2022

Synopsis

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE   October 2022

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A Grim Outlook as Crises Overlap

As the 2022 Global Hunger Index (GHI) shows, the global hunger situation is grim. The overlapping crises facing the world are exposing the failures of food systems, from global to local, and highlighting the vulnerability of populations around the world to hunger.

Global Progress in Tackling Hunger Is at a Near Standstill

Global progress against hunger has largely stagnated in recent years. The 2022 GHI score for the world is considered *moderate*, but at 18.2 it shows only a slight decline from the 2014 score of 19.1. Indeed, one indicator used in the GHI, the prevalence of undernourishment, shows that the share of people who lack regular access to sufficient calories is increasing. As many as 828 million people were undernourished in 2021, representing a reversal of more than a decade of progress in tackling hunger. Without a major shift, neither the world as a whole nor approximately 46 countries are projected to achieve even *low* hunger by 2030, as measured by the GHI.

A Barrage of Crises Is Undermining the Fight against Hunger

The situation is likely to worsen in the face of the current barrage of overlapping global crises—conflict, climate change, and the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic—all of which are powerful drivers of hunger. The war in Ukraine has further increased global food, fuel, and fertilizer prices and has the potential to further aggravate hunger in 2023 and beyond. These crises come on top of underlying factors, such as poverty, inequality, inadequate governance, poor infrastructure, and low agricultural productivity, that contribute to chronic hunger and vulnerability. Globally and in many countries and regions, current food systems are inadequate to the task of addressing these challenges and ending hunger.

FIGURE 1 **GLOBAL AND REGIONAL GHI SCORES, 2000, 2007, 2014, AND 2022**
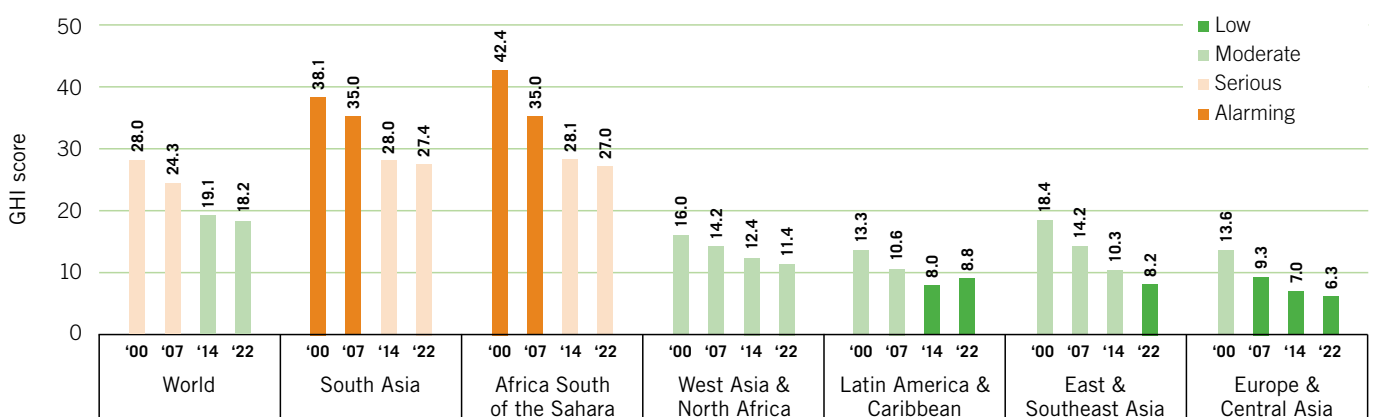
Source: Authors.

Note: See Appendix A in the full GHI report for data sources. The regional and global GHI scores are calculated using regional and global aggregates for each indicator and the formula described in Appendix A. The regional and global aggregates for each indicator are calculated as population-weighted averages, using the indicator values reported in Appendix B. For countries lacking undernourishment data, provisional estimates provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) were used to calculate aggregates only but are not reported in Appendix B. Appendix D shows which countries are included in each region.

