Outcomes REPORT

“Peace on an Empty Stomach?”: Building on Communiqué 1083 of the African Union Peace and Security Council

June 2025

WFP Conference Room, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

IPSS

WFP World Food Programme

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BACKGROUND

The Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) and the World Food Programme (WFP) convened a high-level policy dialogue to address the growing nexus between food security and conflict in Africa. The session focused on the operationalisation of AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) Communiqué 1083, a landmark document that elevated food security to a core peace and security agenda item. The event brought together PSC members, AU officials, regional and international partners, and civil society actors to explore how to move from policy to impact. The dialogue acknowledged that conflicts disrupt food systems, worsen food insecurity, and trigger further instability a cycle that affects millions of Africans daily. Emphasis was placed on supporting African-led initiatives, deepening multilateral partnerships, strengthening early warning and response systems, and ensuring that food systems are integrated into peace and governance frameworks.

To address these challenges, the **World Food Programme African Union Global Office (WFP-AUGO)** in collaboration with the **Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)** convened a policy dialogue on *"Peace on an Empty Stomach?": Building on Communiqué 1083 of the African Union Peace and Security Council* held on 18 June 2025 at the WFP Conference Room.

MAJOR OUTCOMES OF THE EVENT

1. **Shifting the Narrative: From Agriculture to Agri-Food Systems**
   The policy discussion underscored the need to move from traditional agriculture models to comprehensive agri-food systems that are climate-resilient, inclusive, and anchored in local solutions. Speakers traced the evolution from the Maputo, Abuja, and Malabo declarations to the new Kampala Declaration, which advocates for national and regional agri-food investment plans. Stakeholders called for a political and institutional revolution to shift power structures, improve financing models, and enable effective implementation.

2. **Bridging the Gap Between Early Warning and Early Response**
   Participants highlighted significant progress in early warning systems (e.g. CEWS and WFP's hunger maps), while emphasising the ongoing challenges in translating this data into timely and coordinated action. It was noted that AU structures such as APSA, AGA, and the RECs should strengthen collaboration with partners such as the UN and WFP to develop anticipatory frameworks that effectively inform political decision-making and operational responses. However, participants also identified the need for enhanced institutional coordination within the AU - particularly between the PAPS, ARBE, and HHS departments - as a critical area to address for improved effectiveness.

3. Integrating Food Security into Peace and Governance Frameworks

Food insecurity was recognised as both a driver and consequence of conflict. Participants stressed that it must be addressed not only as a humanitarian issue but as a structural, governance, and security priority. Innovative concepts such as food as a human right, the weaponisation of hunger, and local food system resilience were explored. Calls were made to elevate food security within national and continental security strategies, including through possible Africanisation of UN Resolution 2417.

4. Strengthening African Ownership, Multilateral and Regional Coordination

WFP and AU actors presented numerous examples of multilateral coordination successes, including anticipatory financing, the Great Green Wall initiative, home-grown school feeding programmes, and integration of food security in national development plans. The dialogue reaffirmed the importance of African solutions to African problems while simultaneously leveraging multilateral partnerships. However, coordination remains uneven. The role of special envoys on Food Systems was discussed as essential for sustaining advocacy and aligning AU and UN efforts.

5. Technology and Innovation as Game Changers

The WFP and other speakers highlighted transformational technology applications such as real-time hunger maps, AI-driven forecasting tools, blockchain platforms for aid delivery, and mobile-based cash transfers. Innovation was portrayed as essential not only for efficiency and early response, but also for reducing operational costs and enhancing local agency. Yet the utility of such tools remains limited without greater political uptake and integration into AU systems.

6. Recognition of Food as a Weapon and Legal/Normative Gaps

The dialogue brought strong attention to the weaponisation of hunger in conflict zones. There was a consensus that starvation must be treated as a violation of international humanitarian law, and mechanisms like UN Resolution 2417 should be contextualised to address the unique challenges and realities faced by AU Member States. Food security was highlighted as not only a humanitarian right but also a critical priority for peace, security, and justice across the continent.

WAY FORWARD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The policy dialogue produced a detailed set of recommendations aimed at strengthening the operationalisation of Communiqué 1083 and addressing the food security–conflict nexus across the continent:

- Operationalise Communiqué 1083 by establishing a clear monitoring and implementation framework within the AU Peace and Security Council and across relevant AU departments.
- Strengthen early warning–early action linkages by leveraging WFP's hunger maps and IPC tools

in AU and REC decision-making platforms, with stronger data-sharing protocols and political triggers for response.

- Enhance institutional coordination within the AU (PAPS, DARBE, HHS) to streamline food security-related mandates, avoid duplication, and ensure holistic response.
- Elevate food systems as security priorities by integrating food resilience into national security budgets, development plans, and governance mechanisms.
- Invest in local solutions and indigenous crops through support for community-led initiatives such as cassava-based bread in DRC and youth-led agriculture projects in Zambia.
- Leverage innovative financing including the African Development Bank, Afrexim Bank, and Africa Risk Capacity mechanisms to support food system transformation in fragile states.
- Promote inclusive partnerships with civil society, the private sector, and international partners to scale sustainable food security programmes like home-grown school feeding and food-for-assets.
- Advance African leadership and ownership by aligning food security policies with AU Agenda 2063 and insisting on African-driven positions in global platforms.
- Deploy and empower special envoys on food systems, climate security, and humanitarian response to enhance advocacy, coordination, and policy coherence.
- Revive the Intergovernmental Task Force on Conflict Prevention to drive coherent responses across early warning, development, and peacebuilding frameworks.
- Leverage the Cost of Conflict Study, which will be undertaken by WFP and IPSS to quantify the economic and structural impacts of conflict and hunger across sectors. Use the findings to inform evidence-based policymaking, national development strategies, and budget prioritisation.
- Protect food systems during conflict by incorporating farmland, livestock, and food supply chain protection into peacekeeping mandates and AU security strategies. Consider the development of “Safe Food Zones” in conflict-affected areas.
- Strengthen the role of the private sector, youth, and civil society by formalising their participation in food system governance and resilience-building. Support innovation, local entrepreneurship, and cross-sector collaboration in agri-food systems.
- Address strategic gaps in food reserves and storage by establishing or reinforcing national, regional, and continental food and seed reserves. Invest in resilient storage infrastructure to ensure rapid response to climate shocks, conflict, and displacement.
- Urge the AU PSC to discuss and deliberate on processes to contextualise and adapt UN Resolution 2417 to African priorities and realities.

CONCLUSION

The IPSS-WFP policy dialogue reaffirmed the inseparable link between peace and food security. With over 158 million Africans facing hunger and conflicts escalating across the continent, the stakes are too high for fragmented action. Participants called for bold, coordinated, and African-led responses that turn early warning into early action and policy declarations into transformative change. Communiqué 1083 offers a critical entry point, and its implementation demands political will, multilateral partnership, and community-driven innovation.

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