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Promoting resiliency for at risk populations: lessons learned from recent experience in Somalia

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Abstract

“Resilience” is defined as the ability of a system to anticipate, resist and/or recover from stresses or shocks in ways that preserve integrity and do not deepen vulnerability. This includes both the ability to withstand threats and the ability to adapt to new options if necessary. Since late 2011, FAO Somalia, UNICEF Somalia and WFP Somalia have joined efforts to promote a medium-term strategy to enhance household and community resilience in Somalia. The objectives of this strategy for the three agencies are to better align programmes and to coordinate interventions to bring about more resilient outcomes for beneficiaries.

This paper reviews the rationale and motivation for adopting a joint strategy on household and community resilience and presents some of the early lessons the organizations have learnt from this ongoing experience. An analysis of the relevance of resilience strategies in the context of Somalia is followed by an outline of the key strategic changes proposed under the FAO–UNICEF–WFP strategy and of the process adopted by the three agencies for moving towards concrete implementation of the strategy on the ground. The last section of the paper provides an account of the emerging challenges and opportunities for realizing the resilience strategy in Somalia in the future.

Introduction

There is growing recognition amongst government, donor and international analysts that the problems faced in Somalia require different and more integrated responses than those applied elsewhere. Somalia has one of the world's longest-lasting protracted crises. This is manifested in conflict, an extensive breakdown of livelihoods and very little institutional capacity to respond, particularly when these structural constraints are magnified by natural disasters such as drought. It is now widely acknowledged that ad hoc and short-term responses fail to address the underlying causes of the crises. Increasingly, there are calls for more sustainable and preventative approaches that would focus on the underlying causes of individual and household vulnerability, including political instability, conflict, inadequate infrastructure, poor and unreliable service delivery, ecosystem degradation and natural and economic shocks.

As a result, over the last five years humanitarian and development practitioners have been paying increasing attention to the idea that ways must be found to enhance local resilience – the ability of an individual/household/community to withstand shocks and stresses or to adapt to new options in a changing environment. This emerging consensus on the need to focus on resilience is grounded on longstanding economic analysis of household-level vulnerability and risk management strategies. It also stems from the structural trends in development policy observed since the 2008 food-price crisis that have put both food security and countries in protracted crises very high on the international policy agenda. Moreover, the 2011 Horn of Africa (HoA) crisis was perceived to be due, in part, to pre-existing widespread food insecurity and livelihood erosion and the failure of the international community to help populations withstand shocks in years prior to the drought. This triggered even more attention and political momentum for resilience-based approaches.

In late 2011, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) joined forces in the development and adoption of a joint strategy on community resilience for Somalia. Drawing on household risk management, sustainable livelihoods and disaster risk reduction models, the strategy proposes a comprehensive approach to support Somalis exposed to the ongoing protracted crisis. This approach is based on community initiatives, supported by the concerted interventions of multistakeholder groups, both humanitarian and development. The strategy aims at delivering three integrated and complementary outcomes that provide the foundation to enhance household and community resilience – enhanced productive sectors, enhanced basic services and a minimal social protection mechanism. This approach builds on the comparative advantages of the three agencies in terms of sectoral competence across these three areas, their field presence and their longstanding engagement with – and understanding – of Somali livelihoods.

Implementation of the strategy is not done through a joint programme, because each agency has its own way of operating; rather, the participating agencies align their programming within the strategy and pursue enhanced coordination mechanisms based on a common information sharing platform. The three agencies have established a step-by-step process for implementing the strategy: they carry out joint assessments to identify local resilience frameworks, coordinate field interventions and jointly engage in monitoring and evaluation. In presenting the strategy to the international community we have three aims: to offer strategic and institutional learning; to engage larger coalitions of actors able to support or facilitate the process of building local resilience in Somalia; and to further mainstream planning and programming for enhanced resilience into humanitarian and development practice.

In this paper, the three agencies discuss the rationale, objectives and lessons learnt from their ongoing experience of developing and promoting a resilience strategy for Somali households and communities. Section 1 presents the rationale and the drivers for prioritizing resilience in the context of countries in protracted crises and in Somalia. Section 2 presents the resilience strategy of the three agencies and reviews the key strategic innovations that it hopes to bring. Section 3 focuses on the steps taken for moving from the strategy towards its implementation. Section 4 concludes with some of the emerging opportunities and challenges for external aid agencies in taking the approach on resilience forward.

1. The case for prioritizing resilience in the protracted crisis context of Somalia

Broadly speaking, resilience is: “the measure of a system’s ability to withstand stresses and shocks, that is, its ability to persist in an uncertain world” (Alinovi et al., 2010). It can be defined as the ability to anticipate, resist, absorb and recover from stresses or shocks in ways that preserve integrity and do not deepen vulnerability. This includes the abilities to withstand threats and to adapt if necessary to new options during crises. When households, communities and networks for goods and services are resilient, people realize positive livelihood outcomes – sufficient income, food security, safety, proper nutrition, good health etc. – and ecosystems are preserved and protected.

Resilience in Somalia and the failures of the international community

More than other societies, Somalis rely on their resilience as individuals, households and communities to protect their lives and livelihoods. Due to the lack of a formal state and effective governance system, Somalia is characterized by a quasi-absence of reliable public systems and inequity of access to private systems that provide support, expertise and protection to address the root causes of food and livelihood insecurity (see Box 1). In the absence of a functioning state or a robust civil society, crisis management today in Somalia falls principally to the international community (Lautze et al., 2012), i.e. UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations working principally with and through “implementing partners,” i.e. humanitarian subcontractors.

