

# **Grußwort**

## **Zur Eröffnung der Konferenz „Politik gegen Hunger“ des BMEL im Welsaal des AA, Berlin**

Am 27.06.2023

- - Es gilt das gesprochene Wort - -

Minister Özdemir, dear Cem,

Ministers,

State Secretary Flasbarth, dear colleagues,

Excellencies,

Dear Guests,

On behalf of Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, let me welcome you here in the Foreign Office in Berlin. We are honoured to host this event - organised by our colleagues from the Ministry for Food and Agriculture and the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development - here in our building. More than 20 years after it was first held, this forum for combatting hunger and malnutrition in the

world has become a good tradition. Yet, this year it is of particular importance:

As you all know, we are in the run-up to the United Nations' SDG-Summit in September that will take stock of progress made in reaching the Development Goals the international community has set for itself in 2015. It is more than bitter that global hunger and that the number of people living in absolute poverty has dramatically increased in 2022.

Until 2019, the trends pointed in the right direction. Progress was too slow on some of the goals, but it was there. But as of then, we started facing the global economic consequences of the Covid19 pandemic. Since February 2022, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has dramatically exacerbated the global food security crisis, through attacks on Ukrainian agricultural exports as well as inflation and currency fluctuations caused by this war. Thus, some of the progress previously achieved was undone.

As we all know, development and peace are interlinked inseparably. Conflicts are generally the main driver of food insecurity. And

unfortunately, the number and intensity of conflicts has been on the rise for a number of years now. Just think of Yemen, Syria or the Horn of Africa. Furthermore, Russia's illegal war against Ukraine has led to an unprecedented hike of food prices worldwide.

It is therefore all the more important that Russia does not stop the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which was brokered by the U.N.

Secretary General in the interest, first and foremost, of the most vulnerable. Together, the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the European Solidarity Lanes, which enables food exports from Ukraine over land, have managed to bring down global food prices at least back to their level of January 2022. By threatening to abandon the BSGI, Russia is now putting this much-needed relief at risk.

We must also oppose the false Russian narrative around this. The sanctions imposed upon Russia in response to its war of aggression do not target food or agricultural exports including fertilizer. The EU has stated this repeatedly and explicitly vis-a-vis economic operators in response to such requests from the United Nations in this context. The truth is, had Russia not invaded Ukraine and

obstructed some of the world most important agricultural production and trade routes, global food security would be in a better state.

Dear guests,

Saying that a UN SDG is ,off-track‘ or that a conflict has global consequences are fairly abstract notions. When it comes to hunger and malnutrition, this is also a human rights issue. That is why I welcome the focus of this year’s conference on a human rights-based approach to global food security. The right to adequate food is enshrined in the Universal declaration on human rights. I know that our government has been actively committed to advancing the concepts and to realising the notion, nationally, in the FAO, in the EU and in other international fora. Our ministries are working together on taking it further for instance in the Human Rights Council in Geneva and in other UN bodies in New York.

As you know, the German government also has once again stepped up its financial contribution to fighting food insecurity worldwide. We have made this a priority in our G7 chair, and we have allocated a record sum of around 5 billion Euros for global food security in 2022.

We did this through both, Humanitarian Assistance the Foreign Office contributes for instance to the World Food Programme and development assistance from your two ministries, making food systems thus more sustainable and resilient. We have also contributed in the framework of the “Grain from Ukraine”-initiative, delivering foodstuff directly to countries most in need.

I believe it is legitimate to mention: we are the second largest humanitarian donor in the world, and we do fulfil the 0,7% goal in our development assistance. We have also launched the Global Alliance for Food Security, and supported the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the European Solidarity Lanes from the start.

Dear guests,

As the Global Crisis Response Group of the Secretary General of the United Nations has pointed out, many of the current multiple crises are interrelated. We need to act jointly, both in crisis response in order to minimise the humanitarian impact of supply shocks like in 2022, and in making food systems sustainable and resilient for the long-term in accordance with the Agenda 2030.

This year offers a good opportunity: As you know, we are meeting here shortly before the UN Food Systems Summit follow up event taking place in Italy at the end of July, and in the run-up to the SDG summit in New York in September. We should aim for ambitious outcomes there. For a true transformation towards sustainability which our governments must enable also through other international processes such as the climate negotiations at the COP and the biodiversity tracks. And for tangible progress and additional political momentum by all member states in the fight against hunger. For reaching the SDGs overall and for the realisation of the human right to adequate food.

Thank you