High Hunger Persists in Too Many Regions

Hunger is *serious* in both South Asia (where hunger is highest) and Africa South of the Sahara (where hunger is second highest). South Asia has the highest child stunting rate and by far the highest child wasting rate of any world region.[1] In Africa South of the Sahara, the prevalence of undernourishment and the rate of child mortality are higher than in any other world region. Parts of East Africa are experiencing one of the most severe droughts of the past 40 years, threatening the survival of millions. In West Asia and North Africa, where hunger is *moderate*, there are worrying signs of a reversal in the progress that has been made in tackling hunger. Hunger is considered *low* in Latin America and the Caribbean, East and Southeast Asia, and Europe and Central Asia.

[1] Authors' estimates; see full report for further details.

Conflict, Climate Extremes, and the Effects of COVID-19 Are Worsening Hunger in Many Countries

Hunger is at an *alarming* level in 5 countries—Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, and Yemen—and is provisionally considered *alarming* in 4 additional countries—Burundi, Somalia, South Sudan, and Syria. In a further 35 countries, hunger is considered *serious*. In a number of countries, hunger is worsening: since 2014, hunger has increased in 20 countries, with *moderate*, *serious*, or *alarming* hunger levels across multiple regions. Even within well-performing regions and countries, hotspots of food and nutrition insecurity persist. There are, however, also signs of progress: since 2000, 32 countries have seen their GHI scores decline by 50 percent or more, including at least one country from nearly every world region.

BOX 1.1 **ABOUT THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX SCORES**

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels over recent years and decades. GHI scores are calculated based on a formula combining four indicators that together capture the multidimensional nature of hunger:

Undernourishment: the share of the population that is undernourished, reflecting insufficient caloric intake

Child wasting: the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (low weight-for-height), reflecting *acute* undernutrition

Child stunting: the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (low height-for-age), reflecting *chronic* undernutrition

Child mortality: the mortality rate of children under the age of five

In 2022, data were assessed for the 136 countries that met the criteria for inclusion in the GHI, and GHI scores were calculated for 121 of those countries based on data from 2017 to 2021. The data used to calculate GHI scores come from published UN sources (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation), the World Bank, and the Demographic and Health Surveys Program. Of the 136 countries assessed, 15 did not have sufficient data to allow for the calculation of a 2022 GHI score, but provisional designations of the severity of hunger were assigned to 8 of those countries based on other published data. For the remaining 7 countries, data were insufficient to allow for either calculating GHI scores or assigning provisional designations.

The GHI categorizes and ranks countries on a 100-point scale: values of less than 10.0 reflect *low* hunger; values from 10.0 to 19.9 reflect *moderate* hunger; values from 20.0 to 34.9 indicate *serious* hunger; values from 35.0 to 49.9 are *alarming*; and values of 50.0 or more are *extremely alarming* (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2 **NUMBER OF COUNTRIES BY HUNGER LEVEL ACCORDING TO 2022 GHI SCORES**

GHI Severity of Hunger Scale				
≤ 9.9 **Low** 49 countries	10.0–19.9 **Moderate** 36 countries	20.0–34.9 **Serious** 35 countries	35.0–49.9 **Alarming** 9 countries	≥ 50.0 **Extremely alarming** 0 countries

Source: Authors.

Note: These tallies reflect the 121 countries for which GHI scores were calculated based on 2017–2021 data and the 8 countries that were assigned GHI scores on a provisional basis (4 as *serious* and 4 as *alarming*).

2022 GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX BY SEVERITY

Legend:

- Extremely alarming ≥ 50.0
- Alarming 35.0–49.9
- Serious 20.0–34.9
- Moderate 10.0–19.9
- Low ≤ 9.9
- Not included or not designated (see Appendix A for details)
- * Provisional severity designation (see Table A.3 for details)

Source: Authors.

Note: For the 2022 GHI, data on the proportion of undernourished are for 2019–2021; data on child stunting and wasting are for the latest year in the period 2017–2021 for which data are available; and data on child mortality are for 2020. GHI scores were not calculated for countries for which data were not available and for countries that did not meet the GHI inclusion criteria; see Appendix A for details.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by Welthungerhilfe (WHH) or Concern Worldwide.

