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FAO'S EARLY WARNING – EARLY ACTION SYSTEM

› A NEW FOCUS ON RESPONDING TO EARLY WARNINGS

The challenge of triggering early actions in response to early warnings has received renewed focus in the past few years. Humanitarian and development partners have better understood the need – and the way – to take action before a crisis has escalated into an emergency. And it's indeed a wise investment: stepping in early to take action reduces both disaster losses and the costs of emergency response.

› OUR OBJECTIVE

FAO is developing an Early Warning – Early Action System to translate warnings into anticipatory actions to reduce disaster impacts. It focuses on consolidating available forecasting information and putting plans in place to make sure we act when a warning is at hand.

› HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

The Early Warning – Early Action System works at two levels, global and national.

GLOBAL – FAO develops a quarterly Early Warning – Early Action report with a list of countries at high-risk of food insecurity. Besides giving warnings, the report includes recommended early actions to take. If threats are imminent, special alerts are published.

NATIONAL – FAO is working closely with national authorities to establish early warning systems and to develop indicators and evidence-based triggers for prompt action. Early action plans are also being drafted so they can swiftly be put in place as soon as a trigger is reached.

A pilot system is running for the 2015–2016 El Niño event. This will be followed up with a lessons learned review and a cost-benefit analysis which will further strengthen the case for investing in early action.

› HAZARDS

The Early Warning – Early Action System guides actions in response to a range of hazards which are crucial to FAO's areas of work – agriculture, food security and nutrition:

- natural disasters;
- food chain emergencies such as those caused by plant pest or animal disease;
- socio-economic crises like high food prices;
- conflicts.

› EARLY ACTION FINANCING

FAO is setting up a new financing mechanism of around USD 40 million so that early actions can quickly and efficiently be taken. Once pre-defined triggers have been reached, funds will be rapidly released to implement country-level Early Action Plans.



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