



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

### Hundred and Fourth Session

Rome, 25 - 29 October 2010

### FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in post-conflict and transition countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Tajikistan)

1. This cover page provides the background and key issues for the attention and guidance of the Committee on the attached Evaluation report *FAO's Effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in post-conflict and transition countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Tajikistan)* and the *Management Response*.

#### *Background*

2. This synthesis report of country evaluations is the second of its kind. A synthesis of the first four country evaluations was received positively by the Programme Committee at its 99<sup>th</sup> session in May 2008 and since then, at the Committee's request, the Office of Evaluation has continued to carry out evaluations of FAO's effectiveness at country level. The present paper provides a synthesis of evaluations in post-conflict and transition countries with large emergency and rehabilitation programmes [the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Sudan and Tajikistan]. The common feature in the recent history of these three countries has been the disastrous effects of years of civil conflicts on development, with some significant differences between the post-conflict and transition situation in Tajikistan and the fragile and unstable situations that still prevail in some parts of the DRC and the Sudan.

#### *Key Issues in Evaluation Report*

- Overall, FAO's interventions in DRC, the Sudan and Tajikistan were found relevant to the country's needs and to those of its populations. In general, activities related to agricultural development, as well as those related to emergency and rehabilitation mostly met the needs of the targeted population in the context of market dysfunction, decay of public institutions and, in the case of DRC, geographical isolation.
- However, there were a number of gaps, some common to FAO's work at country level and others specific to these country contexts, identified by the evaluations. They included:
  - i) insufficient connectedness between the relief, rehabilitation and development components

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of FAO's work that would facilitate a timely shift from input distribution to more development-oriented capacity building interventions; ii) missed opportunities to assist in the design of policies and strategies in the crucial areas of land reform and governance, natural resource management and forestry; iii) FAO's capacity at country level in DRC, the Sudan and Tajikistan was uneven over time; and iv) the lack of a harmonized and unified vision of FAO's work at country level.

- In future, the evaluations advocated for a differentiated strategy that reflect rapidly evolving situations over time and take into account contiguous and disparate situations among regions of the large countries of DRC and the Sudan.
- While it was not possible to synthesize the specific recommendations made in each of these evaluations, similar recommendations to address issues found in post-conflict and transition situations have been grouped under four common areas:
  - review FAO National Medium Term Priority Framework in order to reflect a harmonized and comprehensive vision;
  - strengthening and ensuring continuity in FAO's presence at country level;
  - in-house cross-organizational coordination; and
  - policy and legal assistance in support of good governance

### *Management Response*

3. FAO Management welcomes this synthesis and noted that it provides a creditable attempt to identify areas of common concern and to provide recommendations to address these. It further underlined that many of the issues raised in the original evaluations are already in the process of being addressed.

4. Management accepts the four recommendations and points out that many of the actions to be taken involve several organizational units, which underlines the "contiguum" of simultaneous action on emergency/rehabilitation and development fronts. There are clear linkages with actions in follow-up to the recommendations made in the *Evaluation of FAO's operational capacity in emergencies*<sup>1</sup>. Management acknowledges that there is an urgent need to review not just the operational risks but also the financial risks faced by FAO when operating in complex environments and to ensure that the Organization's policies and procedures are appropriate and address those risks.

5. Additional financial resources are likely to be required for the recommended support to governments in formulating strategies, policies and legislation, as well as for a strengthened technical response. To obtain this, management will take action to reinforce advocacy at country level by training and production of advocacy material suitable for post-conflict and transition contexts. In order to enable FAO Representatives to play their full role in enhancing country effectiveness in a consistent fashion, sustained support to FAO country offices will be required, something which, the Evaluation notes, the emergency programme, because of the nature of its funding, has not been able to provide.

### *Guidance sought*

6. The Programme Committee may wish to provide its views and guidance on the key issues in the Evaluation report and the proposed follow-up actions by Management.

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<sup>1</sup> PC 103/7 - FC 132/10



The background of the page features a large, stylized FAO logo. It is a symmetrical emblem with a central vertical axis. The left side is a solid dark purple, and the right side is a lighter, semi-transparent purple. The design consists of a central stem-like shape that branches out into several large, leaf-like or petal-like shapes, creating a sense of growth and balance.

## **FAO's Effectiveness at Country Level: A Synthesis of Country Evaluations**

### **Post-conflict and Transition Countries: DR Congo, Sudan and Tajikistan**

**July 2010**



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## Acronyms

AOS	Administrative and Operational Support
APO	Associate Professional Officer
CAHW	Community Animal Health Worker
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CONADER	Programme for Demobilization of Ex-combatants
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECU	Emergency Coordination Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAOR	FAO Representative
FFS	Farmer Field School
FNPP	FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity (Sudan)
GOS	Government of Sudan
GOSS	Government of Southern Sudan
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
IDP	Internally Displaced People
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life School
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
LRWG	Land Reform Working Group
MAPE	<i>Ministère de l'agriculture, de la pêche et de l'élevage (DRC)</i>
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NMTPF	National Medium-Term Priority Framework
OCD	Office of Decentralization (FAO)
OED	Office of Evaluation (FAO)
PAP	Priority Action Plan
PCO	Project Coordination Office
REOA	Regional Emergency Office for Africa
RP	Regular Programme
SFE	Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa



SIFSIA	Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action
SPCRP	Sudan Productive Capacity Recovery Programme
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
TCE	Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (FAO)
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
TVA	Tajik Veterinary Association
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VFS	Veterinary Field Service
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit



## II. Introduction

1. This synthesis report of country evaluations is the second of its kind. A synthesis of the first four country evaluations (in Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Cambodia and Honduras) was received positively by the Programme Committee at its 99<sup>th</sup> session in May 2008 and since then, at the Committee's request, the Office of Evaluation has continued to carry out evaluations of FAO's effectiveness at country level.
2. Country evaluations attempt to assess the totality of FAO's work in a country, including national projects, country participation in regional, inter-regional and global projects, the use made of normative products and services and the work of the FAO country office. Country evaluations assess the extent to which institutional arrangements and human and financial resources allow FAO to fulfill its mandate with regard to policy assistance, sharing and applying knowledge, advocacy and mobilizing resources as well as building capacities. They also examine FAO's capacity to partner effectively, in particular within the United Nations (UN) system.
3. At its 103<sup>rd</sup> session, the Programme Committee endorsed the proposal made in the Indicative Rolling Workplan of Strategic and Programme Evaluation 2010-2012 to prepare syntheses of like-type country evaluations. The present paper provides a synthesis of evaluations in post-conflict and transition countries with large emergency and rehabilitation programmes<sup>2</sup>. It is based on the following evaluations:

Country	Inception Mission	Final Evaluation Mission
Democratic Republic of Congo	October 2007	March/April 2008
Tajikistan	December 2008	June 2009
Sudan	November 2008	September/October 2009

## III. Post-conflict and Transition Contexts

4. The common feature in the recent history of all these three countries has been the disastrous effects of years of civil conflicts on development, with some significant differences between the post-conflict and transition situation in Tajikistan and the fragile and unstable situations that still prevail in some parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan.
5. The first seven years of independence of Tajikistan between 1991 and 1997 were marked by civil war and economic hardships caused by the sudden collapse of the previously centralized command economy. Between 1990 and 1997, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by 60 percent and rural poverty was widespread. Since 1998, with the advent of a political settlement and despite occasional serious drought, the economy has improved overall and progress has been made in alleviating poverty. Agriculture continues to play a central role in the economy. A significant effect of the country's current economic situation has been the return of thousands Tajik migrant workers due to lack of employment prospects in Russia.
6. War and conflict have been central to the humanitarian crises in DR Congo and Sudan, as they pushed millions of people into exile or internal displacement, and left millions of others in extreme poverty, destitute and with access to neither development services nor adequate care from customary institutions. The impacts of war and conflict, combined with a variety of hazards such as droughts, floods and biological phenomena such as locusts, plant and animal diseases, have

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<sup>2</sup> The reports are public documents and are available on the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) website: <http://www.fao.org/pbe/pbee/en/index.html>



increased food insecurity and famines in Sudan and DRC. The peace agreements<sup>3</sup> brought the return of political security in some parts of the two countries and, moreover, created conditions for reconstruction activities and progress towards development. Internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees returned to their homes in large numbers. Most of them make their living from agriculture, livestock or fisheries production.