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TABLE 1 GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX SCORES BY 2022 GHI RANK

Rank[1]	Country	2000	2007	2014	2022
	Belarus	<5	<5	<5	<5
	Bosnia & Herzegovina	9.3	6.6	<5	<5
	Chile	<5	<5	<5	<5
	China	13.3	7.8	<5	<5
	Croatia	<5	<5	<5	<5
	Estonia	<5	<5	<5	<5
	Hungary	5.5	<5	<5	<5
	Kuwait	<5	<5	<5	<5
	Latvia	5.6	<5	<5	<5
	Lithuania	5.4	<5	<5	<5
	Montenegro	—	5.4	<5	<5
	North Macedonia	7.5	7.2	<5	<5
	Romania	7.9	5.8	5.1	<5
	Serbia	—	6.1	5.8	<5
	Slovakia	7.0	5.9	5.7	<5
	Türkiye	10.1	5.8	<5	<5
	Uruguay	7.4	6.5	<5	<5
18	Costa Rica	7.0	<5	<5	5.3
18	United Arab Emirates	6.2	6.5	5.9	5.3
20	Brazil	11.4	7.1	5.0	5.4
21	Uzbekistan	24.2	15.4	8.3	5.6
22	Georgia	12.3	7.8	6.1	5.7
22	Mongolia	30.0	21.8	9.2	5.7
24	Bulgaria	8.6	7.9	7.4	5.9
24	Kazakhstan	11.2	11.6	5.8	5.9
26	Tunisia	10.3	7.6	6.7	6.1
27	Albania	20.7	15.8	9.2	6.2
28	Russian Federation	10.1	7.1	6.7	6.4
29	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	13.7	8.8	7.4	6.5
30	Saudi Arabia	11.0	12.2	7.4	6.7
31	Argentina	6.6	5.5	5.0	6.8
32	Algeria	14.5	11.4	8.7	6.9
32	Armenia	19.3	12.1	7.3	6.9
32	Moldova	18.7	20.3	6.8	6.9
35	Jamaica	8.6	8.1	8.8	7.0
36	Azerbaijan	24.9	15.3	9.3	7.5
36	Ukraine	13.0	7.2	7.2	7.5
38	Colombia	10.9	11.2	8.6	7.6
38	Peru	20.6	15.0	7.6	7.6
40	Kyrgyzstan	18.0	13.6	9.4	7.8
41	Paraguay	11.6	11.4	8.1	8.0
42	Mexico	10.2	8.5	7.0	8.1
42	Panama	18.6	14.0	9.4	8.1
44	El Salvador	14.7	12.1	10.4	8.4
45	Dominican Republic	15.0	13.9	9.8	8.8
46	Trinidad & Tobago	11.0	10.7	8.8	9.0
47	Fiji	9.5	8.5	9.3	9.2
47	Morocco	15.8	12.4	9.6	9.2
49	Turkmenistan	20.4	14.6	10.6	9.5
50	Suriname	15.1	11.3	10.0	10.2
51	Guyana	17.1	15.8	12.4	10.4
52	Lebanon	11.6	11.2	8.7	10.5
53	Jordan	10.8	7.5	7.4	10.6
54	Cabo Verde	15.3	11.9	12.1	11.8
55	Viet Nam	26.3	21.4	15.4	11.9
56	Thailand	18.6	12.1	11.9	12.0
57	Egypt	16.3	17.2	14.6	12.3
58	Malaysia	15.4	13.8	10.9	12.5
59	South Africa	18.1	17.2	12.7	12.9
60	Oman	14.7	11.5	11.5	13.0
61	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	27.7	22.0	14.7	13.2
62	Honduras	21.8	19.2	14.1	13.4
62	Mauritius	15.3	14.1	13.0	13.4
64	Nicaragua	22.4	17.9	15.5	13.6
