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Social protection and resilience

Supporting livelihoods in protracted crises and in fragile and humanitarian contexts



Centre for
Social Protection



Institute of
Development Studies

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASP	Adaptive Social Protection	IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
CADENA	Mexican national programme Componente de Atencion a los Desastres Naturales	IPCC	Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change
CCA	Climate change adaptation	LFSSP	Lesotho Linking Food Security to Social Protection Programme
CdR	Caisses de Résilience	MFIs	Micro Financial Institutions
CFS	Committee on World Food Security	MIS	Management and information systems
CFW	Cash for work	NDMA	Kenya National Drought Management Authority
CGP	Lesotho Cash Grant Project	NGO	Non-governmental organization
CODI	Core Diagnostic Instrument	ODI	Overseas Development Institute
CSA	Climate-smart agriculture	OPM	Oxford Policy Management
CT	Cash transfer	PILU	Programme Implementation and Learning Unit
DRR	Disaster risk reduction	PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme in Ethiopia
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development	RIMA	Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis tool
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	RM-TWG	Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group
EA	Early Action	RNR	Renewable Natural Resources
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
FbF	Forecast based Financing	SF	Strategic Framework
GDP	Gross domestic product	SOFA	State of Food and Agriculture
HIEP	DFID's Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme	SP	Social protection
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts	SPIAC-B	Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board
HLPHCT	High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers	UN	United Nations
HSNP	Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IDP	Internally displaced person	VCI	Vegetation Condition Index
IDS	Institute for Development Studies	USD	United States Dollar
		WFP	World Food Programme
		WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

INTRODUCTION

The paper discusses the role that social protection can play in saving livelihoods while also enhancing the capacity of households to respond, cope and withstand threats and crises. The paper builds on FAO Social Protection Framework (FAO, 2017) and focuses on the role of social protection systems in humanitarian contexts, with a closer look at protracted crises and a discussion on the importance of shock-sensitive and responsive systems, even in stable contexts. The paper acknowledges that strengthening resilience at national and community levels requires a multisector approach, where risk-informed social protection interventions, including cash transfers, can become a critical component.

The paper falls within the current context of i) increased complexity and recurrence of humanitarian crises; ii) massive population movements due to distress migration, forced and protracted displacement; iii) limited financial capacity to effectively meet humanitarian appeals and; iv) scale-up of social protection interventions and innovations across regions. It draws upon a review of FAO work on social protection in development and humanitarian contexts, and then develops the key aspects of the FAO approach *vis-à-vis* social protection in a range of different scenarios. In conclusion, key messages for FAO future engagement in this sector are identified.

Evidence coming from across regions have shown the important contributions social protection programmes have on a broad range of indicators, including food security, access to basic services, as well as in enhancing the economic and productive capacity of the poorest and marginalized

communities. These benefits have been shown to strengthen the capacity of rural households to move progressively out of poverty, but also to effectively manage multiple risks and stresses.

The paper describes different operational entry points to allow existing social protection programmes to enhance their ability to effectively manage a crisis. However, it also discusses key challenges in this regard, including the capacity of the system, considerations regarding neutrality and impartiality in conflict contexts, sustainable financing of contingency mechanisms, as well as the need to find convergence between poverty reduction and humanitarian action objectives. For the latter, FAO Strategic Framework reflects the Organization's commitment to a comprehensive vision around rural poverty and resilience: focusing on prevention, strengthening economic and productive capacities at household and community level, while promoting innovative sustainable solutions and livelihoods strategies in the context of rural transformation. This approach is further reinforced by the alignment to the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda for Humanity.

In this context, FAO comparative advantage lies in knowledge generation, policy work and operational know-how to effectively support governments in the design and implementation of shock-sensitive and responsive social protection systems, and in the direct implementation of cash-based and cash plus interventions in emergency contexts. But, most importantly, FAO works through a twin-track approach to effectively gather key lessons and operational expertise to progressively and effectively contribute to bridging the humanitarian and development divide.



