation can only get worse, in particular with the imminent arrival of winter in many parts of the world.

Our question is: On what basis can a few people in the Kremlin decide who should eat and who should not and dictate to developing countries — and perhaps not only developing countries — in Africa and Asia whether they can have something on their table and whether they can feed their children? The reasons given for the suspension, which were linked to allegations of drone attacks, have nothing to do with the shipments, as we heard. Let us not forget that Russia is illegally occupying Ukrainian waters in the Black Sea.

No one has the right to weaponize food, no one has the right to play with hunger and no one has the right to play starvation games. We call on Russia to reconsider its decision, go back to do its part with regard to inspections, renew the deal later this month, honour its

commitment and enable food to reach those who need it. It must also do better, end its war of choice and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

In conclusion, we encourage and fully support the United Nations in its efforts to resolve the situation through talks and dialogue and help avoid a recurrence of an artificial global food crisis.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan for their briefings.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative was a sign of encouragement in the middle of a tragedy that affects millions in Europe and elsewhere, as well as a demonstration of the potential of dialogue to contain the spillover effects of the conflict. Brazil deeply regrets its suspension. The consequences, as we all know, will be dramatic, even more so for developing countries, which will have to face the renewed threat of food insecurity.

We recall the Secretary-General's warning that the world may be on the threshold of an unprecedented food supply crisis. The interruption of grain shipments across the Black Sea pushes us closer to that scenario. We believe that, at present, simply pointing the finger at others will not bring us closer to a solution. We urge the parties to return to the negotiating table and renew their commitments made in July without delay. It is no exaggeration to say that the lives of millions depend on the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Brazil understands that the Black Sea Grain Initiative should have been the initial step on the journey towards peace. Unfortunately, it has turned out to be an almost isolated effort and not part of a set of actions that would result in building trust and cooperation between the parties. We are aware that the conflict in Ukraine entails complex causes that involve the collective security architecture in Europe.

For that reason, it may not be realistic to expect a short-term solution to the crisis. In that context, creative and pragmatic measures, such as the Istanbul agreements and the exchange of prisoners of war, should be encouraged by the international community. We reiterate our willingness to contribute to exploring new paths for dialogue. The price of delaying a diplomatic solution, in good faith and without preconditions, is simply too high.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank the briefers for their candid statements.

We are here once again to discuss the consequences of Russia's own illegal war against its neighbour and fellow United Nations Member State, Ukraine. That war is a blatant violation of international law and the very principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which we have all committed to uphold. In addition to the enormous and steadily increasing loss of human lives and the grave humanitarian consequences for Ukrainians, the war increases the risk of an imminent global food shortage.

The detrimental effects of Russia's illegal war are being felt far beyond Ukraine, with devastating consequences for the millions of people already facing hunger. The negative impact of the war on global food security is clear. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the reason that the supply of Ukrainian grain to global food markets stopped, with undeniable and direct consequences for the global food supply. By exacerbating shortages and causing higher prices, Russia's war of aggression affects us all.

Grain from Ukraine is also critical for the World Food Programme and other humanitarian actors responding to increasing humanitarian needs across the globe. It is vital that the Black Sea Grain Initiative be fully implemented and continued. We trust that the parties' commitment to the agreement will continue, and we call on Russia to lift its suspension in order to minimize the impact on the populations that depend on those shipments. It is essential to keep a transportation line open to secure food for the world's most vulnerable people and countries.

In July, we were encouraged to see that the parties were able to negotiate the critical agreement to allow for the resumption of exports from the global breadbasket — Ukraine — and food and fertilizer from Russia. The Secretary-General called the agreement "a beacon of hope" and "multilateral diplomacy in action". We are pleased to learn about the current efforts of the United Nations to keep vessels moving.

Norway continues to support the Secretary-General's efforts for dialogue and mediation between the parties to advance the grain agreement. When the time comes, we will stand firmly with the United Nations in the efforts to build and sustain peace, including the full restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders.