7. Today, all three countries face, to various degrees, the challenge of high levels of poverty and food insecurity, the need to urgently address short-term needs of the most food-insecure populations while re-building the physical, political and economic environment for long-term sustainable peace and development. The governments, with the help of the international community, strive to address multiple and complex issues, among which land tenure, competition over resources, corruption and the need to carefully balance national unity and unavoidable decentralisation of power have a central place. As a result, FAO has to operate in a context of extremely weak institutions, poor local capacities and the quasi-absence of legal and policy frameworks.

#### **IV. The Cooperation Programme**

8. Over the past five-year period, FAO implemented complex and diversified programmes in terms of the mix of sectoral interventions and the challenging operating environment, especially in Sudan and DRC. The overall portfolio totalled over the five-year evaluation period US\$ 200 million in Sudan, US\$ 100 million in DRC and US\$ 26 million in Tajikistan<sup>4</sup>, mostly in extra-budgetary funds. The common feature in the three countries is that nearly the whole project portfolio is labelled as emergency activities and is managed by the Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division (TCE) at FAO. However, the nature of activities within the project portfolio varied depending on the country.

9. In Sudan, the mission estimated that only half of the activities could be considered truly emergency interventions – the rest falling more naturally within the definition of rehabilitation and development. In particular, two large institutional strengthening and capacity building projects, the Sudan Institutional Capacity Programme: Food Security Information for Action (SIFSIA) and the Sudan Productive Capacity Recovery Programme (SPCRP) together represented a third of the total FAO Sudan portfolio. The main types of interventions implemented by FAO included distribution of agricultural inputs, livestock vaccination and treatments, transboundary animal diseases surveillance and control, capacity building/training and institutional strengthening, technical assistance and support for information and statistics, and Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) coordination. In DRC, 70% of the portfolio was dedicated to emergency and rehabilitation projects and aimed at improving the immediate food security and livelihoods situation, and re-adaptation of living or survival strategies. In terms of sector, the development portfolio was also mainly agricultural, except for significant interventions in community forestry and development as well as in agricultural and forestry research. The nature of FAO activities in Tajikistan has rightly changed over the years from almost exclusively input distribution to more development-oriented activities such as supporting the privatisation of veterinary health care, livestock and pasture rehabilitation, land reform, watershed management and food security issues.

10. For all three countries, the evaluation period was marked by very active engagement of the international community, among which the UN system, in partnership with the Government, in advocacy and coordination, as well as in defining policies, strategies and programmes for

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<sup>3</sup> The “Global and Inclusive Agreement” was signed in 2002 in Pretoria by the various Congolese factions. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005 between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).

<sup>4</sup> These figures do not include international and regional projects including these countries. They relate only to the national projects.



recovery and development of the countries. Apart from its portfolio of projects, as well as its normative activities, FAO was involved in these processes to various degrees.

## **V. Evaluation Process, Methodology and Challenges for the Country Evaluations**

11. All the evaluations were conducted by independent teams of external experts, with the participation of staff members of the FAO Office of Evaluation. Being the second round of country evaluations, they benefited from the experience of the previous exercises and followed a more standardized approach and methodology. The evaluations took place in three phases.

12. The first phase, led by the concerned Evaluation Manager, was a desk review at FAO headquarters to collect relevant information, including data and analysis from FAO corporate systems, as well as consultation with relevant staff at headquarters, Sub-regional offices and in countries. This phase included an inception mission to the country to conduct preliminary consultations with the Government, key donors and members of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). Terms of reference were prepared during this phase and impact studies to be carried out as part of the evaluation were identified.

13. Impact studies were conducted in the second phase, whose aim was to provide an in-depth analysis of a specific area of FAO's work and its impact on the livelihoods of the intended beneficiaries and their communities. Extensive use was made of national staff in conducting the studies, and thus they had the benefit of building evaluation capacity in the country. These studies were conducted by collecting quantitative and qualitative information through document review, individual and focus group interviews, questionnaires and field visits. In the absence of adequate information, recall was used for establishing baseline situations. The subjects of the impact studies were:

- DRC: Impact Study on FAO's Emergency Programme
- Sudan: Thematic Study of FAO's Work in Community-based Animal Health
- Tajikistan: Impact Assessment of FAO Support to the Veterinary Field Units (VFU).

The results of these impact studies are summarized in Section VII below.

14. The third phase was a mission to the country by the evaluation team, each of which was about four weeks' duration including work in the capital city, visits of various parts of the country where FAO has activities and meetings with the concerned Sub-Regional Offices (based in Ankara for Tajikistan, Addis Ababa for Sudan). For DRC and Sudan, team members also visited the Regional Emergency Operations Office for Africa in Nairobi. The culmination of the third phase was the preparation of the evaluation report.

15. Evaluation processes were highly consultative, and in the case of DRC and Sudan, included the setting-up of innovative consultative groups composed of representatives of the key donors and senior FAO staff. The consultative group provided advice to the Evaluation Team at different stages of the evaluation process. For all three evaluations, at the end of the country mission, workshops were held with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders both in the country and at headquarters during which the preliminary results of the evaluation were presented and discussed. Finally, in addition to posting the evaluation reports, technical annexes and management responses on the FAO website, efforts were made to widely disseminate the final reports, in particular to all internal and external stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation teams.

16. Many of the difficulties and challenges highlighted in the first synthesis report remained valid for these evaluations, including: the absence of a clear framework against which to assess the performance over time of FAO at country level; the time-consuming process of data collection beyond existing corporate information systems; the methodological difficulties of assessing the use of normative products and the lack of reliable baseline data to conduct rigorous impact assessments. In addition, the conduct of the evaluations in the three countries has been challenged



by other factors, the most compelling one being the insecurity in some parts of DRC and Sudan, making the organisation of missions complex and uncertain, as well as preventing field visits and the collection of evidence in some parts of the countries. This and the fact that DRC and Sudan are large countries and all three of them have poor infrastructure contributed to high overall costs of the evaluations and impact studies relative to others.

17. Although the FAO Representative (FAOR) position in Sudan was vacant at the time of the evaluation, in all countries, FAO staff fully engaged with the evaluation teams and facilitated understanding of the role and work of the Organization.

18. Finally, the importance of the portfolio, and within it, of the emergency and rehabilitation activities in Sudan and DRC, weighted the analysis in favour of well-resourced areas of work at the expense of under-funded sectors, which nevertheless may be of general interest for their innovative approach and/or for what they have achieved.

## **VI. Assessment of Institutional Arrangements and Operational Capacities for Delivery**

19. FAO Representatives and staff in the field are at the forefront of FAO's delivery of products and services at country level. Country evaluations examine the extent to which institutional and management arrangements as well as human and financial resources are appropriate to efficiently and effectively develop and deliver FAO's programme.