1. A NEW CONTEXT: CHANGING DIMENSIONS OF HUMANITARIAN AID

Today, the humanitarian system is under unprecedented strain. Disasters - due either to natural or human-induced crises - are not only more frequent but also characterized by increased complexity. The international humanitarian community is progressively faced with the need to respond to crises characterized by a combination of multiple and compounding vulnerabilities: violence, instability, acute poverty and weak governance. Consequently, **an important part of humanitarian aid goes to chronic and prolonged crises**, where the number of refugees and internally displaced persons is at its highest point since the Second World War.¹

The situation is even more complex owing to the **emerging climate change patterns**. The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that impacts from recent climate-related extremes, such as heat waves, droughts, floods, cyclones and wildfires, reveal significant vulnerability and exposure of some ecosystems and many human systems to current climate variability (IPCC, 2014). In the near future, extreme weather events are expected to increase in frequency and severity due to climate change.

Given the current context of increased complexity, people without substantial or diversified resources, are likely to be hit hardest: shocks can **exacerbate their pre-existing economic and social vulnerabilities**, while being forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms, including selling off productive assets, child labour, forced early marriages (FAO and WFP, 2010) or fleeing

Box 1 THE STATE OF HUMANITARIAN AID

59.5 MILLION PEOPLE: The number of refugees and internally displaced persons due to conflict at the end of 2014.

19.5 MILLION PEOPLE: The number of people forced from their homes by natural disasters in 2014.

17 YEARS: The average length of displacement.

550 PERCENT: The increase in the size of the UN global humanitarian appeal from USD3.4 billion in 2003 to USD18.7 billion in 2015.

40 PERCENT: The shortfall in response to UN humanitarian appeals in 2014.

World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat. (2015) *Restoring Humanity: Synthesis of the Consultation Process for the World Humanitarian Summit*. New York: United Nations.

¹ According to the World Meteorological Organization, natural disasters are occurring nearly five times as often as they were in the 1970s; World Meteorological Organization (2014), *The Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes 1970-2012*. According to the World Humanitarian Summit Secretariat, 59.5 million people have been displaced due to conflict, the highest number since World War II.

their countries in a desperate attempt to meet immediate needs, and/or escape conflict or exclusion. Moreover, **formal as well as community-based and non-formal solidarity mechanisms are significantly weakened**. The current challenge for the humanitarian and development sectors is **how to meet immediate needs and increased caseloads, while providing assistance that empowers and equips people to prepare, withstand and bounce back from dire and complex situations** (CFS, 2015).

In this context, the paper explores the role social protection can play in helping to address these challenges and best support livelihoods in order to (i) **reduce the need for recurrent and continued humanitarian assistance** by contributing to building resilience at household and community levels, and (ii) **facilitate an effective response** in humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises.² The paper acknowledges that enhancing resilience encompasses a multidimensional approach, where social protection, if adequately design and implemented, can become a critical contributor.

SOCIAL PROTECTION: A STRATEGY TO REDUCE POVERTY AND BUILD RESILIENCE

Social protection has been recognized as a **critical strategy to reduce poverty, build resilience and enable development**: evidence from Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa shows clear positive impacts in terms of food security, nutrition and human capital development.³ Social protection impacts have also been seen as enhancing the economic and productive capacity of even the poorest and most marginalized communities. Beyond poverty alleviation, the **combination of social and economic impacts can strengthen resilience**: enhancing the capacity of poor households to cope with, respond to and withstand natural and human-induced crises. Access to predictable, sizeable and regular social protection benefits can, in the short term, **protect poor households from the impacts of shocks**, including erosion of productive assets, and can minimize negative coping practices. In the longer term, social protection can **help to build capacity, smoothing consumption and allowing for investments that contribute to building people's resilience** to future threats and crisis. Despite increased global recognition and national and international political commitment, social protection continues to play an under-utilized role. Furthermore, even as programmes and investments expand towards universal coverage, **in fragile contexts coverage is often limited or non-existent**.

2 Protracted crises are situations of prolonged or recurrent crisis. Protracted crises include some combination of conflict, occupation, terrorism, human induced and natural disasters, natural resource pressures, climate change, inequalities, prevalence of poverty and governance factors. They result in disruption of livelihoods and food systems, increasing rates of morbidity and mortality and increased displacements. See Committee on World Food Security (2015), Framework for action for food security and nutrition in protracted crisis.

3 See for instance the evidence generated by FAO and UNICEF around the impact of cash transfers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Complete analysis and information can be accessed in the FAO Social Protection Framework (FAO, 2017).