Let me conclude by reiterating that Norway does not and will not recognize any illegal annexation of Ukraine's territory, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We remain steadfast in our commitment to international law and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Russian Federation has requested the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Chumakov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): There are different interpretations of the statistics. I would like to draw members' attention to the content of the website managed by our United Nations colleagues and the data of the Joint Coordination Centre. As of 29 October, the grain corridor in the Black Sea had granted passage to 409 ships, more than 40 per cent of them bound for European countries. Altogether, approximately 9.5 million tons of food were exported, of which 43 per cent was corn and only 29 per cent was wheat. Today wheat was often the only staple grain mentioned, which only represents one third of the grain exported.

We also recall that not all Ukrainian wheat is of food grade. Furthermore, more than half of the recipients are high-income countries, mostly European Union countries. Low-income and lower-middle-income countries received less than one quarter of the exports — slightly more than 2 million tons in three months. The amount delivered through the World Food Programme was only 255,000 tons, or 2.3 per cent of the total. Nor have we had any confirmation from the countries of the European Union of their claim that they are rerouting or reselling part of the foodstuffs that they are buying from Ukraine in order to send it to poor countries. We still find it difficult to understand why the World Food Programme is playing such an insignificant role in this area.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I thank Mr. Griffiths and Ms. Grynspan. I also recognize at this meeting the representative of terrorist Russia in the Soviet permanent seat.

Inflicting terror on civilians has become a hallmark of Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine. This morning Russia again attacked Ukraine's energy facilities and other critical civilian infrastructure with

missiles and drones. Specifically, more than 50 cruise missiles were launched from north of the Caspian Sea and the Rostov region of Russia. Most of them were shot down by the Ukrainian defence forces, but the rest targeted 18 critical civilian infrastructure sites, mostly energy facilities, in 10 Ukrainian regions. At least 13 people were wounded as a result of the attack. In particular, a Russian strike on the capital city of Kyiv has resulted in water outages for 80 per cent of the households in the city. About 350,000 households in Kyiv were also cut off from electricity this morning.

Russia continues its deliberate attempts to undermine the progress achieved by humankind since the Second World War in striving to apply international law effectively. Russia is attempting to break its core principles. We are contributing to strengthening the principle of the sovereign equality of nations. Russia is claiming the exclusive right to dictate its will to other nations. We are doing our best to resolve the global food crisis. Russia is deliberately dooming millions throughout the world to hunger.

We were outraged, but not surprised, by the announcement by Russia that it was suspending its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The announcement did not come completely suddenly, as Russia has never stopped aggravating the food crisis as a tool to pressure and blackmail the world. We had already heard Russia threaten to quit the Initiative before. Since September it has been resorting to impeding the passage of ships through the grain corridor, leading to its effective blockade. According to the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine, as of 30 October, 218 cargo ships were at a standstill in the corridor, some of them waiting there for more than three weeks. Of those, 95 ships with grain have already left the Ukrainian ports and are now awaiting inspection to depart to their final destinations; 101 are awaiting inspection to arrive at the Ukrainian ports; and the remaining 22 ships are waiting to leave the Ukrainian ports. This absolutely deliberate blockade by Russia started more than a month ago. Its intention is crystal clear — to blackmail Ukraine into succumbing to the Kremlin's demands, bringing back the threat of large-scale famine across the globe.

Putin's representative's crocodile tears cannot conceal the cynicism of his masters and their total disregard for the critical nutrition needs of millions of people in various parts of the world. More than 2 million tons of foodstuffs are right now actually on board the ships that have been blocked by Russia in

the grain corridor. Blocking that amount means that access to food has been worsened for at least 7 million consumers all over the world. It is disgusting that while depriving people in need of 2 million tons that could be supplied immediately, Russia has generously promised to send 500,000 tons of grain over the course of the next four months, while at the same time it is stealing extensive amounts of grain from the occupied part of Ukraine. Russia has forgotten to explain the reasons for such generosity.