64	Sri Lanka	21.7	18.9	17.3	13.6
66	Iraq	23.8	20.8	16.6	13.7
67	Ghana	28.5	22.1	15.5	13.9
67	Tajikistan	40.3	32.9	20.6	13.9
69	Philippines	25.0	19.5	18.8	14.8
70	Ecuador	19.7	18.6	11.7	15.2
71	Myanmar	39.9	29.4	17.9	15.6
71	Senegal	34.2	22.8	17.6	15.6
73	Eswatini	24.7	22.9	18.4	16.3
74	Côte d'Ivoire	33.4	35.8	22.7	16.8
75	Cambodia	41.1	26.1	20.1	17.1
76	Gabon	20.9	20.3	16.5	17.2
77	Indonesia	26.1	29.1	22.2	17.9
78	Namibia	25.4	26.8	22.9	18.7
79	Guatemala	28.4	24.1	21.7	18.8
80	Cameroon	35.8	29.9	21.4	18.9
81	Nepal	37.0	30.0	21.2	19.1
82	Lao PDR	44.2	31.4	22.5	19.2
83	Solomon Islands	20.1	18.1	22.3	19.4
84	Bangladesh	33.9	31.3	26.3	19.6
85	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	14.6	10.1	8.1	19.9
86	Botswana	27.7	25.8	20.5	20.0
87	Gambia	29.0	26.5	22.2	20.7
87	Malawi	43.3	32.5	24.1	20.7
87	Mauritania	31.8	28.3	26.3	20.7
90	Djibouti	44.3	35.8	27.4	21.5
91	Benin	33.8	26.9	23.2	21.7
92	Togo	39.3	30.2	26.1	22.8
93	Mali	41.7	35.7	26.1	23.2
94	Kenya	36.6	31.1	21.6	23.5
95	Tanzania (United Republic of)	40.8	30.9	25.5	23.6
96	Burkina Faso	44.9	34.5	26.5	24.5
97	Korea (DPR)	39.5	29.6	27.5	24.9
98	Angola	64.9	44.7	26.2	25.9
99	Pakistan	36.8	32.1	29.6	26.1
100	Papua New Guinea	33.6	29.9	29.0	26.5
101	Comoros	39.5	31.7	29.1	26.9
102	Rwanda	49.9	35.9	29.5	27.2
103	Nigeria	40.4	32.1	28.4	27.3
104	Ethiopia	53.6	42.6	27.4	27.6
105	Congo (Republic of)	34.7	33.7	25.3	28.1
106	Sudan	—	—	29.3	28.8
107	India	38.8	36.3	28.2	29.1
108	Zambia	53.3	46.0	35.2	29.3
109	Afghanistan	50.3	38.7	30.6	29.9
110	Timor-Leste	—	45.5	33.3	30.6
111	Guinea-Bissau	37.7	31.0	30.2	30.8
112	Sierra Leone	57.5	51.1	33.1	31.5
113	Lesotho	32.7	29.1	29.3	32.4
113	Liberia	48.2	39.0	34.8	32.4
115	Niger	52.5	40.2	32.8	32.6
116	Haiti	40.9	41.7	32.6	32.7
*	Guinea, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zimbabwe	—	—	—	20–34.9*
117	Chad	50.7	49.0	40.7	37.2
118	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	48.0	43.2	38.7	37.8
119	Madagascar	42.5	37.2	37.3	38.7
120	Central African Rep.	48.8	46.8	44.6	44.0
121	Yemen	41.3	38.4	41.7	45.1
*	Burundi, Somalia, South Sudan, and Syrian Arab Rep.	—	—	—	35–49.9*