Moreover, at national and subnational levels, robust institutions and social cohesion (elements needed to develop and implement nationally appropriate social protection systems), are often lacking. In contexts affected by recurrent or chronic crisis social protection systems come under strain to i) adequately cover populations that are acutely vulnerable, ii) meet the needs of additional caseloads during a crisis period, iii) function in the wake of major economic, environmental, social or political shocks or, iv) as an early action measure, contribute to the protection of lives and livelihoods of at risk populations before an imminent disaster occurs. Devereux's Catch 22 of social protection is therefore highly applicable to humanitarian settings: "the greater the need for social protection, the lower the capacity of the state to provide it" (Devereux, 2000; Harvey *et al.*, 2007).

Over the last three decades, social protection programmes have grown exponentially: today, **more than 1.9 billion people in 136 countries benefit from social assistance programmes** and approximately 718 million people are enrolled in cash transfer programmes (the most widely used social assistance instrument, also in humanitarian settings) (Honorati, Gentilini and Yemtsov, 2015). This has translated into a global level political commitment to social protection, including a specific target under the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 1.3): "to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable".

The central focus of the 2030 Agenda to "leave no one behind" has provided a clear framework for action, where **development and future growth must be inclusive of all**. The United Nations Secretary-General's Report for the World Humanitarian Summit and the development of the Agenda for Humanity has reinforced this message, calling on us to specifically **focus our attention on those left furthest behind**.⁴ FAO recognizes that it is precisely **in the context of threats and crises that we increase the risk of leaving the most vulnerable behind** and, thus, it is critical that we identify new, innovative and efficient approaches and support an integrated resilience approach looking at prevention, mitigation, response and capacity building. Given its commitments to the 2030 Agenda and Agenda for Humanity, FAO sees the UN Secretary-General's call to move from "addressing short-term needs" towards investment in prevention, as a critical **opportunity to maximize the role that social protection systems can play in humanitarian, protracted crises and fragile contexts**.

Furthermore, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030⁵ highlighted the **need to promote and support the development of social safety nets and social protection as disaster risk reduction measures** linked to, and integrated with, livelihood enhancement programmes. These measures were considered as crucial to reducing vulnerability and exposure to climate-related extremes due to increasing climate variability and climate change (IPCC, 2014).

4 United Nations, General Assembly. One humanity: shared responsibility. Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit. A/70/709 (2 February 2016). Available at <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Secretary-General%27s%20Report%20for%20WHS%202016%20%28Advance%20Unedited%20Draft%29.pdf>

5 SFDRR. 2015. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held from 14 to 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan.

RESPONDING TO THE 2016 WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT'S CALL

The new integrated approach to resilience building has been highlighted in the Secretary-General's report for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). The report calls for a fundamental shift to "transcend the humanitarian-development divide by working towards collective outcomes, based on comparative advantage and over multiyear timeframes" (United Nations, 2016). In order to deal with root causes of vulnerability and crises, stakeholders in the humanitarian system are called to make a fundamental **shift from "a reactive, insular and competitive enterprise" to one of partnership that "can anticipate, and respond in strategic collaboration"** (CAFOD, FAO and World Vision, 2015).

There is an urgent need to **support nationally-led responses, to bring in diverse financing sources** and to upgrade humanitarian systems in order to **anticipate crises, coordinate responses and mobilize funding, taking advantage of the potential of cash-based programming** to make such responses more cost-efficient and effective (CAFOD, FAO and World Vision, 2015).

Promoting risk informed and shock-responsive social protection in order to bridge the gap between development and humanitarian interventions is especially crucial at a time when the **humanitarian sector is facing a financial crisis**. FAO explicitly

recognizes that humanitarian action and development work are part of a "**contiguuum**"⁶ where humanitarian response can be effectively enhanced by working with risk-informed and shock-responsive systems, and where long-term programmes to reduce poverty and enhance resilient livelihoods require an explicit recognition of economic, social as well as environmental and conflict-sensitive risks (FAO, 2016a).