The hunger threat resulting from Russia's actions becomes even more obvious if one takes into account the overall totals of food supplies that have shipped since the first vessel left the Ukrainian port of Odesa on 1 August. Over the past three months we have managed to export more than 9 million tons of foodstuffs under the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Out of that amount, 5 million tons were sent to countries in Africa and Asia. We are particularly concerned about the detrimental impact of Russian actions on the grain supplies under the World Food Programme for countries teetering on the edge of famine. During the period of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the United Nations contracted with Ukraine for almost 200,000 tons of grain for Ethiopia, Yemen and Afghanistan. On top of that, we have allocated 50,000 tons of grain as humanitarian aid for Ethiopia and Somalia, and those supplies are also under threat at the moment.

For its part, as a reliable contributor to global food security, Ukraine remains committed to implementing its obligations under the Black Sea Grain Initiative in good faith. Our commitment has not been shaken by Russia's deliberate and regular armed attacks and provocations. Let me remind the Council that on 23 July, the day after the Initiative was signed, Russia shelled the port of Odesa with missiles. On 23 September, the port of Odesa sustained another Russian attack with unmanned aerial vehicles of Iranian origin. Odesa is one of the ports that Russia had committed not to attack, in accordance with the Grain Initiative. Ukraine has done its utmost to ensure the functioning of the grain corridor against the backdrop of Russia's recent terrorist attacks on our critical energy infrastructure, which in particular cut off Ukrainian ports. We remain ready to continue gathering and shipping agricultural products to ensure global food security.

The only thing that Russia has been able to feed us is fakes and disinformation. It is especially concerning that the Security Council has also been misused by

Russia to promote its false narratives. The past week in the Council was exemplary in that regard, and today we have again faced Russian attempts to discredit the Council by turning it into a venue for circulating new aspects of a lie — the lie that serves the same goal of covering up its aggression against Ukraine, its war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as its actions aimed at aggravating the food crisis worldwide. That practice is discrediting the Council and must be stopped.

We welcome the continued engagement of the Secretary-General in intense contacts aimed at ending Russia's suspension of its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We commend his role in brokering and implementing the Initiative and support his efforts to secure the agreement. A strong response by the United Nations and Türkiye, as signatories to the agreement with Russia, is needed to bring to an end to Moscow's attempts to once again terrorize the world with the threat of hunger and genocide and to make it fully implement its commitments under the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Representatives of the United Nations and Türkiye are negotiating with the Russian delegation and continue to seek solutions for the full implementation of the Initiative. According to the proposal of the Joint Coordination Centre, representatives of the United Nations and Türkiye envisaged having 10 inspection groups working to check 40 ships. That proposal was accepted by the representatives of Ukraine and representatives of the Russian Federation were informed. As a result, 12 ships carrying 354,500 tons of agricultural products left Odesa, Chernomorsk and Pivdennyi seaports today to respond to the needs of Africa, Asia and Europe. Among them is the bulk carrier *IKARIA ANGEL*, with Ukrainian wheat intended for the residents of Ethiopia, who are on the verge of famine. That is the seventh vessel chartered under the World Food Programme.

At the same time, passage into Ukrainian ports for loading is allowed for four vessels that have passed the Joint Coordination Centre inspection one day prior, with the participation of all parties, including representatives of Ukraine.

The declaration of the leaders' summit on global food security, on 20 September, explicitly named Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine among the factors that have disrupted production and supply chains

and dramatically increased global food insecurity, especially for the most vulnerable.

I therefore wish to reiterate that as soon as Russia is compelled to stop the war, the looming threat of hunger will be over, in particular for the most vulnerable nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

Mr. Sinirlioglu (Türkiye): I also thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Secretary-General Grynspan for their briefings.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative marked a turning point in how we put the needs of those furthest behind first, even in times of war. It is a message to the world that the United Nations, Türkiye and the parties to the conflict pledged to do our utmost to limit the suffering of those dependent on fertilizer and grain exports for their food security.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative has already moved more than 9.5 million metric tons of grain and foodstuffs. It brought global food prices down. As a result of the Initiative, the World Food Programme was able to intervene before famine took hold. Children around the world — from Afghanistan to Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen — have been benefiting from the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Those products are still desperately needed today as we head into winter. Furthermore, a global increase in food prices will threaten those in already precarious situations, as inflation leads to cost-of-living crises worldwide.