The people of Somalia have been remarkably resilient at many levels considering the protracted challenges that have affected the country. This resiliency is grounded in determination, entrepreneurialism and mobility and is buoyed by communities of solidarity that span the local to the international, including clans, the private sector and an engaged, robust and generous diaspora. However, resilience varies by gender, age and livelihood group.

The degree of resiliency is challenged by sustained and multiple threats, which one minister neatly summarized as “war, weather and weak governance and economy”. The famine of 2011 starkly illustrated how shocks overwhelm the resiliency of the poorest or most marginalized, leading to intolerable outcomes of destitution, displacement, hunger, illness, death and the breakdown of families and communities.

Box 1. Factors causing vulnerability in Somalia

- *Political instability and violent conflict* – governance failures, institutional breakdown, terrorism, warlordism, piracy, lack of individual and communal safety.
- *Deterioration of infrastructure* – negatively impacts the economy and reduces productivity and production due to disruption of services and limited access to supply centres and markets.
- *Poor quality, inadequate and unreliable delivery of services* – including agricultural extension and skills building, health, education and water services.
- *Skilled labour shortages* – caused by loss of talent abroad and a 20-year decline in education and training.
- *Massive displacement of people* – driven by conflict and natural disaster, increasing pressure on local natural resources, intensified overuse and degradation, whilst aggravating tensions with host communities and pressure over land, resources and services in urban centres.
- *Environmental degradation* – poorly managed and unprotected soils, water, grasslands, forests and fisheries, leading to severe degradation of natural assets, processes accelerated by reliance on charcoal for fuel and income.
- *Drought and climate variability* – repeatedly expose populations to shocks, with associated destitution and reliance on negative and irreversible coping strategies.
- *Economic shocks* – food price volatility, changes in terms of trade etc.

For decades, the threats and associated failures of resilience (natural, political, social and economic) have been addressed principally through two paradigms: humanitarian assistance and, more recently, state-building and stabilization. While these efforts are crucial, it has become increasingly clear that they have been insufficient to build the capacity of Somali populations to withstand shocks in a sustainable manner. The delayed response to the crisis warnings issued from 2010 starkly demonstrated the limits of the international humanitarian community to respond in time to a looming humanitarian crisis (Lautze et al., 2012). It is notable that resources for Somalia flowed more rapidly once famine had been declared. At the same time, the crisis highlighted the inadequacy of efforts in the years prior to the crisis to build people's resilience to future and recurrent shocks (USAID, 2012).

The repeated failures of the collective responses to emergencies highlight that current flows of international assistance, which display a clear separation between humanitarian and development streams, fall short of addressing the complex patterns of acute and chronic vulnerabilities that characterize countries in protracted crisis (FAO, 2010), including recurrent crisis events. The need to address both the immediate symptoms and the more structural causes of vulnerability is ever clearer today, as the growing frequency and severity of natural disasters linked to climate change (droughts, floods etc.) also exacerbate the underlying factors of vulnerability, namely, poverty, degraded natural resource bases, inadequate physical infrastructure, conflict/insecurity and ineffective governance (Frankenberger et al., 2012).

The 2011 HoA crisis and calls for resilience

Governments, academics and practitioners, on both humanitarian and development sides, now increasingly recognize that specific solutions are needed in protracted crisis contexts to enable at-risk populations to withstand shocks and broaden abilities to adapt to changing conditions. Resilience approaches are seen as a promising way to address those goals, as they entail an emphasis on the reduction and management of risks rather than reliance on crisis response

alone and on enhanced investments in building resources – productive, human, social, natural and financial – locally within households and communities.

Regional drought emergencies in the HoA in 1999–2000, 2002–03, 2005–06, and 2008–09 helped create the consensus on the need for stepped-up resilience programming. However, with few exceptions, the drive towards resilience has been lost once the crisis has abated. It is notable that Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) emerged after the 2002–03 crisis, and in the words of the Government of Ethiopia was designed to catalyze "a gradual shift away from a system dominated by emergency humanitarian aid to productive safety net system resources via multi-year framework" (IDS and INDAK, 2006). In other words, Ethiopia sought to facilitate resilience through a predictable, timely, safety net that will insure against risk and enable beneficiaries to move into activities with a higher return or higher productivity (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2011).

The more recent humanitarian crises in the Sahel and the HoA (2010–11) marked another milestone in bringing resilience approaches to the forefront of the debate, but were also a turning point in gathering more broad-based, definitive – and hopefully more sustainable – political support for resilience within the international community, and especially from donors. The renewed interest in resilience has translated into the adoption of resilience-based, long-term policy and programming frameworks from bilateral/multilateral donors including development banks:

- For Somalia alone, several donors, including an increasing number of "development" programmes, are now turning their attention to the resilience agenda. The United States, for example, recently issued a "call for change" in building resilience to foster growth in the HoA, while the African Development Bank is to invest several million dollars in a four-year programme geared towards resilience in several regions of Somalia.
- Regional donor initiatives are also gaining important momentum. Notably, the European Union (EU) launched its SHARE initiative, "Supporting Horn of Africa Resilience", a long-term strategy (2012–20) that is intended to become one of the main vehicles for EU assistance to the HoA. The European Commission is combining its humanitarian assets (aimed at saving lives in the crisis) and its long-term development capabilities and directing both towards removing the root causes of food crises, with the goal being to prevent their recurrence.
- On the institutional side, the Joint IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) Ministerial and High-Level Development Partners Meeting on Drought Resilience in the Horn of Africa established a platform for promoting a common framework for risk, resilience and growth both at regional and national levels. The initiative has the potential to deliver "a coherent and sustainable institutional framework for effectively promoting resilience in the HOA".
- Financial instruments are also beginning to evolve in the same direction. Interestingly, the DFID Somalia Stability Fund's focus has moved from political stability to local community development.

