



## ELMAU 2022: G7 MUST NOT LEAVE THE HUNGRY BEHIND AGAIN

The G7 countries' immediate and decisive action in the face of the global hunger crisis triggered by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is to be welcomed. By investing in emergency aid, human lives must now be saved. At the same time, it is imperative that the G7 countries agree on a long-term strategy at the Elmau summit at the end of June that prevents a further increase in hunger and contributes significantly to the United Nations' goal of eliminating hunger worldwide. Elmau 2022 must become the starting point for a long-term transformation of global food systems.

Food prices have been rising worldwide since 2019, and very sharply since 2020. And since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, they have literally been exploding. The war has also disrupted trade through Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea, and as long as the fighting continues, sowing and harvesting in Ukraine will be very limited. In response to the escalation of the hunger crisis unfolding before our very eyes, the German government recently joined forces with the other G7 countries and the World Bank to establish the Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS). As the concept paper of the German Federal Ministry for

Economic Cooperation and Development on GAFS states, the initiative aims to "advance a rapid, immediate and coordinated response to the unfolding global food security crisis [...] as an act of solidarity and support for those most affected" (GAFS, 2022a). The push is to be welcomed. However, it is crucial that the associated measures also be geared to the actual needs of the people affected.

### G7/G8 initiatives to fight hunger ineffective for over a decade

Looking back, owing to the dramatic situation during the food price crisis of 2008, as a result of which the number of people suffering from hunger was estimated to have risen to over 1 billion, the G8 countries (today's group of seven leading industrialized nations – the G7 – was at that time complemented by Russia) put the issue of food security on their agenda in 2009. The resulting L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) marked a shift away from aid deliveries to combat acute famines toward comprehensive and forward-looking support for rural development – with the aim of ensuring sustainable food security worldwide. The outcome of the initiative is viewed differently. While the G7 awarded themselves a rating of "Excellent" (G7 France, 2019), nongovernmental organizations criticize that much of the money was not disbursed to the affected countries as promised (Welthungerhilfe, 2012). The AFSI was never able to have a long-term impact.

Then in 2012, at the initiative of the U.S. government, and supported by the World Bank, among others, the G8 countries launched the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN). Here, too, the overarching goal was to promote investment in rural areas – specifically, private sector investment in African partner countries. However, NAFSN has been criticized for marginalizing smallholder farmers and pushing for deregulation of the agricultural sector (Prášková and Novotný, 2021). In contrast, the G7's own reporting also rates this initiative as "Good" (G7 France, 2019).

Three years later, in 2015, the so-called Elmau Commitment followed – with a goal that was as concrete as it was ambitious: 500 million people were to be freed from hunger by 2030. Since the global community has set itself the goal of achieving a world without hunger by 2030 with global Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), the "Elmau Commitment" is to be understood as the G7's contribution to this goal. However, concrete financial or political commitments to underpin the commitment remain absent to date. All that has been agreed is to include G7 spending on agriculture and fisheries in official development assistance (ODA) (Welthungerhilfe/Terre des hommes, 2022). Since achieving the 500 million target as well as SDG 2 by 2030 is unrealistic in view of the efforts made so far, the corresponding G7 self-assessment ("Below expectations") seems more than justified.

All of these projects have two things in common. They are neither characterized by staying power, nor can they point to sustainable successes, as the global increase in the number of people suffering from hunger since 2015 shows. Lessons must be learned from these mistakes. The fourth initiative of the G7, the Global Alliance for Food Security, is explicitly designed to tackle the crisis in the short term.

However, it should lead to a political strategy that contributes to the long-term transformation of global food systems towards the realization of the right to food for all people. Here, special attention should also be given to eliminating malnutrition.

## What is the potential of GAFS?

The Global Alliance for Food Security, as far as is yet known, is to be designed as a political alliance that brings together "like-minded countries and organizations" (GAFS, 2022b) through an open structure in order to respond quickly and agilely to the developing food crisis in a temporary forum (GAFS, 2022a). The alliance was launched at the G7 Development Ministers meeting in Berlin in mid-May and was supported by a number of key stakeholders.

