



Food and Agriculture
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Changing the way disasters are managed

Linking social protection mechanisms with Early Warning Early Action systems

Climate-driven hazards and conflicts are increasing in intensity and frequency. The impact on local economies, people's lives and their livelihoods has similarly increased. Approximately 8 out of 10 people who are acutely food insecure rely on crops, fisheries, livestock or forestry assets for their survival. However, one crisis can follow another, each time stripping away these hard-earned but limited resources. To safeguard these critical assets, FAO's approach is shifting from a reactive mind-set to one focused on mitigation and prevention.

Social protection and Early Warning Early Action systems are key tools to mitigate risks. In the context of a changing climate, FAO is working towards supporting national governments to build flexible social protection systems to maximize their effectiveness to prevent the negative impact of hazards. To achieve this, FAO is planning to integrate Early Warning Early Action systems into this model – using critical early warning information to act at the right time, before a risk turns into an emergency. Working hand-in-hand, these two modalities can improve how disasters are managed.



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What is social protection?

Social protection comprises a set of policies and programmes that addresses economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty by protecting life and promoting livelihoods. FAO recognizes that scaling-up social protection systems is a strategic priority to enhance resilience of vulnerable populations. Social protection is a key area of work for FAO to build on, as in many countries national programmes already reach significant segments of the population offering great opportunities for FAO programming in rural areas. Additionally, social protection systems are often underpinned by sophisticated structures for targeting and delivering, necessary to provide regular and predictable support to programme participants.

What is Early Warning Early Action?

FAO's Early Warning Early Action system translates early warnings into anticipatory action to intervene at the right time – before a crisis becomes a humanitarian disaster. The system consolidates existing and timely forecasting information and puts together plans to ensure FAO acts when a warning is at hand. Acting early before a disaster has happened or reached its peak is critical – it can save lives and protect livelihoods from the immediate shocks as well as safeguarding longer-term development gains by increasing the resilience of local communities over time.

Since 2016, FAO has protected the livelihoods of more than 80 000 vulnerable farming and herding households across 15 countries. These communities were at the forefront of drought, transboundary animal diseases, harsh winters and forced-migration. The results of acting early have been fruitful: every USD 1 that FAO has invested has generated a return ranging from USD 2.5 in Madagascar to USD 7.1 in Mongolia in avoided disaster losses and added benefits.

Acting early save lives
and protects livelihoods

How can social protection and Early Warning Early Action work together?

Social protection and Early Warning Early Action systems have several important links. When combined together they can provide an effective structure to support vulnerable populations quickly and efficiently ahead of shocks – empowering households to protect their key assets, instead of losing them in the face of a crisis. It can also provide key lessons to national governments to build social protection systems that are risk informed and able to mitigate or prevent the impact of shocks.

Key inter-linkages between the two thematic areas include, but are not limited to:

Early warning and social protection

- Geographical targeting: Determine at-risk areas and adjust provision of social protection programmes when pre-defined thresholds are reached through the early warning system (trigger social protection vertical and horizontal scale-up).
- Design Tweaks: Inform social protection programme design and regularly update system features to

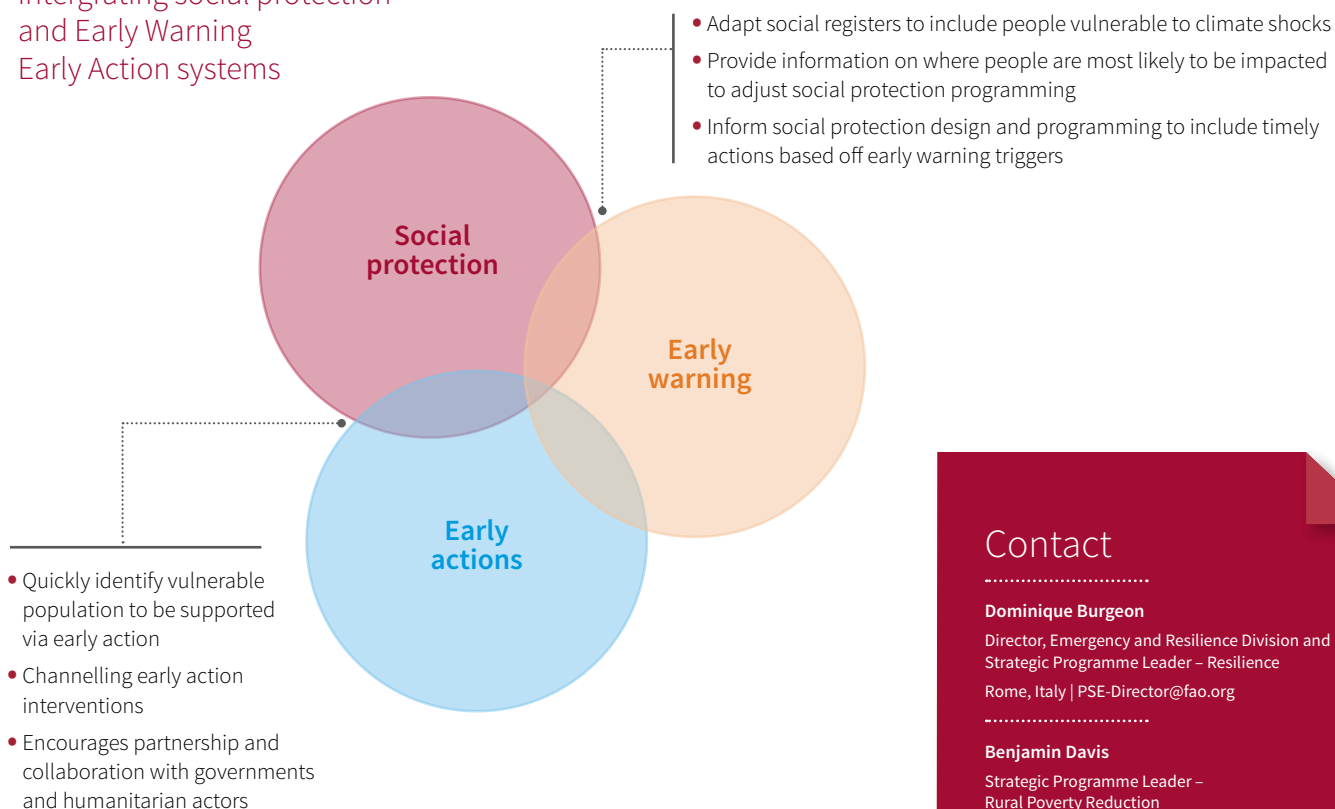
maximize efficiency and effectiveness – use the early warning system to understand the potential impact and appropriate time to take action to prevent/mitigate the hazard.

- Dynamic vulnerability: Use the early warning systems to adapt targeting criteria in social registries and include people vulnerable to climate hazards and at risk of losing their livelihoods.

Early action and social protection

- Socio-economic targeting: When an early warning is issued, use social protection management information systems (including social registries) for targeting to quickly identify vulnerable populations.
- Delivery: Channel early action activities (cash transfer, cash+ or in-kind) through national social protection system to (i) ensure efficiency, (ii) build on/complement government programmes, and (iii) save time. Timely support can prevent vulnerable communities falling back on negative coping strategies.
- Working together: Ensure coherence between government programmes and humanitarian interventions implemented by other actors.

Integrating social protection and Early Warning Early Action systems



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