The 2022 GHI scores less than 5, collectively ranked 1–17[2]

■ = low ☐ = moderate ☐ = serious ☐ = alarming ■ = extremely alarming

— = Data are not available or not presented. Some countries did not exist in their present borders in the given year or reference period.

Note: As always, rankings and index scores from this table cannot be accurately compared to rankings and index scores from previous reports (see Appendix A).

For the 2022 GHI report, data were assessed for 136 countries. Out of these, there were sufficient data to calculate 2022 GHI scores for and rank 121 countries (by way of comparison, 116 countries were ranked in the 2021 report).

* For 15 countries, individual scores could not be calculated and ranks could not be determined owing to lack of data. Where possible, these countries were provisionally designated by severity: 4 as serious and 4 as alarming. For 7 countries, provisional designations could not be established (see Table A.3 in Appendix A).

[1] Ranked according to 2022 GHI scores. Countries that have identical 2022 scores are given the same ranking (for example, Costa Rica and United Arab Emirates are both ranked 18th).

[2] The 17 countries with 2022 GHI scores of less than 5 are not assigned individual ranks, but rather are collectively ranked 1–17. Differences between their scores are minimal.

FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Guest essay by **Danielle Resnick**

Brookings Institution and International Food Policy Research Institute

Within a global food system that has fallen short of sustainably ending hunger, it is important to look at food system governance at the local level, where citizens are finding innovative ways to hold decision makers accountable for addressing food and nutrition insecurity.

Why Local Food Systems Governance Matters

Though transforming food systems ultimately requires interventions at multiple levels, a greater focus on local governance of food systems is warranted for several reasons. Natural resource management practices, farming and livestock-rearing methods, and food preferences are often grounded in local cultural traditions, historical experiences, and agroecological conditions. Furthermore, the trend toward decentralizing government functions over the past 20 years has given local governments greater political autonomy and functional authority over key elements of food systems. As the world urbanizes and cities demonstrate their own unique food security challenges, mayors and municipal councils have become more influential in transnational development networks. A local lens can also help reveal whether and how national food system priorities, which may be influenced by food corporations and agribusinesses, actually reflect local needs and preferences. Finally, a local approach is particularly necessary in fragile states where—owing to ongoing conflict, weak capacity, or both—national governments are unable to exert power, authority, or legitimacy across their territory.

When adopting a local perspective, however, it is important to remember that the same tools for participation and accountability cannot be used everywhere. The tools for engaging citizens and promoting accountability need to be appropriate to the context—that is, the community's degree of local government autonomy, the degree of freedom of speech and association available to citizens, and the level of government fragility.

Bringing Communities into Food Systems Governance

There are a number of ways communities can engage at the local level to improve accountability for food and nutrition security outcomes. One example is the use of data and technology to track performance at the local level. Another consists of local platforms that bring many stakeholders together to contribute their perspectives on food system challenges and policy options.

Some communities have found ways to track government budgets and expenditures that affect food and nutrition security. It can be a challenge to get access to these subnational budgetary and expenditure data on nutrition, agriculture, and other food system dimensions, either because they are not publicly available or because the fees required to access them are unaffordable. Yet some local actors have overcome this information shortfall by, for example, enabling the public to provide information about the implementation of government projects in their communities.

Another approach focuses on incentivizing local governments to perform better through peer comparisons, such as scorecards generated by citizens and service providers. Several initiatives have started developing such tools jointly with local governments, with opportunities for feedback and refinement. Such scorecards are being used to highlight areas of weakness in the provision of government services, which can then be addressed in response to citizens' input.

Multistakeholder platforms, which aim to foster dialogue among a diverse range of constituents, are used to identify areas of concern in local food systems and to gather wide-ranging input on laws and policy options relevant to food systems. There are several concerns about such platforms, including whether they create unrealistic expectations about policy outcomes and whether they simply reinforce existing power asymmetries in the food system. Attuned to these concerns, some platforms ensure participation by civil society, the private sector, and all levels of government. Others seek continuous feedback from participants and adjust the design of the platforms accordingly.

Lessons Learned and the Way Forward

The experiences of various communities and civil society organizations with using performance tracking and multistakeholder platforms suggest several successes while also providing key lessons.

First, local governments often have fewer resources and technical staff than their central government counterparts. Given the wide diversity of local government settings, it is important to ensure that governance efforts are well matched to conditions and capacities on the ground and to be realistic about the replicability of such tools.

Second, local leadership is pivotal to the sustainability of local interventions. This leadership can be exercised by motivated local authorities or by "champions" outside of government.