All of the above has fostered unprecedented political momentum for prioritizing resilience. At the operational level, stand-alone resilience initiatives for the HoA region/countries have emerged in parallel with these institutional processes. Besides the FAO–UNICEF–WFP initiative for Somalia – to which we dedicate the rest of this paper – a consortium of nine NGOs coordinated by World Vision set up a regional initiative on resilience, based on partner NGOs' best practices. The consortium initiative targets five countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda. After elaborating their strategic approaches in late 2011/early 2012, both

the three-agency Somalia initiative and the NGO consortium regional initiative aim at moving towards actual implementation of their resilience programme(s) starting September 2012. Both initiatives are also starting to identify areas for collaboration (see section 3), while FAO, UNICEF and WFP also maintain engagement with other key partners on resilience.

Structural trends and the emerging consensus on resilience

A consensus on resilience is emerging in the international assistance debate in 2010–12 as a result of the progressive and structural changes that occurred in both economic research and the development agenda over the past 5 to 10 years.

Conceptually, resilience had been at the centre of discussions in the poverty and household microeconomics literature over the past 10 years. The discourse recognized that reducing vulnerability – a combination of exposure to risk and the ability to manage risk (resilience) – occupies a central place in achieving pro-poor economic growth (Devereux, 2001; Sabates Wheeler and Haddad, 2005). Starting in 2005, pioneering work highlighted the importance of long-term vulnerability and resilience for food security (Pingali et al., 2005).

Concepts of household risk management combined with disaster risk reduction and sustainable livelihoods models highlighted the conceptual linkages between structural constraints, immediate threats, households' adaptive capacity and food security/livelihood/environmental security outcomes (Frankenberger et al., 2012). One of the seminal analytical works on resilience (see Alinovi et al., 2009, 2010) explains that households differ in their resilience depending on the options available to them to make a living at a given point in time, including its assets, and access to income-generating activities, public services and social safety nets. It also depends critically on the household's ability to adapt to changing conditions (adaptive capacity).

Changes in the global policy agenda in favour of agriculture and food security were also of particular consequence in bringing resilience forward in the international debate. The 2008 food price crisis and related commodity price volatility have re-emphasized the importance of agriculture and food security for development and the need for resilience in the face of price volatility. Additionally, 2010 saw the international community begin to focus particular attention on the specific constraints to achieving food security and poverty reduction in countries characterized by long or complex crises. Key milestones in this process include the publication of *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2010, Addressing food insecurity in protracted crises* (FAO, 2010, a report prepared jointly with WFP) and *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, security and development* (World Bank, 2011).

As a result there is growing agreement within both the humanitarian and the development communities that protracted crises require long-term and preventive investments to address the underlying causes of chronic vulnerability and that prioritizing resilience is of particular importance in these contexts for ensuring household food security, livelihood security and ecosystem protection. FAO (2010) goes further, making the case for transcending the artificial divide between relief and development, i.e. to reach greater convergence between humanitarian and development approaches in crisis contexts so that short-term and long-term interventions overlap in a "contiguuum" (i.e. convergence and synergy among interventions) rather than a continuum (i.e. a sequence of interventions).

2. The FAO–UNICEF–WFP resilience strategy: objectives and changes

Recognizing the nature of vulnerability and shocks in the context of Somalia and acknowledging the breadth of opportunities for building household and community resilience in this environment, in late 2011 FAO, UNICEF and WFP combined their efforts to promote a medium-term strategy focused on enhancing local resiliency and began alignment of their programmes and interventions in Somalia.

As emphasized in the strategy and by the growing number of other promoters of resilience, resilience approaches call for a paradigm shift in strategies and practices. They demand holistic, cross-sectoral and collaborative approaches that are supported by multistakeholder coalitions of humanitarian, development and investment organizations; long-term and sustained commitments supported by multiyear funding; and tailored approaches that account for local resilience patterns/constraints, the local institutional context and the existing mandates and capacities of the facilitators of resilience (FAO/UNICEF/WFP, 2012).

This section highlights the objectives and some of the strategic orientations proposed in the FAO–UNICEF–WFP resilience strategy.