### **A. INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP, RESOURCES AND STAFFING**

20. The institutional set-up, staffing and resource issues present many similarities in Sudan and DRC. In both countries, there is an FAO Representation with a large emergency arm. In Sudan, the situation is made more complex by the principle of "one country-two systems" established in 2005 by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the management of the Sudan Programme operated by two different teams headed by a Senior Coordinator and supported by two different senior TCE officers at HQ. FAO set up a management structure which effectively deals with South Sudan and North Sudan as if they were distinct countries, without however formalizing the relationship. There is no FAO Representation in Juba, although in 2009 the Emergency Coordinator in Juba was nominated as Deputy FAO Representative. However, the Emergency Coordinator does not have Regular Programme (RP) resources for supporting non-project related technical and policy assistance.

21. In Tajikistan, there is no accredited FAO Representative. There is a national correspondent, a government employee of the Ministry of Agriculture, with limited functions paid by the FAO Regular Programme and who reports to the FAO Sub-regional Office in Ankara. FAO's organizational presence was established in 2002 through the setting-up of a Project Coordination Office (PCO), headed by an Emergency Coordinator, to manage the emergency programme. Currently, the bulk of the work is administered by the PCO reporting to TCE in Rome. The Evaluation found a mixed picture with this arrangement; some incumbents established FAO as a credible presence in Tajikistan as evidenced by the consistency with which donors sought out FAO as their implementing and technical partner, but one stretch of some two and a half years was characterized by weak leadership and high turnover.

22. There is a large presence of FAO in the three countries thanks to the emergency projects. In Tajikistan, there were some 70 FAO staff, all paid by extra-budgetary resources. There were about 214 FAO staff, including staff of the FAO Representation in Sudan (127 in the North and 87 in the South), only four being paid by RP resources. In DRC, the FAO Representation was staffed with 11 RP posts, only two being professional. Here as well, the bulk of FAO presence was ensured by staff paid by the emergency projects. The 200 staff, of which half were professional and the other half administrative, were spread throughout the country in 18 offices structured around five levels of organisation.



23. In both Sudan and DRC, measures were taken to improve the staffing situation of the Representation by obtaining administrative staff from extra-budgetary resources to facilitate operational support, making best use of Associate Professional Officers (APOs) in provincial offices in DRC and project staff in both countries to support the FAO Representative.
24. The FAOR post for both countries remained vacant for long periods (over 18 months). Although a consultant acted as FAOR *ad interim* in both cases for some time, this left the offices without strategic leadership at a very demanding time in both countries.
25. FAO country offices in Sudan and DRC and the PCO in Tajikistan are funded by a mix of resources, mainly RP and Administrative and Operational Support (AOS). With regard to the latter, it seems that there are variable uses of the AOS, in particular in regards to the portion allocated to the country office. For two years, DRC benefited from large AOS allocations. In Tajikistan, the Evaluation found an imbalance between project support costs retained by TCE in Rome and those devoted to the Project Coordination Office. It concluded that there is a strong *prima facie* case for examining the distribution of support costs in order to provide more predictable support for the Dushanbe office.
26. Overall, while the DRC and Sudan portfolios were the two largest country field programmes for FAO in the evaluation periods, the evaluations found that this was not reflected in the way the Organization staffed and resourced these country offices. The Sudan country office was only recently classified as a large country office (class A)<sup>5</sup> despite the expanding responsibilities and workload.
27. All evaluations found the staff competent and highly dedicated. However, a common issue raised in all evaluations regarding FAO staffing in the three countries was the fact that staff contracts, and therefore FAO presence, was very much linked to project funding, thus creating constant uncertainty.
28. The unusual situation of the FAO Project Coordination Office in Tajikistan was that it found itself financed and administered as if it were a temporary emergency coordination office, while in fact it is supporting what is essentially a development portfolio. The Evaluation further noticed that this uncertainty about office funding is highly detrimental to staff morale and sends a message of uncertainty to other actors about FAO's intentions in Tajikistan.
29. All evaluations stressed the importance of FAO having a strategic presence, especially at a time where so many efforts are devoted by the international community and governments to developing policy and legislative frameworks and ensuring effective relief-development transition. In fact, the understaffing of the FAO Representations has had negative consequences on the capacity of FAO to fulfil some of its core functions in DRC and Sudan: liaison with partners, be it the Government, the UN or other partners; advocacy and mobilisation of resources for agriculture and food security; administrative support to projects (especially in DRC where 30% of the portfolio is non-emergency and therefore managed by the FAO Representation).
30. Moreover, in DRC and Sudan, government decentralisation, including delegation of authority at provincial or state level, puts increasing demand on FAO and other partners to support policies, strategies and policy implementation at those levels, with the advocacy and liaison functions at provincial level becoming increasingly important. In fact, the DRC evaluation recommended to strengthen FAO's role in the provinces using decentralized project and ECU offices.

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<sup>5</sup> Country classification for staffing models developed by OCD.



## **B. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT - OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY**

31. All of the field programme in Sudan and Tajikistan and a large part of it in DRC is managed by TCE as the Budget Holder for emergency and rehabilitation projects. TCE provides direct line management support to senior emergency coordinators. The FAORs in Sudan and DRC also provide guidance to the senior staff in the countries, supervise non-emergency projects in the case of DRC as well as act as a representative of the Organization externally by liaising with the Government, donor representatives and other international agencies. In practice, TCE continues to supervise the implementation of a large part of the programme in DRC and almost the entire Sudan programme. The evaluations raised the issues of split management and the lack of comprehensive oversight by the FAO Representatives on TCE-managed operations. Both the Sudan and DRC evaluations underline the issue of “two FAOs” in the countries and the need for a more harmonized assistance, including greater operational integration and control by the FAO Representatives over the entire work of the Organization in the countries. They also highlighted the inefficiencies linked to overly centralized management in large countries and stress the need for decentralized decision-making authority relating to project management for staff located at local level.

32. The situation in Tajikistan differs as there is no FAO Representative. Yet, the evaluation made suggestions to further decentralize authority for decision-making to the PCO, including making the Coordinator the Budget Holder for all national projects, as is done for FAO Representatives.

33. In all three countries, FAO’s operational capacity was criticized and implementation delays noted. The evaluations found that FAO’s procedures often do not allow the necessary speed and operational efficiency required to deliver large quantities of material inputs. However, all the evaluations pointed out improvements in project management and operational arrangements in recent years. In Tajikistan, the setting-up of an imprest account and the access to corporate systems facilitated office administration, in particular with respect to procurement. The Sudan evaluation also noted improvement in procurement that was attributed to attention given to the country by HQ to ensure an efficient and effective system.

34. In DRC, at the time of the Evaluation, the FAOR was not equipped to handle the exponential increase of procurement requirements, 90% of which were for emergency operations in 2007. Insufficient planning, reduced staff of the procurement unit, unreliable information and weak knowledge about markets contributed to delays in delivery to the beneficiaries. To address this, the evaluation recommended the appointment of an international head of the procurement unit in Kinshasa, and this has been done as part of the evaluation follow-up.

35. Monitoring is weak in all the countries, despite needs in view of the large volumes of emergency operations. The lack of a monitoring system impedes proper planning and programming and inhibits taking corrective measures. A monitoring system covering the whole programme would also help reinforce the FAO Representative’s oversight over the programme. Some exceptions were found in DRC, where the “HUP” project<sup>6</sup> in particular had developed exemplary monitoring systems with baseline data and regular impact surveys.