Third, those local communities with the worst hunger have the most to gain from improved accountability. However, owing to weak or poor governance, high levels of displacement, and a lack of security, any initiatives to enhance accountability will encounter a greater risk of failure. Development partners need to be prepared for this potential trade-off, adopting a sufficiently long timeline and flexible funding arrangements.

The local milieu—whether neighborhood, district, or municipality—remains the main level at which citizens engage with the state and where they are most directly affected by food policy and service delivery performance. Harnessing their experiences and mobilizing their voices are therefore essential for meaningful food systems transformation that benefits all people, especially the most vulnerable.

Note: The views expressed in the guest essay are those of the author. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Welthungerhilfe or Concern Worldwide.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2022 GHI reflects both the scandal of *alarming* hunger in too many countries across the world as well as the changing trajectory in countries where decades of progress in tackling hunger is being eroded. These recommendations highlight the need to respond to current emergencies while transforming food systems so they are more equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient—and thus are able to help avert future crises.

1 PUT INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AT THE CENTER OF EFFORTS TO TRANSFORM FOOD SYSTEMS.

→ Governments must respect, protect, and fulfill the right to food, which should be enshrined in national law and supported by mechanisms for redressing grievances. All actors, from citizens to regional and international organizations to courts at all levels, should contribute to holding governments accountable.

→ It is vital that governments strengthen inclusive coordination of food and nutrition policies at all levels. In particular, government planning and budgeting processes should take into account existing power imbalances and prioritize the voices of the most vulnerable and crisis-affected groups and constituencies. Support must be directed to inclusive food governance bodies, such as food councils and other multi-actor platforms.

→ Governments must review, implement, and monitor their food systems commitments, including the national pathways launched at the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, in an inclusive way and with an emphasis on accountability and governance at all levels.

→ At the global level, governments should strengthen the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) so that it can deliver on its mandate as the central multilateral, inclusive global policy coordination platform.

2 ENSURE CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION, ACTION, AND OVERSIGHT, AND CONSIDER THE CONTEXT.

→ Stakeholders at all governance levels must harness local voices and capacities. Communities, civil society organizations, small producers, farmers, and indigenous groups, with their local knowledge and lived experiences, should shape how access to nutritious food is governed; their capacities and good practices should be supported, including in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

→ Strong local leadership is pivotal to the sustainability of local food systems interventions and should be fostered by, for example, educating local officials or encouraging local champions—especially women.

→ To enable oversight, governments and development partners need to raise citizens' awareness of their entitlements and of pathways to food and nutrition security. Citizens require a clear understanding of food systems activities and relevant processes, as well as guaranteed access to data and information, so they can track government performance and enforce their rights.

→ Efforts to strengthen governance must be tailored to conditions and capacities on the ground, given the diversity of local government settings. National governments should devolve responsibilities to lower administrative units and raise and allocate resources that enable local authorities to understand and carry out their responsibilities for local food and nutrition security.

3 SCALE UP RESOURCES FOR HUMANITARIAN NEEDS WHILE TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS TO MAKE THEM RESILIENT TO SHOCKS.

→ The international community needs to mobilize greater public support, increased investment, and more diverse sources of funding in order to meet escalating humanitarian needs while scaling up essential resilience-building efforts. The 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) and subsequent international fora must deliver commitments to accelerate food system transformation for all.

→ In countries suffering from protracted crises, governments and development partners must use early warning systems and flexible contingency funds to anticipate shocks and quickly respond to them. Initiatives such as the Global Network Against Food Crises should receive more resources and support to ensure earlier responses using evidence-based interventions.

→ Against the backdrop of global food security pressures, governments should avoid ad hoc reactions such as export restrictions. Rather, they should consider the use of food import facilities to ensure that food price increases do not lead to increased hunger, social unrest, or conflict.

→ In situations of conflict, actors involved in humanitarian, development, and peace-building activities must come together to jointly analyze and respond to the needs of conflict-affected people. This approach will link the practical management of people's immediate needs with attention to their long-term livelihood needs while promoting reconciliation and peace building.