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Committee on Agriculture

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**STATEMENT BY THE INTERNATIONAL GRAINS COUNCIL
ON BEHALF OF THE FOOD ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE AT THE 97TH MEETING
OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE ON 29-30 MARCH 2021**

"COVID-19 AND AGRICULTURE"

The following submission, dated 15 March 2021, is being circulated at the request of the International Grains Council (IGC).

1.1. At the 13th Session of the Food Assistance Committee held in November 2020, Members approved the Food Assistance Annual Narrative Report for 2019.¹

1.2. The report highlighted that global emergency hunger remained at its highest level in 2019. Almost 135 million people in 55 countries, or 16% of the population analysed, were classified in crisis condition or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above)². This marks the highest number in the four years since the Global Report on Food Crises was launched. The persistence of food crises was due in large part to multiple ongoing humanitarian crises linked to protracted conflicts, often in combination with exacerbating elements such as climate shocks, economic instability, and widespread poverty. The complexity and protracted nature of these food crises calls for the commitment and determination of the international community to respond through a holistic manner, working across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, and intervening with the necessary assistance in a timely and efficient manner, in alignment with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

1.3. In 2019, all Parties fulfilled or substantially exceeded their commitments and contributed with a total of almost six billion US dollars to the improvement of worldwide food security. Key responses were carried out in collaboration with various agencies and programmes of the United Nations, national governments in the developing world, and civil-society organisations. Geographically, food assistance was provided in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific region. At an interventional level, food assistance was provided as in-kind food distribution, cash-based transfers, food vouchers, fortified food programmes, school feeding programmes, work-for-food programmes, nutrition-targeted interventions, and much more.

1.4. The FAC Session was followed by a seminar titled "How to ensure effective disability inclusion during a pandemic response". The seminar consisted of contributions from the International Disability Alliance, World Food Programme, the former Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Somalia, ASEAN Disability Forum, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland which emphasised the additional challenges COVID-19 poses for people with disabilities, and highlighted the need to collaborate across various humanitarian aid sectors.

¹ For report see <https://www.foodassistanceconvention.org/en/reports.aspx>.

² GRFC, 2020, p. 20.