The building blocks of the joint resilience strategy

In the FAO–UNICEF–WFP strategy, the concept of “enhancing resilience” refers to “the concerted actions that will help at-risk Somali society cope with crises on the basis of community initiatives”. The strategy recognizes that enhanced household and community resilience can be achieved only through multiyear initiatives designed to strengthen asset bases, improve access to services – public, private, communal –, create economic opportunities through livelihood diversification and intensification, deepen human and social capital and ensure basic needs are met for the seasonally-at-risk. The approach is broken down into three “building blocks”, or resilience outcomes, to which several stakeholders contribute (see Anonymous, 2012):

1. **Strengthen productive sectors to enhance household income:** For the various livelihoods types (pastoralism, agropastoralism, farming, riverine, fishing, and urban), this includes deepening and improving access of working households to physical assets for production, generating increased output with fewer inputs through enhanced technologies, improving access to decent employment opportunities, diversifying production and income sources, and expanding access to and improving function of market systems and market information.
2. **Enhance basic services to protect human capital:** This focuses on increasing the quality, reliability and responsiveness of key services and systems and services that enhance people’s human capital, including good health, adequate nutrition and education, safety and adequate skills. This includes basic services (health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and protection), support services (such as agricultural extension and veterinary services) and information and knowledge management for early warning/planning.
3. **Promote predictable safety nets to sustain basic needs of the chronically-at-risk/destitute (minimum social protection):** This entails moving beyond the current norm of discontinuous cycles of short-term assistance to approaches that build resilience by providing a predictable level of assistance to those suffering from long-term destitution and to households that are seasonally at risk on a recurrent basis. Based on thorough understanding of the diverse and multidimensional risks faced by households and communities, predictable safety nets will be designed to respond to these risks and promote equity. This “floor” in well-being provided by

predictable safety nets enables households to take on prudent risks such as new income-generating activities and enables them to maintain and build human capital through access to basic services.

All three outcomes are important for enhancing and protecting the resources on which people draw to anticipate, accommodate, adjust to and recover from shocks. The enabling environment for the strategy includes improved knowledge management (assessment, monitoring and evaluation of household/community resilience and vulnerability) as well as an overarching policy and regulatory framework for effective service delivery in each sector. Finally, local governance and local institutional development play a cross-cutting, supporting role and must be promoted with households, communities, civil society organizations and the private sector.

Key innovations

While the resilience strategy draws upon well-known “ingredients” to enhance food and livelihood security (broadly speaking, community- and livelihood-based approaches), it strives to apply a new “recipe” to local development for food security enhancement. At least four important innovations are proposed in the strategy:

1. **From crisis response to crisis prevention:** the FAO–UNICEF–WFP strategy, like other resilience approaches, recognizes the need to focus on building the capacities of individuals and households in ways that allow them to avoid crises. This entails an emphasis (in resources and efforts) on long-term preventive approaches, including climate-change mitigation/adaptation, disaster risk reduction, diversification of livelihoods, social protection and gender equity (Frankenberger et al., 2012). This preventive, long-term, developmental approach focused on resilience aims at raising income, deepening human capital and addressing basic needs. (See Box 2 for an example focused on agropastoralist livelihood zones.) Importantly, the provision of economic opportunities, predictable cash transfers and capacity-building/vocational training at household and community level holds great promise for establishing bottom-up peacebuilding processes in the failed governance system of Somalia. In addition, conflict sensitivity will be particularly addressed, guided in part by local implementing partners. Approaches to this are very context specific but might include, for instance, static health, water and education facilities to be placed, after careful mapping with communities and partners, in locations that minimize the risk of conflict over these resources; or disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding components to be integrated, where appropriate, into school curricula and community-level information campaigns.

Box 2. Preventing crises through resilience approaches: the example of agropastoralist populations

The agropastoralist livelihood zones were the zones hit hardest during the 2011 famine and historically tend to be areas that deteriorate most rapidly during significant shocks. Much is unknown about why these areas are so prone to shocks, which increases the need for consultation with those affected and assessment of the existing situation. Factors to consider include reduced mobility (particularly when conflict arises), fewer assets due to smaller herd sizes and dependency on external labour opportunities for income.

In such contexts, the three building blocks of the strategy would focus on the following areas:

- Increasing and diversifying the range of productive assets available to households, promoting improved agricultural practices, including farm diversification to increase production of nutritious and

high-value crops, horticulture and livestock, improved market access, and value addition. Together these foster more diverse livelihood strategies and income sources that offer higher income potential. Development of infrastructure to foster intensified local production and/or improve market access could be supported through public works programmes that can be scaled up seasonally to develop, for instance, water points, market facilities and community irrigation.

- Provision of basic services embraces a range of local services including access to safe drinking water, sanitation, agricultural extension services and farmer field schools to increase adoption of technology (improved seeds, fertilizer, small machinery, etc.) and community-based health and nutrition services. Conditional transfers can support access to health clinic services and schooling.
- Establishment of predictable safety nets to cover basic needs, including in times of significant shocks. These will be used to put a “floor” under basic well-being that enables households to take on prudent risk, such as new livelihood strategies, knowing that their basic needs are covered. Safety net instruments will also be structured to support delivery of the other two building blocks.

2. **Empowering Somali people as providers of first resort for crisis mitigation:** This notion is developed in Lautze et al. (2012) looking at crisis response and management in the case of Somalia. The argument is that in the quasi-total absence of a recognizable system of first resort providers, resources and services should be first designed for and accessible to those directly affected by shocks – individuals, households, communities – so that in-country resources can be accessed and organized in the early stage of an evolving threat in order to mitigate or avert a crisis. Empowering communities as providers of first resort will avoid crisis mitigation falling on the international assistance community, which is expected to act, rather, as the provider of last resort. Entry points include, for instance, embedding early warning, market monitoring and contingency planning functions primarily within local communities, and establishing community-based health and nutrition services for humans, and veterinary and extension services for livestock, building on the community health-/animal health-worker model. Establishing delivery of many services and promoting knowledge sharing within the community ensures that the service and knowledge stays with the community if it moves to avoid conflict, unrest or natural disaster. The community is thus not so dependent on international assistance when crisis strikes.

