

## Statement of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

To the Ministerial Segment of the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on World Food Security  
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**Delivered by Roberta Fusacchia, Director of Programmes, Italian Red Cross**

Mr Chairman,

I am pleased to offer the following statement on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which is the international representative of the world's 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their 14 million community-based volunteers.

Recognising that food insecurity is rising in many parts of the world, I will be focussing my remarks on the current situation in sub-Saharan Africa, which is experiencing one of the most alarming food crises in decades. Some **146 million people, predominantly women and children, are suffering from acute food insecurity**. Urgent humanitarian assistance is required to save lives.

Since the start of the crisis, **African National Societies have reached almost 3.5 million people through life-saving interventions**. We have just launched a regional appeal seeking to reach 7.6 million more in 14 countries, with a particular aim on the hardest-to-reach communities.

Several sub-regions and countries are of highest concern for us. In the Horn of Africa, a fifth consecutive failed rainy season is looming on the back of the worst drought in 40 years. **Currently, famine is an imminent risk for 360,000 Somalians**. Across the Sahel, acute food insecurity jumped from 10.8 million people in 2019 to 40.7 million people in 2022 – almost half of them in Nigeria. In South Sudan, a fourth-consecutive year of flooding is a major concern because most people estimated to face starvation and death are located in flood-prone areas.

Warnings about the evolving food insecurity situation were given as early as 12 months ago, when we launched our first emergency appeals to respond to the crisis. The first alert of the crisis in Somalia was sounded by the humanitarian community in April 2021. **We are still not acting fast enough on these kinds of warnings**. Donor funding for anticipatory action accounts for a mere 1 to 3% of total humanitarian spend. Early warning must trigger timely and adequate funding.

This crisis is not only about food. It is also about nutrition, livelihoods, health care, clean and safe water, and protection. We need investments in **multisector and collective solutions** (involving government, humanitarian and development actors, the private sector, academia, and others) **that simultaneously provide critical humanitarian assistance, address root and systemic causes, and build resilience**. These solutions must be informed first and foremost by the perspectives of affected communities themselves. We are also calling on donors to ensure that they carry out their commitments in the Grand Bargain to support local humanitarian actors to respond their own countries and communities in response to this crisis.