

Background Note:

Conflict and Hunger – What actions can the RBAs take to implement UN Security Council Resolution 2417?

19-02-2019

On February 28th 2019, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will organize a seminar on the topic of Hunger and Conflict. UNSC resolution 2417 addresses the link between hunger and conflict. This resolution underscores the need for early warning, early action and to invest in resilience by safeguarding agriculture-based livelihoods as an essential contribution towards preventing and responding to food crises. The seminar will focus on how the Rome Based Agencies (RBAs) can implement this resolution and will be a precursor to the FAO/EC sponsored Global Network against Food Crisis event in Brussels in April 2019.

1. Trends in Hunger, Conflict and Resilience

The 2018 *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* report shows that hunger rose again in 2017, with 821 million people now living in both hunger and poverty. Among the drivers of this rising trend are climate variability and extremes, civil conflicts that show little sign of abating and the interaction of the two, which can exacerbate existing poverty, inequality and lack of access to resources.¹

Millions of people continue to be affected by acute hunger, with hotspots of acute food insecurity that repeatedly require urgent humanitarian action and are becoming increasingly protracted. *The Global Report on Food Crises 2018*² warns that, in 2017 almost 124 million people across 51 countries faced crisis levels of acute food insecurity or worse. Those in IPC Phase 4, which consisted of 20.9 million people in 2017, face an elevated risk of famine. It is also important to note that worldwide nearly 52 million children under the age of five are acutely malnourished. Urgent action is required to assist these extremely vulnerable populations.

We cannot accept that one in 9 people go to bed hungry each night. The consequences of hunger to their lives are too great. For example, trends in food insecurity and conflict can be linked to increased levels of migration. In fact, recent research by WFP has shown that refugee outflows per 1000 population increase by 0.4 percent for each additional year of conflict, and increase by 1.9 percent for each percentage increase of food insecurity. In that scenario, the number of migrants would increase by approximately 800.000 migrants. Food insecurity is found to be one of the critical 'push' factors driving global migration.³

But there is hope. On May 24, 2018, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously endorsed Resolution 2417 (S/RES/2417). This UNSC Resolution has paved the way for addressing conflict-induced hunger. It is a recognition of the unanimous

¹ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2018. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018. Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition*. Rome.

² Food Security Information Network (FSIN). 2018. *Global Report on Food Crises 2018*.

³ WFP. 2017. *At the root of the exodus: Food security, conflict and international migration*. Rome.

condemnation of starvation and stresses the protection of the most vulnerable in situations of conflict. Moreover, the resolution identifies a series of actions and measures that can be undertaken to address International Humanitarian Law (IHL) violations.

Securing the means to produce food and investing in safeguarding agriculture-based livelihoods during conflicts is also essential. In practice, this is a call for closer collaboration between peace, humanitarian and development actors and related interventions, specifically in the context of conflict induced food insecurity. In line with the Secretary-General's call for scaled up and coherent efforts to sustain peace, a comprehensive response is needed to respond to situations of severe food insecurity resulting from conflict.

In our world of plenty and abundance, crises like conflict and famine are completely avoidable. Where it happens, it is man-made. The fact that this is happening in the 21st century, in an age of progress and unparalleled wealth, is unprecedented. It is shameful. We need to reverse the trend. If *people* are the main cause of famine and severe food insecurity, then surely *people* are able to solve this issue. This means we can achieve the end of famine through political will. The solution lies within and among us.

Box 1: Focus on Africa

- With the unprecedented humanitarian crises in Syria, South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Yemen. Africa is hit hardest.
- With Africa's population projected to double from 1.2 billion in 2016 to 2.4 billion people by 2050 demand for food will increase. Currently, Africa has the youngest population in the world, with 364 million Africans, of which most are not employed and are migrating to the cities.
- Africa is annually spending US\$ 35 billion to import food to feed its people, which means Africa is exporting its jobs to those it imports food from, while Africa has the highest concentration of arable land, which is ideal for crop production.
- Making agriculture a productive and dynamic sector, will improve the lives of more than 330 million Africans, who are living in poverty, in rural areas and are depending on agriculture.
- Prioritizing youth employment will contribute as a means to address political instability and global insecurity.

2. Towards a comprehensive policy and strategy framework

Recent high-level achievements contribute to an improved international enabling environment for addressing factors contributing to the likelihood of famine. These include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; the Commitments to Action taken at the World Humanitarian Summit; and the new European Consensus on Development.