As of this morning, there were 97 loaded vessels and 15 inbound vessels registered for inspection around Istanbul. The ships anchored outside of the Bosphorus Strait pose navigation risks. We have therefore been implementing a movement plan with the United Nations for those vessels.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative must continue. The trust between nations with different development levels has been hard-earned and can be easily lost unless we take proactive steps today. Two deals have been brokered to bring irreplaceable Ukrainian and Russian products to world food markets. We must find ways to overcome any difficulties that prevent the full implementation of those deals.

Today we call for common sense in recognizing the need for restraint and in upholding our responsibility

to protect the most vulnerable populations, who have turned to the United Nations as their last hope. Those two deals should be tackled on their own merits and be decoupled from the developments on the ground. Both deals were made in good faith and should continue in good faith.

As we speak, we have been in contact with the parties in order to ensure the continuation of the Initiative. Türkiye hopes that reason will prevail and that the Black Sea Grain Initiative will remain intact and in place. We will also continue to support all efforts to end the war in Ukraine.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Zahneisen (Germany): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to speak in the Security Council today on this important topic. I will limit my statement to three points, but before doing so, I would like to thank the two briefers, Ms. Grynspan and Mr. Griffiths, for their important insights.

Above all, I would like to recall one fundamental fact — the only reason that the traditional grain export routes from Ukraine to world markets were jeopardized and interrupted is simply because of the war of aggression of Russia against Ukraine. The Black Sea Grain Initiative re-activated those crucial routes, which once again became a lifeline for millions of people across the globe. The Initiative is a remarkable diplomatic achievement, made possible by the United Nations and Türkiye.

Contrary to some false accusations that we have heard, the implementation of the Initiative has been successful. More than 9 million tons of grain have already been supplied to the world through that channel alone, largely to developing countries. The Initiative has also succeeded in bringing prices down to their pre-war level of January, as measured by the Food Price Index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

However, prices are still too high. The international community is working on many fronts to mitigate this food crisis. That is why the Group of Seven Foreign Ministers will discuss the Russian suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and its potential global implications, in particular food security in the most vulnerable countries, at their meeting in Germany at the end of the week. They will look into how to best

support the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Türkiye in that respect. We are pleased that the African Union Commission and the Foreign Ministers of Kenya and Ghana will join those discussions.

It is encouraging that dozens of ships are currently on their way to bring more wheat from Ukraine to the world. We commend the United Nations, Türkiye and Ukraine for having taken a swift decision, making continued grain shipments via the Black Sea possible. We would like to underline our full support for those efforts, and call upon all parties involved to do their utmost to contribute to a safe passage for grain shipments to countries in need.

What the world needs now is a public commitment from all parties to an extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative beyond its initial 120 days. I once again thank Secretary-General Guterres as well as OCHA, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Food Programme for their efforts in that regard.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Mr. Feruță (Romania): I would also like to thank Secretary-General Grynspan and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their briefings. They both confirm what we assessed in Romania, a Black Sea country and a neighbour to Ukraine — the Black Sea Grain Initiative has proven instrumental in unblocking the grain exports in the Black Sea region and, consequently, in avoiding a food-shortage catastrophe for millions worldwide. It needs to be implemented and extended for their benefit.

Making food available and not weaponizing it is both a shared and individual responsibility of all Member States. Romania condemns Russia's suspension and adds its voice in calling on Russia to revert its decision and to resume the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

As mentioned by previous speakers, the positive effects of the agreement brokered by the United Nations and Türkiye are visible beyond any doubt — global food prices decreased and grain became available to the least developed countries and to developing countries.

Such strong encouragement to stay the course on the Black Sea Grain Initiative comes from a country that is already doing a great deal to support the export of Ukrainian grain to various parts of the world.