3. **Promoting demand-driven approaches for sustainable outcomes:** The focus on local resilience is on making it work for the people of Somalia using community approaches, based on the recognition that communities or households are best positioned to observe, learn from, experiment with and respond to their changing environment (IRWG, 2012). The comprehensive resilience strategy emphasizes a demand-driven and bottom-up approach to local development. For basic services, for instance, instead of delivering assistance in a top-down manner at the level of the service facility (e.g. water point, health/nutrition centre or school), the resilience approach suggests focusing first on households’ demand for services and on the available options for local service delivery (whether public, private or community based), in order to eventually improve the availability, quality and reliability of the service at the facility level. It also includes various options for ensuring that services, skills and technical capacities – e.g. in education, human and animal health and nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene technology – are developed in such a way that they are accessible to mobile populations. For example, the services, skills and technical capacities may be embedded in the communities such that when communities move, e.g. pastoralist communities, their services move with them. Alternatively, services and facilities may be placed along known migration routes. Box 3 gives an example of resilience-based activities for pastoralists. Finally, joint planning with communities will be done through community consultations and other forms of participation that seek to represent all livelihood and demographic groups. This will precede community involvement at all stages of programming:

enhancement of basic services will be done through the development of community-based capacities (including technical and professional skills) and community involvement in monitoring will be done to increase accountability.

Box 3. Enhancing resources and services locally for vulnerable populations: the example of the livestock way stations

Pastoralist livelihoods zones require interventions both at the settlement level and along the livestock migration routes, at key way stations, each of which presents particular opportunities for enhancing local resilience.

At livestock way stations (stations along livestock trade routes), the resilience strategy will employ the three building blocks of the strategy to enhance income and access to essential services for mobile pastoralist communities. It will focus primarily on i) provision of animal and human health and nutrition services (health and veterinary extension workers; hygiene and nutrition management and preventative care) and ii) provision of essential inputs for animal nutrition (water harvesting and fodder production, contingency boreholes and sanitation) and animal health (development of cold-chain facilities/management for drugs and vaccines). To exploit further local opportunities, the strategy will look into enhancing local market access (building market facilities for fodder and animals, rehabilitation of feeder roads and enhancing market information) and enhancing access to [mobile] education services for pastoralist communities.

Critically, the strategy will enhance the linkages with surrounding settlements to achieve greater synergies and provide opportunities for local economic and social development. The focus will include areas such as i) improvements in community-based health and nutrition services (including surveillance) through community-health workers working at the settlements/way stations; ii) creation of labour opportunities through seasonal employment opportunities (cash or food for work) that meet the needs of the community and the way stations (e.g. fodder production, building water-harvesting infrastructure, way-station maintenance/cleaning); iii) enhancement of services at health centres and schools; and iv) improving access to sustainable water supplies (boreholes, water harvesting) and sanitation.

4. **Enhancing local synergies and cross-sectoral approaches:** The comprehensive concept of resilience offers the opportunity to move away from traditional sectoral approaches operating in silos (separately), and enhance both sectoral and operational synergies based on the three building blocks of the strategy (see Box 3 above on pastoralists' livelihood zones for an example of enhanced linkages between neighbouring communities and across economic activities and services). In the case of water (a sector, a natural resource, an input for production, an asset etc.), for instance, resilience-based interventions could promote the following related activities concomitantly: construction of water infrastructure through short-term labour schemes (cash or food for work); enhanced linkages with surrounding settlements or economic activities to build greater synergies in access to water for humans, animals or agriculture; support to financial access to water for the destitute; and local management (e.g. community based) of both water infrastructure and water resources. Such linkages will emphasize access to safe water for food security and nutrition. Developing an enhanced cross-sectoral approach requires a) an in-depth assessment of local needs to identify a locally relevant response package to resilience challenges and b) joint planning, involving all stakeholders and sectors, of a coherent sequence of activities for improving households' and communities' access to safe drinking water and to water for agriculture/livestock. (See next section on the implementation process.)

3. The process for moving from strategy to implementation

3.1 The partnership approach

The partnership between FAO, UNICEF and WFP originated because the three organizations recognized that all three building blocks of the strategy – enhanced productive sectors, enhanced basic services, and minimal social protection – must be sustained in order to strengthen and enhance community and household resilience. Between them, the three agencies have the necessary leverage to realize the strategy, i.e. address resilience effectively through multisectoral approaches (see Box 4).

At the same time, inter-UN agency operations can be difficult because the agencies have different management structures and systems, which may not easily blend. The UN system is designed such that each agency has a unique mandate, and while the goal is for the coverage of those mandates to be comprehensive it tends to result in agencies operating within distinct silos and failing to capture potential synergies in their work. There can be tensions at country level if a multi-agency initiative does not include all UN agencies operating in the country, but such large inter-agency programmes can be cumbersome and difficult to design and put into operation.