The humanitarian-development nexus with peace-building considerations emerged as a consensual need for the humanitarian, development and peace actors to align themselves more effectively around collective outcomes and work jointly on analysis and data collection, improve on devising multi-year planning frameworks, collaborate at the country level and increase the coherence of aid deployment.

Donors, governments, implementing agencies, civil society and regional organizations reached a high level of specialization in defining and implementing prevention/preparedness

and response actions to famine situations. A number of successful initiatives have been implemented, such as the regional AGIR and IDDRSI in West and East Africa respectively, and the Ethiopia Productive Safety Nets Programme.

Resources for humanitarian assistance have increased substantially in recent years. For instance, funding for emergency responses to address the four most severe recent food crises (South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Nigeria) grew from USD 2.9 billion in 2013 to more than USD 6.5 billion in 2017, and was estimated at USD 7.3 billion as of September 2018.⁴

3. Building high-level political commitment towards eradicating famine

The Rome-Based Agencies, the World Bank and Member States are joining forces to eradicate famine. Since 2016, the European Commission, FAO and WFP, joined by further partners thereafter, have conducted a joint analysis of threats to global food security in an annual exercise that culminated in the publication of *The Global Report on Food Crises* in 2017 and 2018. In April 2017, the UN Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank (WB) co-chaired a high-level meeting on famine and fragility. A subsequent event at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2017, reiterated calls for further action in response to famine situations.

The Global Network against Food Crises was launched on 23 May 2016, as a step towards enhancing the impact of future responses to food crises at the global level by regularly producing joint reports, in real time, which are based on key analyses and contain timely response options. It is intended to prompt coordination among stakeholders and promote joint planning and coordinated responses to food crises. In addition, it will both improve capacities to learn from past crises, as well as increase the level of transparency and availability of crucial analysis of global needs. The Network is engaged and will further scale up engagement to achieve three goals:

- Foster improved, joint and harmonized food insecurity, resilience and risk analyses of contexts at risk of food crises by building on the experience and partnership behind the 2017 and 2018 editions of *The Global Report on Food Crises*. This may include the development, for instance, of strategic linkages with the data and analytics work stream, Artemis, of the World Bank-coordinated Famine Early Action Mechanism (FAM).
- Enhance partners' evidence-based strategic programming for sustainable solutions to address and prevent food crises. The Network will foster shared understanding of the types of actions and approaches which have a proven validity in the prevention and response to food crises along the humanitarian/development with peace building considerations.
- Promote advocacy and coordination at national, regional, and global levels by developing joint, actionable recommendations for addressing humanitarian, development and peacebuilding needs.

⁴ As reported in *The Global Report on Food Crises* 2018, figures were calculated using the data downloaded from OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS).

During the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings in 2017, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres committed to a "zero tolerance" for famine and agreed "to do more and do better" to put an end to these devastating events. Early 2018, the World Bank disclosed the global partnership for the **Famine Early Action Mechanism (FAM)**, to be announced formally at the UNGA of September 2018. The World Bank, United Nations, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and other global partners are developing the Famine Action Mechanism (FAM) as the first global mechanism dedicated to supporting upstream interventions in famine prevention, preparedness and early action. The FAM seeks to formalize links between early warnings, financing and implementation arrangements. The FAM will focus on:

- Enhancing the capacity to forecast areas most at risk of famine, building on existing famine early warning systems to enhance. By leveraging the World Bank's analytics and partnering with global technology firms—including Microsoft, Google, Amazon Web Services and tech startups—the FAM will explore the use of state-of-the-art technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, to provide more powerful early warnings to identify when food crises threaten to turn into famines. More frequent and powerful data are critical for helping decision makers respond earlier to get ahead of escalating risks.
- Making financing more predictable and strategic by linking, for the first time, famine early warnings with pre-arranged financing to ensure that funds are released before a crisis emerges. It also will seek to tackle the root causes of famine and help build livelihoods, safety nets and stronger coping skills of local communities.
- Ensuring resources are channeled to the most effective and well-coordinated interventions and will work with existing systems to build upon the good and ongoing efforts taking place at the country- and global-levels.

