



23 Feb 2015 - At a press conference on 23 February at [UNRIC](#) , Executive Director of the [World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#)

**Ertharin Cousin emphasized that despite the overwhelming need created by the five current biggest global conflicts, WFP is committed to maintaining its strategy of sustainable development.**

“We can’t prioritize the children in conflicts” she said. “We can’t feed one hungry child over another”. “Acute hunger needs are limiting our ability to achieve stability.”

Due to the scale of the five major crises; in Syria, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Iraq and the Ebola crisis, Ms Cousin said that there are more displaced people today than there were during the Second World War. The record \$5.6 billion raised by WFP last year fell short of the \$7.8 billion required.

This led for example to a 30% reduction in food rations inside Syria and food vouchers in neighbouring regions. This reduction allowed the WFP to ensure that the total population supported did not decrease.

### **Limited access a major issue**

Ms. Cousins stated that the five current major crises are dominating WFP's resources, and posing the biggest obstacle to the goal of zero hunger. Given the piecemeal access available during conflicts, teams need to be ready to quickly get in and out when opportunities arise.

She mentioned that an imminent ceasefire in Eastern Aleppo should allow them access to this previously unreachable region.

She called for more attention to the impact that military responses to ISIS will have on displacement of the population in Iraq, with current efforts centred on ISIS controlled Baghdad and Kurdistan.

Both sides of the conflict in Ukraine have allowed access to the WFP, and Ms Cousins stated that the WFP would be increasing its assistance to over 110,000 people to meet their urgent food needs.

After the briefing, she attended her second development committee in Brussels. Apart from seeking additional finance from the EU she will be trying to highlight the potential for 'credible voices of leadership' to keep global hunger high up on the agenda, building on the awareness achieved during the 2008 food crisis.

### **All financial assistance welcomed**

She praised the Belgian government for providing financial assistance that was not earmarked for one specific aspect of the programme, saying that it helps them to mitigate the underfunding

of certain areas of the strategy.

Another reason for her visit was to speak at the launch of a [photo exhibition](#) named “The Family Meal – What Brings Us Together?” hosted by the European Parliament’s Committee on Development.

Photo: submitted to 'Family Meal' by Ndiokubwayo DaQueen DN