## **C. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT, VISION AND COHERENCE**

36. Maximizing synergies between FAO activities ensures that inputs are optimized and that intervention results build on each other. To achieve this, good integration and collaboration are essential at strategic, programmatic and operational levels. In both Sudan and DRC, it was found that there was no articulated, integrated vision of FAO’s work on development and emergency work. Furthermore, the Sudan Evaluation noted that despite the fact that the programming in the North and the South falls under one country programme and many interventions are similar in

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<sup>6</sup> GCP/DRC/028/BEL: Introduction Horticulture Urbaine (Phases I and II).



nature, there is very little evidence of sharing on programme related issues across or between projects. A similar assessment was made for DRC, where insufficiently explored links existed in some areas between emergency activities and development activities.

37. In DRC, the Evaluation found that there were two different modalities for programme development, with development activities being conceived and developed with Government and donors, while emergency activities were part of the Humanitarian Action Plan in which the Government did not necessarily take part. DRC was a pilot country for the formulation of the National Medium-Term Priority Framework (NMTPF) and the Evaluation found it of good quality. However, the document has never been validated by the Government and did not integrate an analysis of FAO's work on emergency and rehabilitation although this constituted 70% of the volume of FAO activities in the country.

38. Insufficient linkages between FAO interventions in Sudan and DRC were attributed to a number of factors, including among others: the lack of an FAO Representative for a long time; TCE being budget holder for the vast majority of interventions; and the split lines of management between emergency and development projects. This impacted, particularly in DRC, on the ownership and authority that the FAOR and in-country staff had over the programme.

39. Tajikistan is different from the other two countries. The active development of the programme, engaging in donor cooperation forums, UNCT and consultation with Government have varied considerably over the years, depending on the individuals heading the PCO. The period of high turn-over of coordinators prevented continuous and substantive engagement. The Evaluation noticed great improvement since the appointment of a new Coordinator in early 2009.

## **D. DELIVERY OF TECHNICAL SUPPORT AT COUNTRY LEVEL**

40. In general, FAO technical assistance was recognized of good quality by the Government and partners, although timeliness of delivery was sometimes an issue.

41. In Sudan and DRC, very good quality technical support was provided by Chief Technical Advisers (CTAs) on projects. In DRC, CTAs formed a pool of technical expertise in fields such as urban and peri-urban agriculture, agriculture policies, research and forestry. The expertise was valued not only by the Government and partners but also by the FAO Representative who considered the CTAs instrumental in ensuring high quality expert inputs in the country in support of the FAO Representative's multiple mandates.

42. DRC benefited extensively from FAO's technical support. As an illustration, during the period 2005-2007, the Representation hosted an average of 60 missions per year from headquarters, the Regional and Sub-regional Offices and the Regional Emergency Office for Africa (REOA). Most of the missions were to backstop on-going projects or otherwise project-related. Similarly, Tajikistan received an equally high number of mission-days.

43. In Sudan, the issue of the weak project backstopping from the Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa (SFE) was raised, although the Sub-regional Office was expected to be the first port-of-call for providing support to the field programme in countries within its geographical coverage, which included Sudan. One of the reasons for this – at least for emergency projects – was that the Budget Holder being at headquarters did not enhance SFE's strong role in delivering technical support in Sudan. The Evaluation did recommend the progressive decentralization of Budget Holder responsibilities to the FAO Representative.

## **VII. FAO Functions and Services at Country Level**

### **A. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

44. This heading relates to the core of FAO's Field Programme and includes all initiatives aimed at providing technical advice and support at the country level, through projects,



programmes and in response to *ad hoc* requests. It includes technical assistance, policy advice, capacity building and, particularly for these countries, emergency assistance. An issue which emerged across all three evaluations was that interventions have been less effective in supporting longer-term development processes than emergency ones, although opportunities were not lacking.

### *Sectors of Technical Assistance*

45. The work in DRC, Sudan and Tajikistan can, for the purposes of this summary, be divided into four sectors of technical assistance: agriculture and crop production; livestock and fisheries; forestry; and land, water and natural resources. As the countries' needs and priorities differed considerably, the activities and weight in the different sectors varied.

46. *Agriculture and crop production.* Agriculture and crop production is the only sector in which projects and programmes were carried out in all three countries concerned. Interventions included: seeds and tools distribution; Farmer Field School (FFS) extension and training; Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS); promotion of local seed production; seed certification support; locust control; and development of urban and peri-urban horticulture. In DRC and Sudan, agriculture activities have been found relevant. Indeed, the emphasis has been rightly placed on food production in countries where a large majority of households have to face problems of food insecurity.

47. Seeds and tools distribution, a core emergency assistance activity, was carried out in all three countries. In DRC and Sudan, it was the dominant emergency intervention. These interventions were relevant, particularly for vulnerable populations, and had a positive impact, allowing for a recovery of agricultural production. In Tajikistan, the nature of interventions has been shifting from exclusive input distribution to more development-oriented activities. As a result, and although implementation and monitoring of this kind of intervention were judged efficient, the Evaluation concluded that the distribution of free seed and other agricultural inputs was no longer warranted in Tajikistan; rather, efforts should be concentrated on supporting the production of high quality seed for wheat and other crops.

48. Locust control operations were undertaken in both Sudan and Tajikistan. In Sudan, while field teams are well trained and vehicles, sprayers and pesticides are sufficient for monitoring and control, the national Locust Control Unit continually suffers from late release of supplies or insufficient funds. In Tajikistan, interventions have helped control the recurring and serious pest outbreaks, although requests for assistance have come late. Additionally, the country lacked a strong institution for locust control and techniques needed to be brought up to date.

49. In DRC, other development initiatives such as the introduction and strengthening of horticultural production in cities and the FFS were recognized by the Evaluation to have led to a number of accomplishments. Effective normative support was given to the Government on seed certification. However, the sustainability of the results in this sector was uneven.

50. In Sudan, efforts to support agricultural intensification and diversification have been laudable, although limited in scope. A disconnect was identified between FAO's efforts to promote sustainable agricultural practices and conservation agriculture and the Government priorities towards mechanization. Also, normative guidance and lessons learned were lacking and impeded the scaling up of appropriate technologies and approaches.

51. *Livestock and fisheries.* Livestock, particularly animal health interventions, were a major focus of FAO's activities in both Sudan and Tajikistan. In both countries, this sector has major importance and a high potential to contribute to food security, livelihoods and economic well-being. Activities included: training of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs); distribution of livestock; disease control; fodder production; pasture management; and in Sudan, distribution of fishing inputs.



52. In both Sudan and Tajikistan, FAO interventions have contributed to strengthening the animal health system, including building capacities in disease prevention and control. The development of animal health services systems at community level (called Community Animal Health Workers or CAHWs in Sudan and Veterinary Field Units or VFUs in Tajikistan) have positively impacted on the overall performance of animal health services in these countries and disease prevalence, including in remote areas. Some restocking efforts were done in both countries, although efforts in Tajikistan were not emergency-related.

53. In Sudan, where over two-thirds of the FAO projects included an animal health component, the Organization's interventions have been technically correct but conservative. While interventions fit with both the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) strategies, the Evaluation indicated the need to emphasize the use and strengthening of Government systems of delivery.

54. In Tajikistan, the Evaluation found that many of the activities would have been better suited as long-term development programmes rather than short-term initiatives with emergency funding. A highly relevant intervention was the setting-up of private veterinary field services (VFS), which are now operating under the auspices of the relevant local institution, the Tajik Veterinary Association (TVA).

55. *Forestry.* Interventions in forestry, although limited and mainly linked to policy advice, were conducted in both DRC and Sudan. In both countries, but for different reasons, forestry is an important sector, where the Organization could have a key role to play. Although some good work was done, the opportunity to have a significant influence on the management of this key resource was missed.