The household and community resilience strategy for Somalia has tried to bridge these different issues. It is not a resilience strategy for Somalia as a state, it is a strategy built upon some basic needs at household and community levels that can be put into action and delivered by a relevant group of organizations. The strategy aims to move away from vertical dependency and accountability (within agencies) towards a more horizontal accountability (across agencies) and capture the synergies of joint working. Building accountability downwards to final the beneficiaries of all three agencies is critical to breaking down the silos.

The agencies established an informal partnership to deliver the joint resilience strategy and its outcomes in a coordinated fashion. However, this effort was not exclusionary nor did it establish a parallel institutional platform or process. Rather, the strategy is discussed continuously with the many other stakeholders within the humanitarian and development communities, and it is hoped to engage broader coalitions of facilitators of resilience within these communities while further mainstreaming the approach and the lessons learnt into international aid practice.

The strategic alliance was formed at the end of 2011 and moved rapidly towards the concrete realization of the joint initiative in 2012. In April 2012, the strategy was presented to the Somalia authorities and the international community based in Nairobi, Kenya. In May 2012, practitioners, donors and politicians gathered at the Second Istanbul Somalia Conference (31 May–1 June 2012, Turkey) acknowledged the importance of prioritizing community resilience in Somalia and agreed on the proposed entry points for supporting this area. In July 2012, the agencies provided the donor community with details of the process for moving from strategy towards implementation.

Box 4. FAO's, UNICEF's and WFP's comparative advantages

- The three agencies dominated the crisis response in Somalia in 2011; together, they accounted for 73% of activities funded under the Consolidated Appeals Process. This explains their widespread presence, reach and operational capacity.
- The three organizations have similar statuses/mandates (UN agencies) but complementary sectoral expertise operationalized at household and community levels.
- They also have commonalities and complementarities in upstream and downstream know-how – from policy formulation to on-the-ground implementation, information generation and management to local service provision and capacity-building.
- The work of all three is relevant in both humanitarian and development contexts.
- All have an in-depth knowledge of the Somali context.
- The three organizations benefit from the institutional capacity and linkages within the UN and humanitarian clusters systems, which will support advocacy efforts and can leverage additional partnerships.

The process for implementing the strategy

The three agencies are currently refocusing the modalities of their mutual engagement in practical terms to mainstream resilience into their own programmes, and to take concrete steps towards implementing this strategy. Importantly, the strategy is not translated into a joint programme, to avoid the implementation challenges presented by the different management systems within each agency; rather, the participating agencies are pursuing the strategic alignment of their programmes with the strategy and are seeking new mechanisms to enhance coordination. At the core of the strategy is coordination, sequencing and targeting of a set of multisectoral interventions across the three building blocks of the strategy within specific geographic areas. This requires sophisticated levels of coordination in designing programmes and planning interventions to target and sequence locally relevant packages of solutions that will strengthen the capacities of Somali households and communities over time.

The proposed process for moving from strategy to implementation is as follows: a) align each agency programme with the resilience strategy; b) conduct local planning of activities for effective coordination of interventions; c) enhance common analysis and measurement of resilience outcomes; and d) jointly conduct advocacy and fund-raising efforts.

Steps taken to date in each of these areas are detailed below.

Alignment of agencies' programmes

The three organizations first established a common results framework, under which they have committed to contribute jointly to the proposed pillars of resilience, and with which they will further align their own programming (see Box 5).

Box 5. Alignment of programmes on the resilience strategy

WFP is currently developing a new three-year protracted relief and recovery operation 2013 to 2105 which effectively aligns its activities around the joint strategy and adjusts a number of its approaches.

UNICEF is preparing for a mid-term review of its five-year programme for Somalia to ensure that its equity agenda for children is aligned with the resilience objectives.

FAO is in the process of reviewing its existing programmes to develop a fully-fledged resilience programme, which will form the core of the four-year country programme framework of FAO Somalia. Resilience activities are identified by dividing FAO's current mid-term programme activities (2012–15) into three broad categories: 1) core resilience activities (see below for preliminary selection criteria); 2) supporting activities (upstream activities that are necessary for promoting local resilience though not directly affecting/supporting it); and 3) cross-cutting activities.

The alignment of the agencies on the resilience strategy is subject to the identification of resilience-building activities within existing programmes, separating them from those that are not directly relevant. To do this, a preliminary list of criteria has been identified and submitted to the technical experts/teams within agencies:

1. The activity concerns products or services that are normally (or potentially) prioritized and targeted through community dialogue; OR the activity provides the kind of disaggregated information/analysis that is required to ensure that capacities and vulnerabilities are identified and correctly addressed.
2. The activity provides predictability so populations can take prudent risks.
3. The activity directly reduces risk at the household and communal levels (or it includes mitigation measures against risks).
4. The activity is not exclusively emergency relief.

Joint local planning of interventions

This area represents the initiation of the actual identification and coordination of resilience-building operations. The three agencies have agreed on four initial districts for coordinated implementation, with the aim of significantly scaling-up the approach geographically over the course of the next three years and beyond. The four districts – Dolow, Burao, Odweyne and Ishkushkuban, with the possible addition of Bossaso peri-urban areas – represent a variety of livelihood zones. This permits identification of opportunities for varying modalities of engagement. They were selected based on their accessibility to all the agencies, existing agency-specific activities and a long-term trend analysis of the food security and nutrition situation. A number of possible activities have already been identified for each area and their alignment with the strategy determined.