Romania has facilitated the export of over 5.8 million tons of grain from Ukraine via Romanian roads, railways and ports. The port of Constanța, our largest port in the Black Sea, with a capacity to ship over 25 million tons per year, has become a major gateway for Ukrainian grain shipments to the outside world, in complementarity with the efforts under the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Just to provide the full picture of the magnitude of that effort and to provide a reality check, I would like to supply the following data. A maritime vessel using the Black Sea Grain Initiative corridor can carry at least 30,000 tons of grain and can be loaded directly from the relevant Ukrainian ports directly from silos. In order for the same maritime vessel to be loaded in the Romanian port of Constanța, it needs to wait for the transit of trucks, trains or barges on the Danube River towards the port. According to our information, a truck can transport between 22 and 25 tons, a train car 50 tons and a barge around 2,000 tons. I made the calculation, and I think that, in order to load a 30,000-ton maritime vessel, we would probably need to use 1,200 trucks. That has been the reality on the ground for the past more than eight months since the war broke out — truck by truck, train by train and ship by ship towards countries and regions that badly need them.

To accelerate that process, we liberalized the bilateral road transport and freight in transit with Ukraine, providing support to Ukrainian-flagged ships in Romanian ports, adapting the wide-gauge railway line to ensure connection to rail freight transport and facilitating access to the port of Galati on the Danube River. That is how Romania became an important transit country for Ukrainian grain, and we will continue to extend our support.

My country's efforts and the European Union solidarity lanes are complementary to the Black Sea Grain Initiative. But the initiative brokered in July by the Secretary-General needs to continue and to be extended beyond November so that even more people can afford bread. We strongly support it.

I would also add that, in addition to our efforts to support the delivery of Ukrainian grain, as a major grain exporter, we continue to make significant amounts of Romanian grain available to many States Members of the United Nations. We play a key role in food security, and we will continue to act responsibly.

Food needs to remain available for people in the future. We need to avoid a more serious food crisis, which would affect vulnerable people throughout the world. Romania stands ready to support the efforts of the Secretary-General in making a difference to people's lives.

I conclude by saying that there is no alternative to the Black Sea Grain Initiative, and nothing can meaningfully compensate for its absence.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Gonzato.

Mr. Gonzato: I thank you, Mr. President, for granting us this opportunity to speak during this important debate. The European Union (EU) greatly appreciates, and supports, the work done by Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Secretary-General Grynspan with regard to the implementation of the United Nations-brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative. We also commend the role of Türkiye as the host of the Joint Coordination Centre.

Russia's intention to suspend its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative is extremely worrisome because it will obstruct the export of much-needed grain to address the global food crisis. Russia is solely responsible for the global food security crisis, which it caused by its unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine and its blockade of Ukrainian seaports.

The United Nations-brokered agreement, together with the EU-Ukraine solidarity lanes, has made a significant difference by allowing the export of grain and agricultural products from Ukraine to the global markets and to the countries most in need, including in the Horn of Africa, Yemen and Afghanistan. The Black Sea Grain Initiative has brought more than 9.5 million tons of grain and foodstuffs to the global market, as already underlined by many speakers before me. In that context, the EU exported 14 million tons of grain to third countries, which is a higher level than in the past. All those efforts contributed to lowering food

prices — which is what matters — to the benefit of developing countries.

In reply to my Russian colleague, let me also reiterate that most of the wheat goes to least developed countries — 19 per cent — and developing countries — 47 per cent. According to United Nations estimates based on the World Bank model, the reduction in the prices of staple foods has indirectly prevented some 100 million people from falling into extreme poverty. Also, in terms of showing how responsible we are as global actors and major humanitarian donors, we are ensuring that the countries that are most affected by the food crisis have access to the necessary foodstuffs and grain.

Regarding fertilizers, we would like to recall that they are not subject to EU sanctions and that, as underlined by Secretary-General Grynspan, any possible indirect effects were dealt with both through measures to address overcompliance and on a case-by-case basis. We are ready to act regarding any case that is reported to us.

Since the beginning of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, Russia has been weaponizing food and hunger. Russia's deliberate actions, including destroying stocks, disrupting production and imposing quota restrictions on its own export of foodstuffs and fertilizers, have exacerbated the global food security crisis. We therefore urge Russia to reverse its decision and to immediately resume the implementation of the United Nations-brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is key to the livelihoods of millions of people. We strongly support the Secretary-General's call for the extension of the initiative beyond its current period, ending in November.

Finally, the EU and its member States remain fully mobilized to address the crisis, and we will continue to respond to it and to support the timely and stable delivery of Ukrainian agricultural products to the global markets.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.