56. In DRC, although activities in introducing community forestry principles were considered promising, the work had no visible impact. The FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme's role (FNPP) in facilitating the implementation of the Forest Code generated some collaboration between the public sector, the private sector and civil society. However, FAO missed the opportunity to have an impact on forestry policy and its implementation at a decentralised level, given the on-going political decentralisation process.

57. In Sudan, although a largely unattended sector in the country programme, activities were tied to the regional Acacia projects, seedlings distribution in Darfur and support to the GNU to revise national forestry policy. In spite of the long history of cooperation and importance of sustainable development, there was no framework for FAO forestry components and the Organization's involvement was alarmingly low, making efforts in this sector insufficient. Considering its potential contribution to livelihoods and food security, community forestry had a relatively low profile, particularly in South Sudan. There has been no formal framework for GNU and GOSS cooperation in forestry since the CPA, which has resulted in a loss of centrality of sustainable forest management and use of natural resources in FAO activities.

58. *Land, water and natural resources.* Interventions in the sector of land and water as well as natural resources took place in Sudan and Tajikistan. In both countries, most important activities concerned land tenure and land reform. Land issues are particularly important to resolve in post-conflict and transition contexts. In both Sudan and Tajikistan, land was formerly owned by the state, and the subsequent transition provided an opportunity to influence and assist the development of a coherent land policy. A number of successful interventions were identified, yet evaluations felt that they should have been given greater attention and priority.

59. In Sudan, pre-CPA, FAO provided land tenure advice to the Government, in particular for a land tenure action framework for the immediate post-conflict period. After the CPA, the Organization built a stronger platform to allow for dialogue on land issues with different partners. However, in the last two years of the evaluation period, work in this area had significantly decreased due to a lack of project funding. Some good work has been done in land governance and land and property rights and its implementation having some important outcomes. The impact



of the FAO Sudan Land Programme was yet to be realised and it was very questionable if there would be sustained benefits unless additional efforts were made.

60. In Tajikistan, land reform is a major political issue. FAO projects led to the establishment of a working group on land reform (LRWG) composed of government, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and donors; the establishment of legal advisory centres; the establishment of information and legal consultations in 16 districts to raise women's awareness; and a public awareness campaign. The work was largely relevant and public awareness was created, with the most significant impact being the partnership between government and donors through the LRWG. While the LRWG has continued, legal advisory services have been more difficult to maintain in the long term.

### *FAO and Humanitarian Assistance*

61. Operations in DRC, Sudan and Tajikistan derive their similarities from the prevalence of interventions labelled as emergency. In Sudan and Tajikistan, the bulk of the portfolio was emergency and managed by TCE, while in DRC, a considerable part of the country programme included development interventions.

62. Emergency interventions were diversified, although the largest chunk consisted of seeds and tools distributions and, in Sudan and Tajikistan, animal health and livestock interventions. Mostly, the evaluations identified them as being relevant to the context and needs of the target beneficiaries. Interventions of a more development-oriented nature were often labelled as emergency interventions, and at times as a result suffered from too short time frames and inadequate technical backstopping.

63. Individuals targeted were somewhat varied across the three country programmes and included: refugee, IDP and returnee populations; HIV/AIDS affected households; ex-combatants; victims of natural disasters; female-headed households, etc. Coverage, particularly in large countries such as DRC and Sudan, was not as broad as needed, but was usually concentrated in areas with the highest displaced and refugee populations that were easiest to reach. All evaluations criticized a slow transition from relief to rehabilitation and development activities (see section below).

64. In order to overcome some of these limitations, evaluations advocated for more flexible approaches tailored and responding to differentiated needs and taking into account the diversity of situations in DRC and Sudan in line with the concept of an LRDD "contiguum". While short-term food security interventions, including seeds and tools distributions, remain relevant in some parts of DRC and Sudan, it was clear that it was much less so in Tajikistan and much attention needed now to be given to the rehabilitation and development-oriented work in all of these countries.

### *Policy Advice*

65. In all three countries, the evaluation period was marked by intensive dialogue and efforts between the international community and governments and local actors on shaping recovery and reconstruction, in particular in terms of legislative and policy frameworks. FAO's support in that regard has been erratic in all countries, depending very much on the availability of FAO experts in the country and the presence and profiles of the FAO Representative and Emergency Coordinator. In DRC, support to policies, mainly carried out in the framework of projects, and with restricted means when speaking of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), obtained good results, for most of which a follow-up was given or is planned. In Sudan, recent efforts to provide policy advice were important, but at the time of the Evaluation, it was too early to assess its effectiveness. In Tajikistan, engagement in policy assistance was limited, in part due to the fact these efforts were handled by the Regional Office, which had limited resources. Dialogue had recently increased, through the PCO, and the Organization is appreciated by the Government and



donors as a source of potential unbiased information, indicating scope for FAO to play a larger role in future.

66. The most successful area of policy support was forestry, in both DRC and Sudan. In DRC, the support to elaborate a legislative framework in the forestry sector and the introduction of community forestry triggered a momentum for change, although still weak for the time being. In Sudan, support to policy through the FAO National Forestry Programme facility was effective. Nevertheless, FAO did not provide follow-up support to ensure the policy was adopted and implemented. In addition, the GOSS was not supported in elaborating forestry policy and the necessary legal and regulatory frameworks. Nonetheless, the impact of the national forestry programme is seen as considerable as it has sparked a change in attitude at all levels of decision-making.

### *Developing Capacities and Strengthening Institutions*

67. Capacity development in these contexts was challenging. While some efforts were made in all three countries, the most considerable programme could be found in Sudan where two large capacity building projects, the SIFSIA and the SPCRP, represented one third of the total FAO portfolio. Recent efforts to build institutional capacities, particularly at state level in terms of government service delivery, were significant, yet too early to assess. In DRC and Tajikistan, results were somewhat mixed. Despite some positive results in the support of restructuring the MAPE and strengthening statistical services, in DRC, FAO's support concentrated on central services and would have gained efficiency by conforming to the decentralization process with greater synergy. In Tajikistan, challenges were considerable, mostly due to weak institutional framework, government employees receiving low salaries, high staff turnover; and few incentives for good performance.

## **B. SHARING INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE**

68. One of the key functions of FAO is to make knowledge and experience gained through its activities in countries available. This can be done at field level, by adapting/replicating similar experiences gained through interventions in the country or elsewhere to local conditions. Sharing information and disseminating knowledge are also done by making normative information services and products accessible to countries.

69. The evaluations faced methodological difficulties for assessing the relevance, usefulness and use of these products and services. However, as underlined in the Tajikistan report, the use of FAO information materials is governed by several factors. The main one is familiarity with what FAO has to offer and its perceived applicability at country level. On this count, all the evaluations found that there is little knowledge of the global public goods provided by FAO, at all levels. This is partly explained by the countries' level of development, as it is acknowledged that without technical assistance, there are difficulties in adapting information. Internet access is not well developed, especially in government offices, and connection speeds are slow. In Tajikistan, another constraining factor is explained by the fact that very few FAO publications are produced in Russian and none of the other FAO languages are sufficiently known to ensure wide dissemination and accessibility of information.