The FAM will be rolled out initially in five countries that exhibit some of the most critical and ongoing food security needs and ultimately will be expanded to provide global coverage. In addition, the FAM illustrates the World Bank's efforts to promote a preventative and preparedness approach to crises and is a concrete application of the Global Crisis Risk Platform (GCRP). The FAM also represents the deepening of partnerships across the humanitarian and development communities to address the most complex, multi-dimensional challenges of extreme poverty.

In May 2018, the UN Security Council passed **Resolution 2417**, recognizing the direct link between armed conflict and conflict-induced famine conditions. The Resolution establishes a link between hunger and conflict, to prevent and eradicate conflict-induced hunger. Implementation will focus on closer collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors, specifically in the context of induced food insecurity. Specifically, the resolution calls for:

- Early warning briefings, when risk of conflict induced famine and wide-spread food insecurity occurs in armed conflicts;
- Granting of humanitarian access; and

- Provides the UN Security Council with a toolkit for action to respond in situations where the denial of access occurs.

4. Today's Challenges

Protracted crises are becoming the new norm, while in the late 1990s only four countries were considered to be in protracted crises; there are now around 20 countries. As these crises persist, countries and communities need more effective and sustainable strategies to build their capacity against shocks and stressors.

It follows from this situation that securing the means to produce food and investing in safeguarding agriculture-based livelihoods during conflicts is essential. This involves focused action for building resilience and sustainable development. Important aspects of this include:

- Respect of International Law and the prohibition of starvation as a method of warfare. A strong stance against violations of international law is essential.
- Increase efforts to prevent food insecurity – from early warning to early action. Preventing conflict in the short run, but also safeguarding societies from the perils of a generation raised in hunger.

It is crucial to address the immediate needs of crisis-affected families through life-and livelihood-saving assistance, as well as to simultaneously tackle the root causes of severe food insecurity. Humanitarian aid in itself is not a sustainable answer.

Partnerships for implementation

It is important to form partnerships, to achieve sustainable peace and leave no one behind in the effort to realize the Agenda 2030 vision and the SDG's, with actors from public and private sector, to address severe food insecurity, by:

- Promoting investment in food security and preserving and building resilience of agricultural livelihoods and food systems, to mitigate severe food insecurity and the risk of conflict.
- Strengthening partnerships through mechanisms such as the Global Network Against Food Crises, the World Bank's FAM etc.

Humanitarian/development aid disconnect, but are both part of the same coin

Humanity is at a critical juncture with an unprecedented level of humanitarian needs driven largely by protracted crises. Stronger and more frequent shocks are disproportionately impacting the world's most vulnerable and food insecure populations, particularly women and children. Humanitarian responses to crises have saved lives and helped to restore livelihoods but have often not succeeded in addressing underlying vulnerabilities. Often development aspects in the nexus between humanitarian aid and more secured and structural development are not connected to a follow up of direct humanitarian support. Meanwhile, development gains can still be quickly wiped out by a natural disaster, conflict, or a surge in food prices. Addressing underlying vulnerabilities through our humanitarian work could facilitate and form the basis of our development efforts.

Advancing new, differentiated and innovative approaches to protracted crises, including promoting resilience of vulnerable communities and livelihoods is necessary to achieve our goal of Zero Hunger. But it requires a new way of thinking and working, in line with the Commitments made within Agenda 2030, World Humanitarian Summit of 2016 and in the

Grand Bargain. They call for integrated, context-specific, multi-year, multi-partner and multi-year financed actions. Actions should be focused on:

- Connecting building resilience and rebuilding food systems
- Forcefully promoting local procurement as the default option
- Missing link of involvement of private sector and market access

5. Connecting building resilience and rebuilding food systems

The concept of resilience has emerged as a viable framework for this, integrating humanitarian and long-term development initiatives. Governments, donors, development and humanitarian actors and civil society organizations responded with increasing commitment, awareness raising, funds and workforce mobilization.

Resilience at macro level

We need to move from a reactive, crisis-led, conflict and drought management to a proactive management. We know all too well that early response to conflict-related drought saves lives and is much cheaper: prevention is better than cure. In October 2015, it was estimated that a late response to the El Niño drought in Ethiopia would cost \$1.7 billion whereas an early response would cost only \$720 million.