While the work in the four districts of Somalia will provide examples of how the strategy might be implemented across different regional institutional contexts of Somalia, scaling-up activities will require emphasis on differentiated approaches that take into account the capacities of regional or state authorities and engage with state authorities to the degree possible. While the politically unstable Al-Shabbab-controlled areas of South-Central Somalia cannot be ignored given their high degree of vulnerability and repeated exposure to major shocks including conflict, it will be easier for the agencies to work out the details and move up the learning curve of this new approach initially in more stable contexts, moving toward more challenging contexts later (i.e. Somaliland, then Puntland then South-Central regions).

Information, monitoring and evaluation

The agencies must devise coordinated information and monitoring systems that will support a shared understanding of the needs on the ground and of the progress made. Three information and monitoring and evaluation components have been identified to date:

- **Joint impact assessment of resilience.** This will be led jointly by the three agencies to track overall impact and improve programming. These large-scale surveys may be triangulated using regular smaller-scale household surveys in specific areas and/or for specific activities.
- **Agency-level monitoring of own activities.** However, a common monitoring framework will be established to provide further complementarity where the three agencies operate jointly.
- **Joint baseline survey.** This will serve as a reference for all of the above monitoring and evaluation activities; activities will also be prioritized based on in-depth assessments, including improved community-based consultations.

Advocacy and fund-raising

The three agencies continuously work to complement the authorities in Somalia and work through existing partners and coordination mechanisms. For example, the engagement with the clusters (to date the Somalia Food Security and WASH [Water and Sanitation for Health] clusters) ensures information sharing, and aims at facilitating stakeholders' engagement and consolidation of information in the future. The Somalia initiative and the NGO consortium regional initiative have also started exchanging information and coordinating strategic approaches and seeking opportunities for synergies and coordination of activities on the ground.

Recognizing the importance of predictability and a medium-term approach to achieving the overall goal of the strategy, the three agencies will also advocate with the donor community for more predictable levels of funding with a "crisis modifier" to support scale-up of humanitarian assistance – if and when needed – in order to protect gains made through the implementation of the strategy. Similarly, the three agencies are working with their respective headquarters to advocate for change within the humanitarian framework, i.e. extend the timeframe of the one-year Consolidated Appeals Process to a two- or three-year funding/programmatic window.

4. Lessons Learnt and emerging challenges and opportunities for realizing community resilience in Somalia

Community-based resilience as an opportunity in protracted crises contexts

Local resiliency plays a central role in the achievement of household livelihood, food and nutrition security, and more so in countries in protracted crisis than in other contexts. The majority of the population is reliant on its own resources, but this local resilience can be rapidly and acutely degraded for many households as external shocks undermine adaptive capacities. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the absence of a recognizable state and functional institutions, which undermines support for resilience in all critical areas (delivery of basic services, support for productive sectors and provision of a minimal social protection system).

The centrality of local resilience resources and networks for development provides a strong reason for prioritizing community-based resilience strategies in countries in protracted crisis like

Somalia, or where institutions are weak or governance is poor. In other contexts, when a structured and functional governance system does exist, it is likely that there would be greater space for establishing complex policy/programmatic frameworks to address household exposure to risk, including structured national programmes and policies for disaster risk reduction. In such contexts, community resilience would likely remain a critical strategic component; however, it would be linked into a broader programmatic framework involving several national and external actors and operating at cross-border, national, subnational, community and household levels.

Rather than being a constraint, the remarkable resilience of communities in protracted crises represents an opportunity for the humanitarian and development communities to refocus their strategies and mandates. It holds the promise of a change of model in which individuals, households and communities are empowered as providers of first resort to avert future crises more effectively, in a timely fashion and, importantly, more sustainably. The implication for external assistance providers is to refocus their mandates to become facilitators of local development (Frankenberger et al., 2012), through carefully synchronized preventive short-term and long-term interventions, while also remaining accountable as providers of last resort (Lautze et al., 2012) when community resilience has deteriorated acutely.

Finally, the complex – and moving – geography of governance systems and political forces in Somalia means that the three agencies must be contextually aware. Where local authorities can be engaged – i.e. in Somaliland or in Puntland – resilience strategies should emphasize dialogue with state ministries and integration and alignment with regional development plans. In parallel, efforts to build state capacities must be continued to provide the foundation of further and deeper engagement of authorities to support and assist their most vulnerable populations.

Aligning programmes and capacities on a resilience strategy

The implementation of a resilience strategy raises combined issues of conceptualization and structures. In particular, the international community needs improved frameworks and instruments to articulate the multidimensional aspects of resilience, including the complex and shifting notion of risk. Organizations and stakeholders also need to embark on a whole new way of working that takes a long-term view and is flexible, collaborative (both with partners and with communities) and synchronized between humanitarian and development streams. We summarize some of these challenges as follows:

Programming: partner organizations must identify, within complex and structured programmes, the areas of work that can both complement and enhance one another (DFID, 2011). Experience shows that the exercise of identifying resilience activities within existing programmes is far from straightforward. At the same time it is an opportunity for improving the design and management of those programmes, including moving away from the traditional sectoral approach.

Information and knowledge management: this area is as fundamental for resilience strategies as it is intricate. Agencies need to monitor overall impact on household resilience, possibly using a composite index or a set of proxy indicators. They also must be able to routinely assess and monitor the three building blocks of resilience at both household and outcome levels, rather than at area and output levels. They must be able to monitor medium- to long-term changes in resilience rather than short-term changes in household consumption and to understand

resilience as a dynamic process. Finally, they may need to use less traditional approaches to capture local dynamics more adequately (e.g. conflict and political economy analysis).

