

**Permanent Mission of India
New York**

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**United Nations Security Council High-Level Open Debate
"Food Under Fire: The Security Council's Role in Mitigating Global and
Local Food Crises"**

Statement by Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, Permanent Representative
25 August 2026

Madam President,

1. India thanks Denmark for convening this important open debate. We also thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their valuable insights.
2. Food insecurity remains one of the gravest humanitarian consequences of armed conflict. Today's conflicts increasingly generate ripple effects far beyond the immediate theatre of hostilities. Disruptions to energy markets, fertiliser supplies, maritime transport, humanitarian logistics and agricultural trade have demonstrated how regional conflicts can threaten food security across the world, with the greatest burden falling on developing countries that are highly import-dependent.
3. Let us nevertheless remain clear about the causality of this challenge. Food insecurity is fundamentally a consequence of conflict, political instability and underdevelopment, not their root cause. While the Security Council has an important role in responding to threats to international peace and security, building resilient, food-secure societies remains primarily the responsibility of national governments, supported by the UN development system and the Rome-based agencies.
4. Resolution 2417 of the Security Council on conflict induced food insecurity, provides an important framework by recognising the relationship between armed conflict and hunger. Early warning should therefore not be limited to identifying deteriorating humanitarian conditions on the ground. It should also include timely assessments of disruptions to critical supply chains, including food, fertiliser, fuel and humanitarian logistics, drawing upon the technical expertise of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Programme, and other relevant agencies. Such assessments must remain objective, evidence-based and free from politicisation.

Madam President,

5. The Council's immediate priority should be to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of conflict. This requires facilitating safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access, supporting de-confliction arrangements where appropriate, and ensuring that the Council's own measures, including sanctions regimes, do not inadvertently impede

humanitarian assistance or legitimate food and agricultural trade. Equally important is the protection of civilian infrastructure essential for food security, including agricultural land, irrigation systems, storage facilities, transport corridors and ports.

6. Equally important is the need to preserve the safety and freedom of navigation for commercial shipping in accordance with international law. Secure and predictable maritime trade routes are indispensable for the uninterrupted movement of food, fertilisers, fuel and other essential commodities. Disruptions to commercial shipping during conflicts can have cascading effects far beyond the immediate region, disproportionately affecting food-importing developing countries and humanitarian operations. The international community must therefore work collectively to safeguard critical sea lanes and maritime infrastructure, while ensuring that legitimate commercial trade and humanitarian shipments are able to proceed without undue impediment.

7. At the same time, lasting resilience cannot be delivered through humanitarian action alone. Member States, international financial institutions, regional organisations and development partners must work together to strengthen domestic agricultural production, diversify supply chains, improve storage and logistics infrastructure, and promote climate-resilient agriculture. Predictable and affordable access to fertilisers, quality seeds, technology and concessional finance remains indispensable, particularly for developing countries. Open, transparent and rules-based trade in food and agricultural inputs also remains critical to global food security.

8. India's own experience underscores the centrality of sustained, nationally-owned investments in resilient food systems. The National Food Security Act provides a statutory entitlement to subsidised food grains, direct benefit transfers to over 110 mn farming households under the PM-KISAN have strengthened the economic resilience of small and marginal producers. India's championing of the International year of Millets in 2023 has catalysed global attention to climate-resilient, nutrient-rich crops as a viable pathway to diversified food security. These efforts underpinned by digital public infrastructure and climate-adaptive agricultural practices have enabled India to remain both food-secure & a net contribution to global food supply. We remain committed to sharing these experiences through South-South Cooperation and development partnerships.

9. Furthermore, Ocean atmospheric variabilities such as El Nino add an additional layer of vulnerability. They disrupt monsoon patterns, reduce crop yields & strain water resources compounding the food security problems. Addressing this requires strengthened International cooperation & we look forward to working with the international community in that regard.

Madam President,

10. The Secretary-General's good offices can play a valuable role in facilitating dialogue, reducing tensions and supporting humanitarian access, where appropriate. The broader UN system should continue to leverage scientific expertise, operational capabilities and timely

data to inform decision-making. Such efforts should complement, not substitute for national ownership and nationally led responses.

11. India firmly believes that peace, development and food security are mutually reinforcing. The Security Council should focus on fulfilling its mandate by addressing conflict, facilitating humanitarian access and supporting conditions for peace. The General Assembly, ECOSOC, the UN development system and the Rome-based agencies should continue to lead the long-term response to food insecurity.

12. Finally, over reliance on any single model of production would be counter-productive as they are vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions, economic coercion and weaponisation. We must encourage small and marginal farmers to enhance their productivity and contribute to ensuring food security in developing countries of the Global South. We must also encourage climate resilient crops such as millets rather than limit conceptions of food security to the biggest staple, grain crops such as rice, wheat and corn.

13. By acting within their respective mandates and in a spirit of genuine multilateral cooperation, the United Nations system can better prevent food crises.

I thank you, Madam President.