In addition, we can prepare and overcome emergencies, such as droughts. The traditional response to droughts is short-term provision of humanitarian assistance in the form of food, livestock feed, cash, and health and nutrition support. While humanitarian assistance is critical to ensure lives are saved in the immediate term, we need to tackle the root cause of this problem. We need to move from a reactive, crisis-led, drought management to a proactive drought management. We have no shortage of knowledge, technologies and resources. Good practices for addressing the drought and improving agricultural rural development exist. Moreover, technology is on our side. New technologies like satellite data - which can not only predict droughts, but can also be used to map water consumption and crop growth over very large areas - are available for farmers. The challenge is how we ensure that the knowledge, technologies and best practices are available for the farmers in Africa. Another opportunity is to scale up integrated soil and water management, which can conserve soil moisture and allow some production to continue in droughts, from the policy-making arena to the farm. We also have crops. Crop selection offers great opportunities to increase water efficiency. We have new methods that create targeted and small, yet important, changes in crops, which require less facilities and time. They could be applied by a broad group of public and private breeders, and in a much wider range of crops, focusing on the specific needs of farmers. It is important to:

- Make full use of big data relating to predicting and preparing for emergencies like droughts;
- Integrate and align agriculture water and soil management strategies to maximize response;
- Connect farmers to technologies: changing treats to opportunities;
- Move from reactive to proactive management in drought emergencies. This includes making humanitarian resources available before a crises occurs.

Resilience at household level

The majority of people affected by conflict and protracted crisis rely on crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry for their livelihoods. Conflict, violence and droughts interrupt food

production and agriculture, deplete food stocks and seeds reserves, disrupt markets, deepen hunger and exacerbate malnutrition. Agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods, providing food and incomes and, by extension, contributing to stability. As such, it simply cannot be an afterthought when addressing the needs of those affected by crisis. Maintaining food production and rebuilding the agriculture sector are fundamental to preventing loss of life from severe hunger and to providing a pathway towards resilience, recovery and, ultimately, development. Rebuilding and reconstructing food systems are of the highest priority. At the same time this should be done through social protection programs, improving livelihoods, access to health, education etc. Also to make future generation resilient.

In that respect, a complementary approach that bridges humanitarian and development objectives, support and programming is needed. This approach should aim to meet immediate food needs, while sustainably increasing food security and strengthening the resilience of food insecure households and contributing to improved prospects for peace at the same time. Joint programming represents an unprecedented effort to support and invest in the same vulnerable communities over a certain period through integrated, context-specific, market oriented, gender and nutrition-sensitive assistance. They should aim at protecting and promoting people's food and livelihood sources by restoring, rehabilitating and supporting their productive assets, improving market linkages and strengthening technical and marketing capacities. This will contribute to addressing the root causes of food insecurity and vulnerability, and ultimately reduce decency on humanitarian assistance.

This requires first of all joint programming of the RBAs together with the World Bank from the moment a crisis occurs. A team of experts should the situation and starts working on a joint program. In this team of experts also experts of the private sector should be included.

<p><i>Box 2: Canadian Rome based Agencies Resilience initiative</i></p> <p>Canada is partnering with the UN RBAs to further test in the field their joint conceptual framework for strengthening resilience for food security and nutrition. To do so, Canada is making a commitment to address humanitarian needs in protracting crises by contributing US\$ 38 million for an innovative five year programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Somalia. The initiative enables the RBAs to join their expertise and comparative advantages to implement economic/livelihood support activities, rural micro-finance, sustainable agricultural and environmental practices and social cohesion interventions in a mutually reinforcing way that supports peace and bring hope and perspective to people who have been through very difficult situations. As rural women and youth are at forefront of the fight against hunger and malnutrition, the RBA resilience initiative promote women's empowerment and leadership through <u>comprehensive food and agricultural assistance</u>.</p>
<p><i>Box 3: Netherlands Horn of Africa Initiative</i></p> <p>In recognition of the links between conflict and hunger, as laid out in UNSCR-2417, the Dutch Government will substantially invest (\$ 24 million) in strengthening the resilience of agriculture-based livelihoods in conflict-affected regions in the Horn of Africa in the coming 4 years. Focus will be enhancing, via a RBA approach, the resilience of agriculture-based livelihoods and the resilience of local food systems in crises and conflict settings.</p>

6. Introducing local procurement as the default option

Nearly one billion people in developing countries suffer from malnutrition. This is traditionally addressed with food aid from donor countries. But what if a local company builds a factory and produce nutritious food for the region using local raw materials? Then there is a sustainable business model that counteracts malnutrition and stimulates the economy by building resilience and sustainable local and regional food systems. Africa feeds Africa could and should be a philosophy behind humanitarian aid and should be the business model used for it. This means local employment, local purchasing and regional sales. It means building rural economies, upscaling agricultural production and much more. This means breaking an old tradition within the humanitarian community namely importing food aid from outside Africa, especially from developed countries. Africa should and must be enabled to feed itself. That's why we need to invest in a continent itself by building local and regional food systems and local food businesses. Only then you combine humanitarian aid with development.