70. In each of the countries, there are good examples of knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practice through projects. In DRC, the FFS approach has been well developed in some areas and is recognized as an important means of enhancing good practices with farmer communities. In DRC, a large Dimitra network of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and farmers organisations has been working with community rural radios in the South Kivu and Katanga Provinces giving voice to rural populations, men and women. These experiments have proved successful and are being extended. In this context, Dimitra works with AGSP and OEKC to reinforce synergies and ensure a gender approach throughout all projects and programmes. The rural community radio, started with a



small TCP, is now operational and provides technical and advocacy messages. In Tajikistan, the best example is the VFU project. This programme has been built on experience gained in Afghanistan and other countries where FAO has helped develop community-level, private, commercialised animal health services. Transfer of knowledge from the Afghan experience was facilitated by having one of the experts who had served with the Afghan project as the CTA of the project in Tajikistan. In Sudan, FAO has brought global knowledge and tested models in the areas of food security information, agricultural extension and integrated pest management (FFS), land tenure and community animal health.

71. National exposure to FAO normative work has also taken place through the participation of government officials and technical staff in regional and global meetings. However, aside from general comments that such participation is appreciated and useful, it is not possible to assess its influence on programme and policy at country level.

72. Finally, information dissemination and sharing is recognized as an important area for improvement. Lack of adequate dissemination of learning and accumulated knowledge has negative repercussions for scaling up interventions from the level of individual project to programmes and policy. Much more needs to be done to make normative services and products accessible, relevant and useful for countries which are not well equipped, in particular with internet facilities, and/or do not have the expert capacity to access and adapt this information. Printed materials targeted and adapted to local contexts should enhance access to information and knowledge in these countries. The Rural Radio in DRC is also a good example of alternative means to disseminate knowledge and information and capacity building for grass roots communities.

### **C. ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR FOOD SECURITY, AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

73. FAO's role at country level includes communication and advocacy with governments and civil society on issues related to its mandate. FAO's credibility depends on its ability to communicate effectively, disseminating knowledge products and technical information and creating awareness. FAO's effectiveness in mobilizing resources also depends on external factors, including government will and donor trust. In all three countries, the crucial role of agriculture for addressing problems of food-insecurity and economic growth is well recognized by all.

74. DRC is a good example of the timely advocacy role that FAO can play. Many interlocutors commended on the instrumental role of a previous FAO Representative in the evaluation period in creating awareness on food insecurity issues and the challenges faced in forest resource management. The long-standing presence of FAO in the country, including during the war period, gave high credibility to the Organization at a time when international aid programmes started again. The Evaluation underlined the likely influence FAO had on donor decisions regarding their funding priorities. As a result of this effort, FAO's lead position in the agriculture and forestry sectors had been consolidated. Unfortunately, the FAO advocacy was negatively affected by the departure of the former FAO Representative in 2006, and the long period of vacancy in this post.

75. In Sudan and Tajikistan, FAO advocacy was similarly uneven. In Sudan, this was very much linked to the absence of a FAO Representative at a time of intense discussion on recovery for the future of the country. In Tajikistan, while FAO's advocacy work had been weak for much of the evaluation period, it had improved in recent times thanks to the arrival of an active emergency coordinator.



## **D. COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

76. The capacity of FAO to be active in coordination and engage in partnerships at country level depends, to a certain extent, on the environment in which FAO operates, including the cohesion among the UN agencies, the leadership of the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator and, more generally, the capacity of possible partners to invest in partnership as well. However, and as mentioned in the previous synthesis of country evaluations, the in-country representation of FAO is equally important, as that office is almost entirely responsible for the development of partnerships. In post-conflict reconstruction situations, there is a high demand for coordination and partnership for defining macro-policy frameworks and the role of the aid community, putting a high pressure on FAO's human resources and, consequently, for prioritization. It also requires a continuity of who is involved. In all three countries, coordinating and partnering have been a challenge, especially during the periods where the FAOR post was vacant or, in the case of Tajikistan, there was a high turn-over in the Emergency Coordinator post.

77. Aid coordination and partnership were found particularly complicated in the DRC, where humanitarian assistance coordination was structured around clusters and development aid was discussed within the framework of various task forces associated to the preparation of the Country Assistance Framework and the Priority Action Plan (PAP). Again, FAO's leadership role on the food security cluster was very much appreciated by partners since a full-time person had been appointed and was fully dedicated to cluster-related activities.

78. In Sudan and DRC, FAO has partnered with hundreds of NGOs in the course of implementing food security and livelihood interventions. While these partners speak positively about their collaboration with FAO, there have been many delays in receiving FAO's agreed contributions. In addition, the partnerships forged with NGOs in the emergency projects have not been guided by a strategy to develop a long-term alliance for rural development. Overall, the interaction with these organisations was guided by the relationship of short-term service providers formalized within the framework of Letters of Agreement (LoAs).

## **E. RESULTS OF THE IMPACT STUDIES**

79. As mentioned in the above section on the methodology, each evaluation was preceded by an impact study.

80. In both Sudan and Tajikistan, the impact studies examined animal health interventions. In Sudan, the CAHW approach was appropriate and effective, reaching remote communities with vaccinations and basic animal health care services. The effectiveness of the CAHWs lies in their ready availability. CAHWs were said to have contributed to the improved animal health situation and to the eradication of rinderpest in the country; in terms of sustainability, a number of gaps remain. There is no common strategic approach to CAHW work in Sudan and FAO has not provided adequate normative guidance in this area.

81. In Tajikistan, the support to setting up VFUs facilitated the transition to a market economy while restoring veterinary care and medicines. It had a strong impact on the country's animal health and production. On average, larger livestock owners benefited more than the smaller ones and areas located in plains and close to cities were better covered than more remote ones. Some thought was given to sustainability in project design, which is unusual for an emergency project. There was a clear exit strategy planned by embedding of activities into the TVA, allowing for good prospects for sustainability. In areas well covered by the system, private veterinary pharmacies had opened and were doing good business, in part thanks to the VFUs.

82. In DRC, the beneficiary survey found that the FAO emergency and rehabilitation programme was effective in and around cities but that populations located far away from urban centres and in conflict zones could not be reached due to lack of safe access. Multiplication and distribution of healthy cassava cuttings, rehabilitation of rural roads and assistance to rice



production were examples of activities with a significant impact. The most effective channels to reach the vulnerable were IDP camps, nutritional centres and the programme for demobilization of ex-combatants (CONADER). FAO did not have the means to monitor input distributions by NGOs at village level and consequently, such village distributions often caused tensions and concentration of the assistance in the hands of a few. Moreover, some kits were too small to make a difference and were often split and shared at village level to avoid tensions, further diminishing impact. Timeliness of distribution was also an issue.

## **VIII. Findings related to Thematic and Cross-cutting Issues**

### **A. GENDER EQUITY**

83. Gender issues are a real concern in all the three countries. In post-conflict countries, such as Sudan and DRC, the role and needs of women have changed, given the high incidence of male displacement, and its consequences on agricultural production patterns. However, the economic value of the activities that women carry out (e.g. small livestock keeping, wood and water collection) is not always recognized, remaining masked as part of their domestic role and duties. Women are often discriminated against in social and family life, have poor access to education and almost no entitlement to resources (e.g. financial assets, land). Women do not actively participate in public life, with a striking gender imbalance in the public sector cadre composition.

84. A large number of FAO Project Documents acknowledge women as particularly vulnerable. Project activities specifically targeting women, women-headed households and women's associations have ranged across a number of different technical sectors, including extension (FFS), land and forest resources management, small livestock production and health. Women's groups have been set up and, in a few cases, linked with the management of revolving funds.

85. However, FAO does not appear to systematically include gender concerns into project planning and implementation. In the case of Sudan, in particular, the lack of a gender strategy and of a gender focus within the yet-to-be approved NMTPF was criticized.

86. Even when women are explicitly mentioned among the beneficiary groups, project data is very rarely disaggregated by sex. As a result, the specific impact of the activities on women is hard to measure.

