



Anticipating disasters: Forecast-based Financing in WFP

Side event on the margins of the 2020 first regular session of the Executive Board

Tuesday, 25 February 2020, 13:15–14:45

Aula I – Aula Delegatis, WFP headquarters

Light lunch will be served in the Peace Garden from 13:15 to 13:40

The World Food Programme is inviting its members and partners to a side event that showcases the role of anticipatory action within humanitarian and government disaster response systems based on weather and seasonal forecasts. The event will be facilitated by the WFP Director of Programme — Humanitarian and Development Division, Mr David Kaatrud, with perspectives from WFP's Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Unit, Bangladesh Country Office, and representatives from the Governments of Germany, Norway, Denmark and Switzerland.

Context

Extreme weather events and conflict are two of the gravest global risks to food security. More than 80 percent of the world's food-insecure people live in countries prone to natural hazards that further aggravate food insecurity and malnutrition by destroying land, livestock, crops, livelihoods and food supplies. In 2018, these stressors had the biggest impact on acute food insecurity and malnutrition, affecting 59 million people in 24 countries and requiring urgent humanitarian action.¹ To address the increasing number and severity of extreme weather events, which is exacerbated by climate change, humanitarian organizations need to support a transition from repetitive crisis response to forward-looking risk management.

Forecast-based Financing (FbF) is an innovative approach to manage climate risks by acting in anticipation of a severe weather event, based on weather forecasts and with pre-positioned finance. Piloted since 2015 by WFP and the Red Cross, FbF is now on the radar of many humanitarian organizations, donors, and governments around the world that are vulnerable to the effects of increasing climate variability and extreme weather. FbF enables preventive, anticipatory actions to mitigate the impact of natural hazards, reducing humanitarian needs and preventing disasters. The approach is based on credible weather forecast information that is linked with vulnerability and exposure data; these forecasts are then linked to pre-positioned funding and contingency plans which are implemented in the critical window before an extreme weather event occurs. This mechanism is changing the way the humanitarian system responds to climate-related disasters: it complements the existing preparedness and readiness plans of humanitarian and government stakeholders with an anticipatory system to reduce the impacts and scale of those needs *before* they materialize.

With invaluable financial support from Germany, Norway and Denmark, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund, WFP is working together with national and local government partners in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean to link climate early warning systems with anticipatory actions. Progress of WFP's FbF programme to date has benefited from WFP's extensive in-house expertise on climate early warnings, climate services, risk and vulnerability assessments, innovative delivery pathways, monitoring and evaluation and active interagency collaboration.

Strong and diverse partnerships are fundamental for the success of FbF. WFP's FbF programme has established systematic institutional partnerships and linkages with key actors including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the START Network and the World Bank. Some of these partnerships are facilitated by the Early Action Focus Task Force, the Interagency Standing Committee's early warning, and the early action readiness group, and the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership that was

¹ [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018.](#)

launched at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in September 2019.

Objectives

The side event is an opportunity for WFP's membership and interested partners to gain an overview about WFP's approach to forecast-based, anticipatory action in a rapidly changing climate. The session will explore:

- the need for innovative, forecast-based approaches to address the increasing frequency and intensity of climate disasters;
- the basic logic and setup of FbF programmes at country level;
- institutional perspectives on FbF from donor and recipient countries, as well as relevant technical units in WFP; challenges and lessons learned from pilot projects; and
- the way forward developing FbF capacity in WFP and its partner countries.

Agenda

13:15 Lunch will be served in the Peace Garden

13:40 Welcome and opening comments

- Mr David Kaatrud, WFP Director, Programme — Humanitarian and Development Division

13:45 Presentation: WFP's Global FbF programme – How it works

- Mr Jesse Mason, WFP Global FbF Coordinator
Brief overview of the programme goals and activities, lessons learned, and the innovative partnerships at its center

13:55 Presentation: An FbF intervention – Bangladesh example

- Mr Richard Ragan, WFP Country Director, Bangladesh (via conference call)
Brief overview of the FbF project in Bangladesh and the recent July activation of anticipatory cash-based transfers

14:05 Institutional perspectives – Facilitated panel discussion

- Moderator: Mr Gernot Laganda, Chief of Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes Unit
- Dr. Thomas Zahneisen, Director for Humanitarian Assistance, German Federal Foreign Office
- H.E. Aslak Brun, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway
- Ms Jette Michelsen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark

This panel aims to have an open discussion on the donor perspective on forecast-based anticipatory action and how FbF fits within the wider context of donor strategies and priorities for humanitarian assistance. It also aims to encourage a critical discussion on opportunities and challenges in scaling up investments in anticipatory action.

14:30 Questions and answers, and remarks from the floor

14:45 Closing comments

Mr David Kaatrud, WFP Director, Programme — Humanitarian and Development Division