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**Statement**

by

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Permanent Representative

**Open VTC on Protecting Civilians from Conflict Induced Hunger**

Security Council

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Check against delivery

Thank You, Mr. President, and allow me to thank H.E. Miguel Vargas, Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic for his statement earlier. And congratulations to you Mr President, for convening this very important VTC on Protecting Civilians from Conflict Induced Hunger.

We also thank our briefers for their insightful but very solemn remarks.

Mr President,

Today, human civilization stands at an important crossroad where we face the greatest challenges of our lifetime; some of which would inevitably yield repercussions for generations to come. The COVID-19 pandemic, the likes of which we haven't experienced in over a century, continues to wreak havoc on our societies and economies, while the ever-growing Climate crisis casts a precarious shadow over life and livelihoods. In addition to the immense challenges presented by these emerging threats to international peace and security, our fight against hunger persists, and the number of people affected by acute food insecurity continues to rise. We can and we must do better to protect those most vulnerable.

Excellencies,

In the struggle for lasting peace and prosperity, we can claim no easy victories. Yet, it is in our darkest hour, when our struggles seem insurmountable, that we must work together - *not in spite of, but precisely because* - our distinct interests, perspectives and priorities demand constructive forms of engagement that yield creative and people-centred solutions. Let us be reminded that our entire multilateral system was designed by our forebears to serve the interests of people. While our individual nation-states remain the primary media through which our geographically-dispersed societies interact, these constructs are merely tools of human advancement.

To finance the eradication of hunger in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, our government has worked with various partners and donors to implement a mechanism called the "Zero Hunger Trust Fund." This initiative combines a number of social programs that span education and training, health and wellness, housing, employment and productivity, to create a social safety net for the most vulnerable groups, and has significantly reduced levels of undernourishment in our Vincentian society. Our delegation proposes that a similar trust fund can

be designed and implemented, under the auspices of the World Food Programme (WFP), to cover budgetary shortfalls that stymie the assistance offered to conflict-affected and food insecure populations. The recent announcement by the WFP to reduce food-aid to Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen by half due to reductions in donor support is an absolute tragedy. We must work swiftly and resolutely to ensure that all vulnerable populations in Yemen and elsewhere are afforded this much-needed support.

We must be mindful, however, that while conflict is a primary driver of acute food insecurity in some contexts, the hazards of Climate Change including erratic precipitation, floods, drought, and sea-level rise also serve to undermine agricultural productivity and create food insecurity. Additionally, economic recessions and disruptions in supply chains lead to food crises for many vulnerable groups across the world.

Mr President,

If we are to end hunger by 2030, a whole-of-system approach is required to tackle food insecurity both *within* and *beyond* situations of conflict. This means that the Security Council must make a greater effort to work alongside the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and other entities such

as ECOSOC, UNDP, FAO and WFP to tackle the root causes of insecurity across the peace, security, development, and humanitarian nexus.

I thank you.