Box 4: DSM example

There is a sustainable business model that counteracts malnutrition and sustains development and the economy sustainably proves the example of Africa Improved Food by DSM. This joint venture between the Rwandan government and a consortium of DSM and financial parties opened a food factory in Rwanda in 2017. The factory produces porridge from locally sourced maize and soya beans and enriches it with vitamins and minerals. This means healthy food for 2 million young children, pregnant women and mothers who breastfeed nutrition and a better future for more than 40,000 farmers. They have now increased their income by 30 to 40%. This also brings about a structural and sustainable economic development in that region.

Results of practical cases show that it works. In the case of DSM factory in Rwanda, more than 2 million people are fed by the built factory. Furthermore, in the first year, it has garnered 300 high-quality jobs and the income of more than 20,000 is 30 to 40 percent increased. The latter is the result of an improved yield and a guaranteed purchase by the factory. This purchase is guaranteed for farmers for a period of 5 years. This results into better harvests and sells at good prices as well as a huge boost for regional agricultural and economic development. But there are also bottlenecks. Due to higher yields because of European subsidies, the world market price level has declined, so that the factory now has to produce below cost price. WFP is not prepared to take measures for this purpose with the result, that the factory may have to close. This not only creates an acute hunger problem in the region, but WFP will also have to provide 2 million more people with annual food aid. UNICEF has, however, taken measures, namely they have introduced the rule that in principle food aid must be purchased locally if possible.

In order to make full use of the potential in all affected regions the principle of buying locally should be introduced for all UN agencies, especially WFP. Exemptions should only be acceptable if prices of local produced food are more than 15% higher than the world market *price*.

7. Missing link involvement of private sector and market access

The millions of dollars invested in humanitarian assistance must also lay the foundations for a development framework and contribute to peace and stability. Investing in rural

development and building stable and resilient food systems are indispensable aspects of such a framework.

This is the only way to prevent these crises from happening again in the future. But, we have to do more. We have technologies, we have crops, we have experience, we have funding. We have to make huge investments in rural and agricultural economies. Food systems and food supply-chain need complex and multi-scale governance systems, which should involve a range of actors across the public and private sectors as well as civil society. Particularly, the importance of engaging the private sector deserves more recognition. You cannot build or rebuild food systems without the expertise and involvement of the private sector. Yet today, private sector parties are insufficiently involved in preventing and responding to food crises. They must be involved in the conversation on how to reach socially sustainable investments that increase the resilience of local populations and promote biodiversity.

Overall there is an immense opportunity to achieve the SDGs through greater interaction across silos. This means we must all transform our way of working. There needs to be a critical step-change in how the world (we) approaches the nexus humanitarian aid and development. It is not just about more money. It is about breaking down silos and addressing the crises in a joined-up way. The RBAs, government and businesses must think about connections across the humanitarian and development nexus: what can they mean for investments, what commitments can they make and what actions should they be taking.

In a concrete manner, it could or should include making heat maps for every crisis in which you not only describe the humanitarian needs, but also the development steps needed, rebuilding the food system based on local experience, needs and previous food systems and scoping for expertise both from international organizations, government and private sector. Based on this heat map a consortium of experts from the RBAs, government and private sector can start developing joint programs as well investments needed.

8. Proposed innovative approaches

In order to face current and protracted crises we need innovative approaches within the context of the nexus between humanitarian aid and development. The proposed approaches are:

- Joint programming: WFP, IFAD, FAO and WB should establish teams the moment a crises occurs and start preparing joint programming;
- Connecting building resilience and rebuilding food systems: building on resilience and the global/national and house hold levels;
- Introducing local procurement as the default option: introduces the principle for local procurement for all UN agencies, including WFP;
- Missing link involvement of private sector and market access: include experts of the private sector in crises team and establish private sector investment programs.