

Committee of World Food Security – 47 Plenary Session
Global Thematic Event on CFS Framework for Action on Food Security and Nutrition in
Protracted Crisis
Tuesday, 9 February 2021- 9.30-12.30

KEY REMARKS – Canadian Ambassador Alexandra Bugailiskis

Introduction

- Merci beaucoup Ron. Je suis très contente d’être parmi vous aujourd’hui. Il s’agit d’un moment opportun pour parler de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition des populations touchées par des crises prolongées, sachant qu’elles sont devenues la nouvelle norme ces dernières années. Près de 90% de l’aide humanitaire va désormais à des crises prolongées, dont les besoins humanitaires croissants dépassent le financement de l’action humanitaire.
- We have seen a continued deterioration in food security over recent years, with COVID in this past year exacerbating the situation to a breaking point in many contexts. Collaboration is essential if we are to tackle these interconnected challenges and multiple shocks and find sustainable solutions to end hunger.
- In light of this, I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the **Canada-RBA Resilience Initiative** with you, and to highlight some of its synergies with the CFS Framework for Action.

What is the Resilience Initiative?

- The Resilience Initiative was first explored between Canada and the Rome-based agencies during the summer of 2015, as we were encouraging the RBAs to work together differently.
- The idea of the Resilience Initiative was born with the view to help address the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition while continuing to respond to immediate needs.
- Since the very first discussions, the initiative has been grounded in the principles and approaches promoted in both the RBA conceptual framework on resilience and the CFS Framework for Action, also adopted in 2015.
- The “Resilience Initiative” was formally launched in 2017 as a \$50M joint pilot partnership with FAO, IFAD and WFP, over 5 years targeting over 165,000 vulnerable women, men, girls and boys in the DRC, Niger and Somalia.
- At its core, the Resilience Initiative aims to decrease the dependence of vulnerable communities on humanitarian assistance, reduce the cost of meeting the needs, as well as offer lessons learned at the institutional level.

Linkages with the CFS Framework for Action (CFS-FFA)

- Concretely, the 11 principles of the CFS Framework of Action have translated in some of the key features of the Initiative.
- This can be seen in its 5-year timeframe, its gender responsiveness, its consideration of the short, medium and long-term concurrently, and the direct participation of vulnerable communities and other stakeholders in both its design and implementation.
- There are four issues I would like to specifically focus on to illustrate how the principles remain relevant and are operationalized through the Resilience Initiative:

1. First, the need to consider the 11 principles holistically

- Considering the principles of the Framework for Action in an integrated, coherent and systematic way is essential, as no sole principle would actually work in isolation.
- It is not just about humanitarian response, gender equality, innovative financing, nor sustainable management of natural resources.
- It is about all of them. The Resilience initiative demonstrates that a highly integrated approach is indeed possible.
- How did the Initiative leverage the interconnection between the 11 principles?
 - By targeting the same 30,000 households in protracted crises, with multi-year humanitarian funding over a 5-year timeframe and a focus on food security and nutrition including nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific activities;
 - By building ownership by communities and strengthening local capacity through comprehensive joint analyses and participatory planning processes.
 - By keeping a focus on gender responsiveness through implementing activities that take into account women and men participation without negatively impacting their daily livelihood activities and household roles.
 - The initiative integrated women's empowerment by ensuring their participation and decision making in all community consultative processes; promoting their access to and ownership of assets; creating women's groups to manage resources and establishing Dimitra listening clubs; and provided women and girl's literacy classes, amongst others.
 - By combining activities of technical, social and financial nature for the benefit of the same households and communities, taking into account the strong inter-relation between nutrition, adult literacy, women and girl empowerment, diversification of livelihoods, access to productive capitals including land, etc.

2. Second, the need to adapt to local contexts

- Adaptation to the local contexts is a key component to the success of the Resilience Initiative, building as much as possible on existing tools, structures and systems, not duplicating or reinventing things.
- For example, using the WFP's existing Three Pronged Approach allowed for a successful participatory approach to the design and planning of the program, involving food insecure populations both as beneficiaries and more importantly as members of community groups supported by the program.
- Other examples include working with existing community-based civil society organizations and agricultural cooperatives in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and using local community-based approaches for the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition in both Niger and Somalia.

3. Third, the benefit of a multi-stakeholder approach

- The Resilience Initiative took a multi-stakeholder approach in its design and implementation. Though led by UN agencies, at various stages it has relied on a number of different stakeholders, including Governments, local authorities, communities, Civil Society organizations, academia, and private sector actors at the local level.
- These actors bring their own specific approach, interest and focus.
- For instance, the partnership with academia – in line with the Principle 6 of the FFA “ensure and support comprehensive evidence-based analyses” – has allowed to develop some research on the drivers, impact and communities' perceptions of conflict in the DRC. This has contributed to inform the targeting approach and the design of the activities. It has also contributed to inform discussions on specific consideration related to conflict for the analysis and measurement of resilience.
- Additional examples of strengthened collaboration include the setting up of a WFP-FAO Resilience Unit in Kinshasa, which is pooling resources to do joint planning, fundraising, and communication.

4. Fourth, ensuring ongoing flexibility to evolve as the crises evolve

- Implementing a programme over 5 years in contexts of protracted crisis, with recurrent shocks and stressors, unpredictable events, including conflict, is simply not possible without frequently adjusting the approach when contexts change and call for it.
- The DRC, Niger and Somalia are in situations of “protracted crisis” for different reasons – slow-onset recurrent shocks (such as climate-related) or by quick-onset sudden shocks (such as conflict) or both.

- Regular consultations based on real partnerships and collaboration were instrumental to address challenges and constraints faced in the programming.

Conclusion

- Helping meet the acute needs of vulnerable populations through food and cash assistance so that they can feed themselves and their family remains crucial. However, this short-term support needs to be coupled with strategies to decrease humanitarian needs in the long run and help them to be more resilient to shocks.
- We are grateful that the adoption in 2015 of both the RBA Conceptual Framework on Resilience and the CFS Framework for Action triggered discussions that led to our Resilience Initiative.
- The project shows how programming is strengthened when the 11 principles and the learning aspect are incorporated in a holistic way from the outset, with a view to achieving greater impact.
- Since 2015, the concept of resilience has spread broadly and has become central in both humanitarian and development spheres. New concepts have also emerged, some of which were already anticipated in the CFS Framework for Action and the RBA framework, such as the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the “New Way of Working”.
- More importantly, these concepts are now part of global policy discussions to change our “way of doing business” and innovate, in support of affected populations in crises that are increasingly complex, oftentimes transnational, recurrent, at risk of protraction and can be exacerbated by environmental degradation and climate change.
- I thank you for the opportunity to reflect upon these concepts and learn how they are now being put into practice and refined, a few years into the implementation of our Resilience Initiative, and as it continues to advance.