

## FAO's work in Emergencies and Rehabilitation Strategy Note

### 1. Analysis of needs and FAO comparative advantage

There is increasing international recognition of the role of agriculture in emergency response to conflict, civil strife, and disasters complicated by growing populations, rising fuel and food prices, climate change and increased international trade and movement (see Annex). At the same time, the nature of institutional relationships involving FAO is changing. The funding of FAO's work has increased and is becoming more diversified and there is increasing use of pooled funds<sup>1</sup>. The number of UN agencies and NGOs involved in emergency work has increased, creating more competition between agencies as well as incentives to collaborate and cooperate. The ongoing UN reform process increases pressures to "deliver as one" and has increased opportunities and imperatives for coordinating food security actors. At the same time, governments of countries experiencing emergency situations are playing a more assertive role in coordination of external assistance.

FAO has comparative advantages in assisting coordination of international emergency and recovery responses related to agriculture and rural livelihoods at the global, regional and country levels. In addition, FAO has recognised technical expertise allowing for responses to different types of food and agriculture emergencies and different parts of the programme cycle from preparedness, early warning, beneficiary targeting, needs assessment, and relief and sustainable recovery. In this respect FAO continues to have a comparative advantage in comparison to other agencies operating in the same field.

### 2. Overall vision, mission, strategic objective

Vision: In 2018, FAO will play a catalytic role in strengthening the resilience of developing countries and poor men, women and youth to better manage and recover from food and agricultural emergencies.

Mission: Work with governments, civil society organizations, communities and people, to protect before, during and after emergencies the food and livelihood security of those who depend predominantly on agriculture, livestock, forestry or fisheries.

Strategic objective: Effectively respond to food and agriculture threats and emergencies by protecting and enhancing agriculture based livelihoods

Sustained application of effort and expertise to meet this objective throughout the emergency programme cycle will strengthen the links between relief, rehabilitation and development. As such, the strategy for FAO's work in emergencies will make a significant contribution to the current global goals of members by helping to meet food security in difficult conditions, in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts on the environment and is socially and economically sustainable.

### 3. Expected main outcomes

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<sup>1</sup> Numerous country level and New York based pooled funds exist, with multiple donor contributions managed by the UN. In 2007, pooled funds provided one quarter of the record US\$350 million in contributions to FAO's emergency and rehabilitation programme.

The main outcomes of the strategy for FAO's work in emergencies are as follows:

- Stakeholders at global, national and local levels have made more informed decisions based on food and agriculture crisis early warning information provided by FAO through improvement of timeliness and accuracy of communication and building of relevant analytical capacities at country level.
- Governments, civil society and communities are better prepared to respond to food and agricultural emergencies through support to contingency planning in collaboration with WFP and other partners, and by building institutional response capacity and identifying and adapting agricultural practices to respond to extreme climatic events.
- Governments and other stakeholders in food security at national and global level have a deeper and richer understanding of the impact of food and agriculture emergencies on people's lives and livelihoods through expanded roll-out of assessment tools.
- Effective response framework based on livelihood assessment ensured through preparation, funding, coordination and implementation of compelling evidence-based plans of action for rural livelihood recovery.

#### **4. Implementation issues**

Successive evaluations of the work of FAO in emergencies have pointed out the need to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of response by adapting and strengthening administrative, financial and human resource management support at headquarters and in the decentralised offices. Therefore, implementation of the strategy would be accompanied by significant improvements in these areas, building directly on the on-going business process evaluation and the root and branch review. Furthermore, adequate technical capacity has to be assured and integrated into the programme cycle, along with greater team building.

There is a need to improve in collaboration with donors the funding and accounting efficiency and rapidity e.g. through expanding use of the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) and other pooled funding arrangements.

FAO's relationships with the organizations it works with are critical to effectiveness in and around emergencies. The four "pillars" of FAO's global network of relationships are: i) the links with governments in countries requiring assistance; ii) relationships with donors; iii) collaboration with other UN agencies; and iv) partnerships with NGOs. Links with these stakeholders are already strong, but they need to become stronger, e.g. through stand-by partnership agreements with NGOs and technical experts, and to change somewhat in character if FAO is to reach its vision. In addition, opportunities for promoting greater South-South cooperation as well as partnership with the private sector should be explored.

## Annex

Three out of every four poor people in developing countries live in rural areas and most of them depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihoods. It is this agriculture-based population of smallholders, pastoralists, fishers, and landless farm workers and their dependents who constitute the vast majority of the most vulnerable to and affected by conflict and disasters.

In 2008, FAO's involvement in the UN coordinated Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), designed to provide humanitarian assistance to countries affected by protracted crises, will reach 25 million people in 24 countries. However, emergency needs are far greater than those covered by the CAP. At present, there are 36 countries<sup>2</sup> facing food crises that require external assistance. In half of these countries, conflict or civil strife or their legacy is a contributory cause of the crisis. In addition, the number of disasters is increasing, from 100 in 1975 to 400 in 2007, partially due to climate change. In 2007, 200 million people were affected by disasters, of which 140 million by floods and most of the rest by drought. These disasters prompted a record 15 separate Flash Appeals coordinated by the UN. Concurrently, new kinds of complex emergencies are emerging from combinations of increasing natural disasters, growing populations and rising food and fuel prices. Global climate change and increased international trade and movement combine to increase the probability and speed of impact of certain kinds of transboundary diseases and pests, including Avian Influenza and Desert Locusts. HIV/AIDS, described as a "long-wave disaster" is decimating adult populations in rural and urban parts of Africa and increasingly Asia, with dramatic effects on food security and the ability to withstand and recover from frequent shocks.

The consequences of not protecting agriculture-based livelihoods and bolstering self-reliance are increased need for higher cost and unsustainable relief or resort to negative coping strategies, such as selling assets and forced migration, deterioration in human health indicators, and increased risk of conflict and permanent destitution, thereby threatening achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In contrast, timely protection of livelihoods in crisis contexts not only reduces negative impacts but provides entry points for building back better the livelihoods of the rural poor, rather than returning to pre-crisis precariousness.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.fao.org/giews/english/hotspots/index.htm>