87. Any evidence of benefits to women specifically is scattered. Anecdotal references to best practices throughout the reports point out that FAO interventions are significantly more successful when they start with an adequate needs assessment and a holistic analysis of the women's role, capacities and challenges ahead, including poor access to information, less involvement in commercial farming, and decision-making authority still vested in male leaders. The lack of an in-depth needs assessment was often highlighted, as was the poor attention given to the production-marketing and production-nutrition link.

88. The evaluations all pointed out the need to consult more closely with the beneficiaries, starting from the planning phase, to better understand their changing needs.

89. FAO should increase its efforts to mainstream gender in its programme work, possibly by creating cross-disciplinary teams, and also by balancing the staff composition in the field better.

90. The evaluation reports stressed the importance of increasing partnerships with ministries of gender, gender-specialised research organisations and agencies. The Tajikistan Country Evaluation pointed out the positive involvement of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in some training activities. At the same time, the reports recommended more guidance on gender mainstreaming should be provided to NGO/CBOs implementing partners and specific clauses included within the mutual LoAs.



## B. ADDRESSING HIV/AIDS ISSUES

91. Despite the alarming importance of HIV/AIDS issues and their links with food insecurity and their impact on agriculture-related activities in DRC, and to a lesser extent in Sudan, very few FAO interventions, all in DRC, attempted to address them.

92. In DRC, in the evaluation period, some interventions targeting HIV/AIDS-affected households were identified, amongst which the most important was a regional project with World Vision, consisting in the provision of farming inputs requiring minimum labour to HIV/AIDS-affected families. Also, the Dimitra project was a good example of integrating HIV/AIDS-related work into an FAO project, through participatory approaches. Interventions were largely relevant, particularly given the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in DRC. Effectiveness varied, depending on the projects, and a systematic integration of relevant activities was not realised in areas with a high HIV/AIDS prevalence. Contributing factors to the limited range and scope of activities included: the unwillingness of FAO's traditional partners of including these activities; the limited links between projects that would allow a sharing of experiences; a lack of linkages with institutions specialised in HIV/AIDS; and the *ad-hoc* nature of the Organization's HIV/AIDS interventions.

## C. LINKING RELIEF, REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT (LRRD)

93. Earlier definitions of LRRD described it as a process or transition between the provision of emergency relief aid and the implementation of development assistance. Within this broad orientation, the LRRD concept is seen in part as a system for handing over (continuum) relevant relief projects where they can act as a catalyst to longer-term development projects.<sup>7</sup> The concept of an LRRD "contiguum" has become widely accepted in recent years and suggests the need for simultaneously engaging in relief, rehabilitation and development<sup>8</sup> and emphasizing the connectedness between the LRRD components. The underlying logic being that 'better development' reduces the need for emergency relief, better 'relief' contributes to development, and better 'rehabilitation' eases the transition between the two<sup>9</sup>.

94. In line with the contiguum concept, there is a general consensus that the UN and the International Community should work on all three fronts at the same time: relief, rehabilitation/reconstruction and development with emphasis on building a nation and trying to foster some coherence and synergies between activities (connectedness) pursuing these three different objectives. Working on risk reduction during stable periods is also considered good practice and now entirely part of the LRRD conceptual model. This implies increased attention to disaster preparedness, prevention and strengthening household resilience<sup>10</sup>, predictable nationally owned social protection, state building and institutional strengthening, conflict mitigation and peace-building and increasing coherence across political, security and development spheres<sup>11</sup>.

95. In the countries evaluated, the LRRD concept and, more specifically, the "transition" have taken different meanings and realities. The contiguum is well illustrated in the DRC and Sudan situations with localised on-and-off conflicts in some parts of the country, areas where reconstruction for development has started and areas where responding to short-term acute food

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<sup>7</sup> Evaluation of LRRD in Tajikistan. Commissioned by the EC. Peter Holdsworth, Anna Gorter, Robert Stryk. 2007.

<sup>8</sup> . E.C. and U.S. approaches to linking relief, rehabilitation and development. A case study on South Sudan. Paul Harvey. 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell, 1994.

<sup>10</sup> Reducing household vulnerability by addressing physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of shocks.

<sup>11</sup> Joint Guidance Note on Integrated Recovery Planning using Post Conflict Needs Assessments and Transitional Results Frameworks. Working Draft. UNDG & WB. Sept 2007.



security needs of still highly vulnerable populations through relief are a priority and constitute a large component of aid. Such fluid situations, therefore, require flexibility and adjustments. Tajikistan is clearly in a post-conflict and reconstruction phase, aiming predominantly at managing the transition from a central command economy to a market-driven one.

96. Against this background, the three evaluations highlighted specific challenges, including:
- dichotomous international aid architecture including the existence of separate planning processes and funding instruments for financing development and emergency interventions. In complex situations such as those of DRC and Sudan, this often impedes a coherent integrated vision and programme reflecting the needs over the contiguuum, reducing connectedness opportunities and leading to gaps and unmet needs, especially in regards to rehabilitation. In that respect, in the evaluations under review, FAO was found to have taken a reactive role towards fund-raising, often continuing to accept and pursue short-term emergency streams of financing instead of more aggressively advocating and fund-raising for rehabilitation and development funding;
  - dilemmas and trade-offs between the long-term goals of building local and government capacity for service delivery and securing results for an immediate ‘peace dividend’ via the expansion of service delivery through international aid actors. In Sudan, following the signing of the CPA, FAO continued to work extensively with NGO partners in the delivery of direct support despite considerable need for policy support and government institutional strengthening. FAO support has sometime “worked around” government structures and systems in Sudan. In Tajikistan, FAO took a different track to support the resumption of veterinary services on a private basis - promoting private veterinary services through training and support that today have almost national coverage. FAO has also been instrumental in the establishment of the Tajik Veterinary Association. In both countries, insufficient focus has been placed on supporting legal and policy frameworks and institutional development for privatized veterinary services; and
  - recurrent natural resource shocks (in particular drought) superimposed on vulnerable communities recovering from the effects of decades of civil conflict.

#### *Working over the Contiguuum*

97. While FAO’s programming approaches and priorities vary by country, the country evaluations reveal both similarities and differences in the strengths, weaknesses of FAO’s efforts towards LRRD and a contiguuum vision.

#### *Prevention and Preparedness*

98. During non-emergency periods, a focus should be placed within the FAO programming framework *inter alia* on building resilience, disaster risk reduction and emergency planning and preparedness. Good baseline and early warning information are important elements of preparedness. In Tajikistan, Sudan and, to a much lesser extent in DRC, FAO has invested considerable resources towards building state capacity for food security-related data gathering, including early warning systems. While the information generated is deemed relevant and useful by decision-makers, in particular for emergency response planning, evaluations failed to capture impacts of this information on policy making and concern has been expressed about the sustainability of the information systems developed, given resources required for such work and the lack of priority given by governments to quality information and analysis.

#### *Connectedness: Linking Emergency Response, Rehabilitation/Reconstruction and Development*

99. The three evaluations found that the nature of FAO “emergency” activities shifts post acute crisis phase – shifting from simple distribution of agriculture inputs to more development-oriented capacity building interventions (in particular training). In both Tajikistan and Sudan, some local seed production capacity has been built and in the area of animal health, fee-for-service modalities have been introduced. However, not enough has been done in the three



countries evaluated to stimulate local markets and to introduce concepts of cost-recovery and fee-for-service.

