

Remarks by Ms. Elisabeth Kvitashvili

Thank you Ronald and good morning to you all. Before I start, I would like to wish everyone a belated Happy New Year. And if I might send especially warm greetings to my two former CFS Chairs Ambassador Yahya of Nigeria who guided us thru the VGGTs and Ambassador Verburg of the Netherlands who was a force of nature while we negotiated the FFA. Now to my task.

Five years ago, after more than two years of technical discussions using the format of an Open-Ended Working Group that, notably, included many expert voices from academia, the private sector and civil society and, at times difficult, but always civil negotiations that allowed us to find consensus, this body approved the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crisis which we fondly refer to as the FFA. Our process, one of fostering spirited dialogue, collective ownership and shared responsibility is reflected within the words of the FFA.

The evidence-based policy framework we approved then, remains highly relevant today as an effective instrument at global, national, and local levels. Indeed, the FFA is reflected in global discussions in the context of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, including in a paper put forth by the Interagency Standing Committee on this topic as well as the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. I would like to remind the audience that the FFA is a rather unique action-oriented document which, through 11 inter-related principles, highlights the need for political action and hence high-level political commitment to affect positive change. It provides guidance to policy makers to do so and, proposes distinct processes for transforming host country policies, investments, and institutional arrangements towards addressing food insecurity and malnutrition in a Protracted Conflict situation in a whole of community fashion.

The FFA purposely uses the term “stakeholder’ in a broad sense implying collective responsibility for action in several of the principles, although clearly, in some instances, lead responsibilities may rest with host governments and institutions. We remain stakeholders to the extent that we all have responsibility to remind our senior policymakers of the Principles’ continued relevance today, when communities affected by protracted crisis are perhaps even more vulnerable and prone to food insecurity. We, as practitioners must, therefore, learn to program in ways that address food insecurity and malnutrition and use the tools available to us including importantly this CFS FFA.

The Principles describe how to address critical food insecurity and undernutrition manifestations and build resilience in PC situations in a manner that is adapted to specific challenges of these situations- including by focusing on the need to protect those affected by, or at risk from, PC situations, by elevating the role of women and girls and, [that](#) avoid exacerbating underlying causes of food insecurity and undernutrition, and instead, where opportunities exist, contribute towards resolving them.

I was proud then and remain so today to be associated with this remarkable accomplishment. Foremost in my mind, we identified in a number of Principles, issues and approaches that were at the time not recognized as critical. I would suggest that we were quite prescient – or at least brought together some emerging strands of thinking. For example, the recognition that shocks and stresses are perennial features of these PC landscapes and not anomalies and from this, [recognize that](#) concurrent investment to reduce and manage risk, build adaptive capacity and facilitate inclusive growth is necessary. This was a relatively new concept that today is seen globally in efforts to build resilience in communities, and link across the triple nexus. Further, the sequencing, layering and integration or blending of humanitarian and development partners, analysis, programs and funding to comprehensively address the underlying causes of recurrent crises while, simultaneously managing the

risk inherent in working in places subject to recurrent crisis is understood today, to be a basic starting premise, unlike in the past when actions were sequenced one after the other. Whether in the Sahel or Colombia, many host governments, donors and implementing partners have understood that the band aid approach of the 20th century no longer fits. To be fit for purpose, to be modern and 21st century our collective approach as called for in the FFA, requires us to go deeper and address, where possible, social and political inequities, [ethnic disputes](#), [resource competition](#), maybe climate related changes, those context-specific issues which prevent communities from attaining a measure of food security even in the midst of a PC blending different types of assistance through a whole of IP approach.

And, despite our differences in opinion on some issues such as what a protracted crisis is and how support to food security and livelihoods can contribute to peace; we WERE able to reach across the aisle and FIND consensus, which seems to be a practice that has been increasingly challenged in recent years. I recall the extraordinary efforts colleagues from Argentina and Russia, Mexico, the CSM and others undertook to help my co-chair Ambassador Josephine Gaita of Kenya and me find consensus. We collectively demonstrated the positive role a multi-stakeholder policy convergence process can have and importantly the value of THIS particular forum. And as an aside, having Ambassador Verburg in the background as an ally and gentle enforcer, didn't hurt either!

The leadership shown by this body, the CFS, in adopting the FFA, was moreover at the time part of the broader international effort to reform the emergency humanitarian response system which was and perhaps remains either broken (according to some observers) or overwhelmed and perhaps out of tune with current realities on the ground, according to others.

The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit called for changes in the way implementing organizations including the RBAs and countries, donors

and recipients alike think about, program against, and respond, to a myriad of crisis. The FFA is a prime example of a collective effort to map out a more strategic way of addressing protracted crisis. We know for example-- food insecurity can no longer simply be dealt with by providing food aid. As noted in the Framework and as suggested by evidence-based analysis, which is Principle 6 of the FFA, the use of Cash Transfers, suggests a better alignment with what people need and increases the transparency of what is being delivered.

Over the past decade, the very nature of humanitarian assistance has adapted to the more complex and protracted nature of crisis. As called for in the FFA, humanitarian assistance has moved beyond response to shocks to expanding to address chronic emergency vulnerability. Risk reduction, early recovery can contribute to building resilience. These concepts are touched upon in the FFA, again somewhat ahead of the times.

USAID's current food security efforts to reduce global poverty, hunger and malnutrition has an increased focus on risk management and resilience to break the cycle of chronic vulnerability, poverty, hunger and water insecurity. Resilience is built through among other things, food security. The US approach is context specific as called for in the FFA and does not seek to put a proscribed response in place. Appropriate approaches and investments are dependent on the country context including the variations at the sub-national level. An example of an integrated approach that draws heavily from the FFA principles.

Let me close by saying that the FFA is just that - a framework against which we should work to address food insecurity and undernutrition...it is not a guarantee of success nor is it a tool that can be called upon to fix what is essentially a failure of the international community to address the underlying causes of protracted crisis as called for in the FFA.

Coming perhaps at just the moment it was needed, the FFA was an important consultative process, an inclusive process, that brought

together disparate strands of thinking and action into a single, negotiated document. Just over 5 years we can see the DNA of the FFA in global dialogs and more importantly operational changes on the ground in protracted crisis. Despite an increased burden in these contexts, there IS better coordination among players on the ground, analytical capacity HAS improved, and the focus on resilience is making a difference. Five years on we can be proud of what we achieved and how it has influenced our thinking and work.

Thank you indeed for this opportunity to address you today. Ronald, back to you I believe.