In general, GAFS has the potential to make an important contribution to addressing the current famine. However, even if action must (and should) be taken quickly and unbureaucratically now, existing food security structures must not be disregarded. Governmental as well as civil society organizations – including those from the affected countries – must be involved comprehensively and promptly in shaping the alliance so that it can have a high impact. The alliance also needs concrete funding targets that are aligned with actual needs. For example, to cover the funding gap projected for the World Food Program (WFP) alone due to consequences of the Ukraine war, eight billion U.S. dollars would be needed (Wax, 2022).

## Go beyond symptom control

The current global food situation is not solely a consequence of the Ukraine war, but a consequence of the interplay of various factors: a long-standing dramatic neglect of rural areas in the Global South, the climate crisis, an increasing number of conflicts, the Corona pandemic, and rising food and energy prices worldwide. Most importantly, it also highlights the weaknesses of

### G7/G8 initiatives on food security and their own latest assessment in the G7 Progress Report\*

Year	Titel	Assessment in the G7 Progress Report	Status
2009	L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI)	"Excellent"	Completed in 2012
2012	New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN)	"Good"	Completed in 2016
2015	"Elmau Commitment" (Broad food security and nutrition development)	"Below Expectations"	Ongoing, until 2030
2022	Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS)	Assessment will be carried out in 2025	Ongoing, planned for 2 years

\* own presentation, based on: G7 France, 2019 and GAFS, 2022a



our global food system, which is neither equitable, sustainable, nor crisis-proof. The G7 countries must therefore ambitiously dedicate themselves to reducing chronic hunger, achieving the Elmau target, and transforming our food systems in parallel with emergency relief. This must be done in a long-term, close and equal partnership with affected countries, civil society, and local organizations. The means of choice here are the promotion of rural development and regional food systems in the Global South through initiatives with terms of at least ten years and adequate, flexible financing for development cooperation.

To achieve the Elmau target alone, the G7 countries would need to raise an additional 14 billion U.S. dollars per year by 2030 (Chichaibelu et al., 2021). Here, too, it is important to initiate implementation quickly and not wait for further gains in knowledge. After all, the target-oriented paths for action have already been outlined many times – within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and not least by the G7 themselves at their summit in 2009. For example, post-harvest losses must be massively reduced. Site-specific agriculture, which includes the cultivation of locally adapted and resilient crops and varieties, must be massively strengthened, too. This also applies to local and regional food trade. Appropriate strategically combined approaches could promptly reduce dependence on food imports – especially in the countries of the Global South –

and contribute to sustainably overcoming hunger and malnutrition. Positive consequences would include increased resilience of local and regional food systems as well as the development and strengthening of regional economic systems.

However, all efforts can only succeed if other policy areas also live up to their responsibilities. Economic, financial, and trade policy, for example, must support the corresponding realignment of agricultural policy instead of counteracting it. A binding legal framework must be created to ensure human rights due diligence and compliance with environmental and social standards in global supply chains. And last but not least, food security must also be considered in climate policy.



Women waiting for food in the refugee camp in Bentiu, South Sudan.

## G7 summit needs more than pure symbolic politics

The issue of food security is indeed now high on the G7 summit agenda, given the food price crisis; there have been corresponding demands from civil society for a long time. To prevent the G7's contribution to solving the global hunger crisis from being limited to another short-lived initiative with little impact, the heads of state and government must take action on two levels:

### Short-term assistance through an effective GAFS that is adapted to the needs:

- embed the Global Alliance for Food Security in existing structures and launch it quickly where help is needed most;
- involve affected countries and populations, as well as civil society, in a comprehensive and timely manner;
- establish specific funding targets aligned with needs.

### Long-term transformation of food systems:

- promote rural development in the Global South through initiatives with terms of at least ten years;
- establish long-term, close, and equitable partnerships with countries and populations affected by food insecurity and malnutrition;
- strengthen the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) as a multilateral, inclusive forum and see its policy recommendations as guiding policy;

- prioritize agricultural potential in the global South, promoting post-harvest loss reduction and site-appropriate agriculture;
- strengthen local and regional food trade;
- support a fundamental reorientation of agricultural strategies to help achieve environmental and climate goals;
- transform food systems in a manner enabling them to always contribute to food and nutrition security while taking the planetary boundaries into account;
- create a binding legal framework for ensuring human rights due diligence and environmental and social standards in global supply chains;
- provide adequate and flexible funding to also achieve these goals. The G7 countries should contribute at least an additional 14 billion U.S. dollars annually by 2030; Germany's share should be at least 1.4 billion U.S. dollars (approx. 1.35 billion euros) per year.

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