100. In terms of exit strategies, the Tajikistan Evaluation identified as promising the leading role being played by the national veterinary association and the potential for the TVA to take over completely the training and coordination work currently being undertaken by FAO. In Sudan, again in the area of livestock health, FAO efforts to integrate CAHWs into a government system were seen to be nascent but positive. In both cases, the main threat to sustainability was identified as the lack of a clear policy/legislative environment for privatized animal health services – and insufficient attention by FAO to the policy framework and “business aspects of private veterinary practice” are identified as important weaknesses in the Organization’s approach. In DRC, far more focus was placed on supporting policy and legal frameworks in agriculture and forestry and, as highlighted in earlier section, with some good results.

### *Managing Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Objectives*

101. The dichotomy mentioned above is exacerbated in FAO by some institutional disconnect over fund mobilisation, planning, programming and management between emergency and rehabilitation interventions on the one hand, and development work on the other hand. This translates in different ways and impacts on FAO’s overall effectiveness, starting with the lack of a unified vision reflected in a coherent NMTPF and linking the objectives of relief, rehabilitation/reconstruction and longer-term development.

102. The objectives and priorities of relief, rehabilitation and development are different and at times contradictory. For instance, sustainability of service provision is a paramount concern in rehabilitation and development and generally calls for fee-for-service. However, cost recovery does not fit well with relief programmes, which try to respond in priority to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable, and hence place greater emphasis on equity and humanity than on sustainability. Disaster-affected communities are supposedly unable to pay for relief services and it would be perceived as immoral to ask them to do so.

103. This tension between development projects following a cost-recovery approach and emergency projects distributing free inputs cropped up in both Tajikistan and DRC. In DRC, the free distribution of vegetable seed by emergency projects disrupted the work of the HUP project which delivers high-quality vegetable seed to groups of urban and peri-urban farmers on a credit basis. In Tajikistan, the project supporting private veterinarians found it difficult to operate in the most remote areas and to deliver benefits to the poorest households. In both cases, they were commendable attempts to address these issues, although the solutions found to try and harmonise the approach were necessarily sub-optimal. Typically, it consisted in compromising on sustainability to ensure some degree of equity, for example by requesting that all districts of Tajikistan access to veterinary medicines at the same subsidized prices, irrespective of their remoteness and costs of transport.

104. In programme implementation, the institutional disconnect also translated into insufficient provision of technical assistance for rehabilitation activities. Although demanding in expertise, rehabilitation activities generally suffer from insufficient technical assistance as technical units give priority to well-planned development work. Lack of backstopping (and in the case of Sudan, weak M&E systems) has meant that lesson learning has been inadequate, limiting the local generation of good practice that would stimulate replication and scaling up within national strategies.

105. Both the Sudan and Tajikistan country evaluations found that the operational transfer from emergency-driven management to development operations’ modalities had been slow, translating into overly bureaucratic processes and resulting in lower efficiency and effectiveness. This issue is particularly relevant in Sudan and DRC where post-conflict governments are investing heavily in decentralization and responsiveness to locally-defined needs is paramount.



106. On a more positive note, the DRC Evaluation found that, despite a lack of a coherent country strategy (NMTPF), FAO's post conflict work had been appropriate and effective during the immediate post-conflict period, due in part to FAO's continuous presence during the acute emergency phase and to dynamic leadership by the FAOR.

## **IX. Conclusions and Recommendations on FAO's Work at Country Level**

107. Overall, FAO's interventions in DRC, Sudan and Tajikistan were found relevant to the country's needs and to those of its populations. In general, activities related to agricultural development as well as those related to emergency and rehabilitation mostly met the needs of the targeted population in context of market dysfunction, decay of public institutions and, in the case of DRC, geographical isolation. However, there were a number of gaps, some common to FAO's work at country level and others specific to these country contexts, identified by the evaluations.

108. Emergency seeds and tools distribution, including in Tajikistan where its continued relevance was questioned, was applied too uniformly. The sustainability of interventions was often lacking, although admittedly many interventions were not aimed at sustainability, as they responded to short-term emergency needs.

109. In the crucial areas of land reform and land governance, natural resource management and forestry, the Organization did not sufficiently pursue opportunities to shape policies and strategies for the future. While this is not solely attributable to FAO, as donor and recipient countries commitment was sometimes lacking, the Organization should become more pro-active in promoting these areas in which it has clear comparative advantage, and making sure the proper policies, legislations and strategies are put into place.

110. FAO's capacity at country level in DRC, Sudan and Tajikistan was not constant over time. This was particularly evident in the case of DRC, where the Organization was not found to be working in a unified fashion. The long absences of FAO Representatives contributed to a lack of stewardship and clear corporate vision and strategy. In addition, due to the large emergency portfolios, there was often a lack of continuity, as the largest proportion of staff is dependent on project funding. Issues with delivery, in DRC and Sudan in particular, related to procurement issues, although some significant improvements have subsequently been made.

111. There was no harmonized and unified vision of FAO work at country level. In Sudan, this occurred between programmes in the North and South, in the example of DRC with the divide between the emergency and development programme. The Organization requires a long-term multidimensional vision that reflects the so-called contiguum, covering the immediate short-term acute needs of vulnerable and most-food insecure populations, medium-term reconstruction needs as well as long-term development goals in order to have the greatest effectiveness and impact at country level.

112. In future, the evaluations advocated for a differentiated strategy that reflect rapidly evolving situations over time and take into account contiguous and disparate situations among regions of the large countries of DRC and Sudan. There is much scope for FAO to link relief, rehabilitation and development and to work along a continuum, simultaneously engaging in these three dimensions.

113. While it was not possible to synthesize the specific recommendations made in each of these evaluations, there are nevertheless a few similar recommendations that attempt to address some of the common issues found in post-conflict and transition situations. They have been re-worded in such a way that they read more generically and, as such, do not reflect specific actionable recommendations contained in each of the reports.

### **Common Recommendation 1: Finalization and/or Review of the FAO National Medium-Term Priority Framework**



114. The NMTPF should reflect an overall coherence, using a contiguum model along the line of FAO strategic objective I “Improved preparedness for, and effective response to, food and agricultural threats and emergencies”. It should also show some continuity between emergency, rehabilitation and development activities, by better targeting populations and areas where it would be necessary to carry on with emergency and rehabilitation interventions and by increasing synergies between the various activities and elaborating some advocacy for transition. Other elements to be considered include FAO comparative advantage in terms of policy and legislative support as well as of analysis and dissemination of information on food security. FAO NMTPF should be realistic vis-à-vis the Organization’s operational capacity and take into account the government strategies and plans.

### **Common Recommendation 2: Strengthening FAO’s Presence at Country Level**

115. In order to increase FAO’s strategic role in advocacy, policy support, institutional strengthening and capacity development and its capacity to manage the project portfolio while respecting the volume and diversity of activities, a stronger presence should be guaranteed at the appropriate levels (national, state or provincial). Furthermore, FAO Representative posts should not be kept vacant for long periods of time and full-time residential FAO presence should be ensured in-country, especially in countries with a large extra-budgetary portfolio.

### **Common Recommendation 3: In-house Cross-organisational Coordination**

116. In order to improve FAO’s operational and technical capacity and effectiveness, FAO staff must coordinate and collaborate more effectively at all levels, first at country level between the emergency staff and Representations and between country staff and headquarters. Support from headquarters and decentralized offices must be received on time by those who requested it.

### **Common Recommendation 4: Policy and Legal Assistance**

117. The Organization should make use of its comparative advantage in order to guide and support governments in formulating strategies, policies and legislation. Particularly in post-conflict and transition contexts, the opportunities to contribute to shaping national policies in areas such as land tenure, forestry, natural resource management, animal health, etc., should not be lost. Considering the unpredictability of donor support, FAO needs to take a pro-active role in promoting assistance in these fields.