



**50<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council  
Geneva, 13 June – 8 July 2022**

**Concept Note**

*Webinar in conjunction with the 50th session of the Human Rights Council*

***Urgent action needed to address the severe drought and food insecurity  
in the Horn of Africa and in the Sahel***

**Date and location:**

Date: Thursday, 7 July 2022  
Time: 12.30-14.00 (Geneva time)

**Registration webinar:**

Register in advance by using the following link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlOfu-vrzguHNx-1THFCg6S43qG02yQtMq7>

**Organisers:** Caritas Internationalis, Caritas Africa

**Rationale**

Cumulative effects of conflicts, severe drought, repeated climate change shocks, slow post-COVID-19 economic recovery and rising in food prices have dramatically exacerbated food insecurity in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel regions. The situation is alarming. Millions of people are facing acute food insecurity and malnutrition, further exacerbated by the collateral effects of the conflict in Ukraine on the global food supply chain. An estimated 18.4 million people across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia are in need of immediate food assistance because of the drought and severe food insecurity. This figure is projected to increase to 20 million by September 2022.<sup>1</sup> Among those most in danger, children face the highest risk of mortality linked to malnutrition.

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<sup>1</sup> UN OCHA, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/horn-africa-drought-humanitarian-update-10-june-2022>

In West Africa and the Sahel between March and May 2022, an estimated 27.3 million people were reported food insecure, but this figure is projected to increase to an unprecedented 38.3 million between June and August 2022.<sup>2</sup>

In the face of multiple crisis, the suffering of people in the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions is not to be forgotten. The international community and countries in the region must respond immediately to avert a full-scale food and nutrition emergency and save lives.

The Sahel and the Horn of Africa regions comprises a number of countries which have been regularly affected by food security crisis. Repeated food crises are a result of both cumulative stress factors as well as lack of prevention and anticipatory action by the international community to respond more swiftly to early warning signs.

Today, the warning signs are all there. The failure of the international community and countries in the region to act now and in future would result in major violations of the right to food. Urgent life-saving assistance must be combined with sustained actions to address the root causes of the food insecurity and structural challenges of food systems. The unprecedented food crisis affecting today the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions should be seized as an opportunity to reflect on transformation of current food systems and generate recommendations to strengthen and promote a human rights-based approach in the transition to more sustainable food systems and climate-resilient agriculture.

### **Objectives of the event**

Based on the strong experience of the local Caritas member organisations in working with affected vulnerable communities in the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions, the objectives are:

- Draw increased attention of the international community and the media on the dramatic food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions
- Urge international community and countries in the region to act now and in future to address both, immediate needs to save lives and underlying causes of vulnerability and food insecurity
- Share Caritas good practices and exchange of experiences on agroecology, sustainable and resilient food systems in the light of the Laudato Si
- Reflect and discuss on how the human-rights based approach, and especially the right to food, can contribute to put in place more sustainable food systems.

### **Expected outcomes of the side-event**

- Provide room for reflection and generate recommendations to strengthen and promote a human rights-based approach in the transition to more sustainable food systems and climate-resilient agriculture
- Explore possibility to urge the Human Rights Council to hold an urgent debate on the negative impact on the right to food of the worsening global food crisis.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc0114en/>

### **Speakers (7 min. each)**

Opening remarks Aloysius John, Secretary General, Caritas Internationalis (4 min.)

Keynote address, H.E. Fortunatus Nwachukwu, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations and Specialized Agencies in Geneva (tbc) – 5 min.

Speakers:

- Ms Annalisa Conte, Director, WFP Geneva Global Office (7min.)
- Mr Patrick Jacqueson, Senior Programme Officer, FAO (7.min)
- Mr Isacko Jirma Molu, Director of the Diocesan Caritas in Marsabit, Northern Kenya
- Ms. Aichatou Zaman- Allah, Caritas Niger (7 min.)

Concluding remarks: Mr. Albert Mashika, Regional Coordinator, Caritas Africa (5 min.)

Moderator: Caritas Internationalis

**Discussion and conclusions:** Questions and Answers

### **Background documents**

- 2022 Global Report on Food Crises: [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000138913/download/?\\_ga=2.107803458.1112584716.1655902873-1353984834.1647723974](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000138913/download/?_ga=2.107803458.1112584716.1655902873-1353984834.1647723974)
- Caritas Africa, Urgent action need to address the drought and famine in Africa: <https://caritas-africa.org/download/urgent-action-needed-to-address-drought-and-famine-in-africa-statement-by-caritas-africa/>
- Policy Brief, Catholic Relief Services/Caritas USA, The Challenge of Compounding Crises on Hunger: <https://www.crs.org/get-involved/advocate-poor/public-policy/policy-brief-compounding-crises-hunger>
- G7 Heads of State must transform the global food system: <https://www.crs.org/media-center/news-release/g7-heads-state-must-transform-global-food-system>
- Caritas Internationalis Working Paper on Collateral effects of the Ukraine war on the food supply chain: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cet7hJyKj8SBJX49nP0aXL2iKcOJXrG/edit>

- Caritas Internationalis position on the State of the food system:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v3iITmBdJZpV06jnqA-bUi109dX3k6QB/edit>