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Agriculture development, food security and nutrition

Letter dated 29 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you an information note on the issue of global food security in the context of unilateral coercive measures (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of General Assembly under agenda item 26.

(Signed) Valentin **Rybakov**



Annex to the letter dated 29 October 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Aide-mémoire on global food security in the context of unilateral coercive measures

Ensuring food security, eliminating hunger, promoting sustainable agriculture and increasing its productive capacity are of particular relevance today.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that hunger affects some 690 million people, or 8.9 per cent of the world's population, an increase of 10 million people in one year and almost 60 million in five years.

A similar upward trend is seen in the prevalence of acute food insecurity, which also reflects the extent of hunger. Three billion people – nearly 40 per cent of the world's population – do not have access to adequate nutrition.

The economic impact of the coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) has exacerbated an already difficult food situation, with an additional 140 million people facing food shortages.

This jeopardizes the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The world is behind schedule in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 on ending hunger. If trends continue, the number of people affected by hunger will exceed 840 million by 2030.

According to FAO, in September 2021, the average value of the FAO Food Price Index was 130.0 points, which is 32.8 per cent higher than in September last year. The rise in the Index value in September was mainly driven by higher prices for most cereals and vegetable oils. FAO predicts that, despite reaching an all-time high, world cereal production in 2021 will fall short of consumption.

On 4 October 2021, United Nations agencies estimated that the world now faces unprecedented catastrophic levels of food insecurity, with an urgent need for about \$6.6 billion to support 41 million people at risk of hunger.

Belarus has always made a significant contribution to global food security. Our country exports agricultural products and foodstuffs to more than 100 countries around the world. However, the sanctions pressure thoughtlessly placed on Belarus by Western countries constitutes a risk, not so much to our country as to global food security. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sanctions policies make for far from rosy prospects in terms of development efforts and the fight against hunger in the world.

There is a direct correlation between the sectoral sanctions imposed by the European Union and other countries on the potash industry in Belarus and the increase in food risks around the world and the threat of a food crisis. Given that Belarus has a 20 per cent share in the world market of potash fertilizers, it is clear that a ban placed on its export will lead (and already is leading) to higher prices, both of the fertilizers themselves and of food products, thereby contributing to an increase in the number of hungry people in the world. And this is not just our assessment. Similar conclusions have been arrived at by the United Nations, FAO and a number of international companies and associations in the potash fertilizer and food trade. This then raises the question: are the countries imposing sanctions on the Belarusian potash industry aware of this real threat to the whole world or do they prefer to ignore this

threat for the sake of achieving certain ephemeral goals and increasing the sanctions pressure on Belarus?

The Secretary-General convened the United Nations Food Systems Summit on the margins of the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly in September this year, at which nations pledged to continue efforts to end hunger and make healthy food more accessible. At the same time, it was noted that the problem of hunger cannot be solved unless agricultural producers have access to fertilizers in the required quantity and at an affordable price.

In the spirit of the Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security, Belarus calls for a rejection of sanctions that not only contravene international obligations, including within the framework of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but also run counter to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolutions on unilateral coercive measures.
