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Presentation of Central America PRRO 200490, 2014-2016
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Good afternoon.

I am presenting now the Regional PRRO for Central America, on behalf of the Country Directors of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

The Central American region is constantly affected by small and mid-size natural disasters that compromise the precarious food security situation of the poor.

El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua are all lower-middle income countries with high levels of inequality and poverty, with national rates ranging from 46 to 67%.

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As shown in this map, recurrent shocks are very common. In addition to earthquakes and plagues, such as the current coffee rust, these countries experienced 133 extreme weather events between 2000 and 2012.

Hazards like these can easily turn into crises because populations with few means of recovery often live in high-risk areas.

We have used the regional approach to PRROs in Central America since 1999, after Hurricane Mitch struck the region.

Through this project we have supported national response efforts, employing fast and efficient response, contingency planning and pre-positioned stocks to meet the immediate needs of food-insecure populations in the face of emergencies.

We have also addressed aggravating factors that persist after the initial emergency response and provided the opportunity for community members to create and rehabilitate assets and infrastructure.

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Pending approval, this new PRRO will begin in January 2014. With a duration of three years, the operation plans to support an average of 428,000 people with emergency food assistance each year, valued at 70 million USD.

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The PRRO reflects recommendations of the WFP 2012 Evaluation and the 2013 Regional Portfolio Evaluation, which concluded that the PRRO is necessary, effective and that the regional approach to this project works best.

As an improvement, this new PRRO includes the use of the cash and voucher modality, when feasible, and draws from successful experiences that are ongoing in the region such as the use of Forward Purchase Facility, the allocation of contingency stocks in each Country Office and the local purchases preferably from P4P farmers' organizations.

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It incorporates the response to the ongoing coffee rust crisis –its impact on income generation and food access of coffee workers, small-holder farmers and their families.

Through PRRO preparedness, relief and recovery efforts we will also safeguard ongoing investments in resilience throughout the region.

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Thank you.