Security and access: the strategy has to be implemented within the operational realities of Somalia, taking into account logistical and political restrictions on access to communities and risks to community-based workers and for implementing agencies and partners. This raises particularly significant challenges for implementation as resilience frameworks require close and sustained engagement with local populations, including community-based assessments for a deep understanding of local constraints/opportunities, local targeting of different households and close-up monitoring and evaluation.

Funding: programmatic and funding approaches must seek long-term commitments (6, 10 or even 20 years), have sufficient built-in flexibility to deal with both change and crises and emphasize convergence between short- and longer-term approaches to address the overlapping risks and stresses that affect communities and households. Humanitarian funding must be flexible enough both to support resilience and address the immediate humanitarian imperative. The current political momentum for prioritizing resilience in Somalia, and in the HoA as a whole, provides an extraordinary window of opportunity to support all of these efforts.

The institutional lessons learnt from the Somalia experience

The FAO, UNICEF and WFP partnership demonstrates that resilience strategies can be effectively supported by leveraging the comparative advantages of key humanitarian and development stakeholders, including sectoral expertise, field presence and institutional capacity. The open partnership approach adopted has potential to leverage further expertise through new partners, including those outside the UN system, with an emphasis on comparative advantages across participating organizations.

Strategic coordination is of central importance if we are to exploit comparative advantages. The experience of the three agencies demonstrates that it takes leadership, resources, time, expertise and willingness to compromise to set-up a strong basis for interagency collaboration. Accountability can be enhanced by focusing on beneficiaries' needs and expressed concerns and establishing a strategic framework (joint strategy and common results framework). Finally, this experience also shows that a relatively light but effective step-by-step process can be adopted to facilitate technical consensus and operational coordination. We have identified four key steps in this process:

1. Before getting started, establish a partnership focused on outcomes (i.e. strategic outcomes) rather than on process (i.e. institutional settings). Rather than creating a new institutional process or seeking an existing institutional "home" for the partnership initiative, the FAO–UNICEF–WFP partnership established a light and informal coalition/platform, in which stakeholders primarily focus on the common strategy and related objectives. The pragmatic approach has potential for rapidly enhancing joint accountability (on results rather than process) amongst the participating organizations. It also enables a rapid move from strategy to implementation.
2. As a first step, prioritize agreement of participating organizations on strategic outcomes. In this case, this has been achieved by agreeing on overarching strategic frameworks, namely the joint strategy, the common results framework and the common monitoring framework. This requires the articulation of the various elements and components of resilience into a coherent and flexible strategy that builds on a solid analytical framework and on the comparative advantages of the participating organizations.

3. As a second step, translate the strategy into practice by agreeing upon locally relevant resilience frameworks (Frankenberger et al., 2012). The challenge for identifying localized frameworks for resilience is that organizations must better assess local resilience and build on the opportunities derived from each organization's local capacity, local knowledge and local expertise. This requires transparent sharing of detailed information on the ongoing activities and programmes of each agency at the local level.
4. Parallel to the above, pursue continuous advocacy efforts, leverage additional support (partners, funders etc.), share lessons learnt in order to make space within the debate and practice for the promotion of resilience.

While the experience of the three agencies highlights the benefits of strategic coordination without heavy institutional coordination, including parallel efforts for programming and fund-raising conducted by each agency, this approach needs sustained and synchronized engagement from all partner organizations, including in terms of human and financial capacity. For example, failure of one partner to secure funding for the delivery of a component it is responsible for will undermine success in terms of building resiliency as opposed to delivering individual components.

Conclusion

The critical shift observed with the adoption of the resilience strategy for Somalia is towards longer-term approaches that tackle the root causes of food insecurity. A recent comparative economic analysis of responses to disasters found that early response and resilience-building measures are by far the most cost-effective approaches (Cabot Venton et al., 2012).

This shift builds on a livelihoods approach, which is founded on understanding people's short- and long-term strategies for adapting to their changing environment. This approach also includes more stable and predictable cash transfers, with multiyear resources, including funds to finance public works (Pankhurst, 2009). As demonstrated in the case of large conditional cash transfer or productive safety nets programmes, it is the regularity of predictable payments, over time, that can transform beneficiaries' lives and livelihoods in a sustainable way (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2011). The sustainable transfers allow vulnerable people to support themselves during times of stress or emergency and to increase their adaptive capacity through asset accumulation or livelihoods diversification during times of non-stress conditions (Frankenberger et al., 2012). This is an example of an intervention that enhances resilience to shocks by effectively linking short-term humanitarian and longer-term development outcomes.

Given the specific institutional context of Somalia, with the absence of a reliable state authority, the FAO-UNICEF-WFP strategy highlights the responsibility of the international community to sustain livelihoods, basic services and social safety nets concomitantly and comprehensively to promote household and community resilience. The success of the strategy therefore depends on all building blocks of local resiliency being implemented in a synergistic way by coalitions of stakeholders who agree on essential strategic outcomes. The benefits of this approach are that it enhances transparency and accountability amongst the partners on resilience and opens the dialogue for engaging additional contributions and mainstreaming lessons learnt into development and humanitarian practice.

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