In 2014, UN humanitarian appeals were underfunded by 40 percent. This limited capacity was not owing to reduced solidarity among donors⁷ or partners, but to the scope, recurrence and complexity of the appeals. This has heightened the discussion around potential alternatives, including the critical conviction that, when and where possible, **the development sector, business and government should absorb some of the burden, particularly in cases of predictable crises** (CAFOD, FAO and World Vision, 2015). According to the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, **an effective approach to address the growing humanitarian needs is to address their root causes**. Therefore, official development assistance, particularly in fragile and at risk contexts, without excluding emergency response and mitigation, should **increasingly prioritize investments in prevention, preparedness, resilience building and peacebuilding, including social protection**.

6 The notion of a linear relief-development "continuum" began to be questioned in the context of conflict-related emergencies, where the "relief phase" was protracted and the affected populations had multiple, concurrent needs, across different parts of the country. A simultaneous mix of relief, rehabilitation and development interventions was clearly needed. Past "relief to development" models envisioned a progression in which disaster, stability, rehabilitation and eventually livelihood security would follow in a continuum, provided the correct steps were taken. This was obviously not happening as sporadic setbacks and shocks occurred during the expected transition from relief to development. This led to rethinking the "continuum" approach and to a "contiguuum" linking relief, rehabilitation and development. The "contiguuum" model sought to combine short- and longer-term interventions to tackle a broad range of needs, from the most immediate and acute ones to the structural causes that undermine development. The idea of a two-way link between relief and development called attention to the fact that they exist at the same time in the same place. (Tango International, 2012; Dederichs-Bain, 2001; Overseas Development Institute, 2014).

7 Indeed, donors were more generous than ever. According to the 2015 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, international humanitarian assistance rose for a second year running to a record USD24.5 billion in 2014. All of 2013's largest donors gave more in 2014, and many gave their largest amounts.

In at risk contexts, innovative financing modalities including dedicated preparedness/early action and disaster risk reduction budget lines are needed. Programming should be based on joint or coordinated vulnerability, risk and needs analysis, as well as taking advantage of existing national, subnational and community structures.

Development organizations with longer-term funding horizons and better capacity to support economically viable activities **should focus on helping vulnerable people become self-reliant**, even in the face of disaster.⁸

The World Humanitarian Summit's global consultation process yielded insights into the role of social protection in humanitarian contexts. Social protection is recognized as contributing to three of the core discussions at the WHS: (i) managing disaster differently, (ii) leaving no one behind and (iii) changing people lives.⁹

- i. Social protection can play a crucial role in **"managing disaster differently"**. **Social protection programmes**, when designed to take into account multidimensional vulnerabilities (social, economic, environmental and conflict-related), **can be effectively linked with early warning mechanisms and expanded before, or immediately after, threat materializes**. Investing in social protection systems to administer predictable transfers before (and, if needed, also in the aftermath of) an anticipated shock hits, **allows households to make pre-crisis management decisions**, while also **strengthening their preparedness to respond**, motivation and risk-coping capabilities. For example, where

markets are – or have the potential to become – responsive and the currency is stable, cash transfers offer households and communities a choice to design a survival strategy, to enhance productive activities according to the realities of the context and to strengthen their preparedness to protect their assets (e.g. purchase seed protection bags in case of floods).

- ii. **Social protection** can be incorporated as a cornerstone of strategies to address the drivers and to **mitigate** the effects of **forced displacement and distress migration** (FAO, 2016d): on one hand addressing the socio-economic and food insecurity-related determinants of displacements, while on the other hand, making sure host communities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and others are equitably supported in the event of crises, particularly in terms of social services, as well as labour and productive opportunities.
- iii. Social protection systems play a crucial role in **transcending the humanitarian-development divide**. Shock responsive social protection mechanisms contribute to **protecting lives and livelihoods in contexts of extreme fragility**. Particularly, cash-based humanitarian interventions can be used as building blocks for the development of "nascent" safety nets or social assistance systems. This can strengthen the communities' ability to become more self-reliant rather than simply attain basic needs for years on end.

8 See the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report to the Secretary-General. Too important to fail – Addressing the humanitarian financing gap. 2016. Available at: [https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/\[HLP%20Report\]%20Too%20important%20to%20fail%E2%80%94addressing%20the%20humanitarian%20financing%20gap.pdf](https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/[HLP%20Report]%20Too%20important%20to%20fail%E2%80%94addressing%20the%20humanitarian%20financing%20gap.pdf)

9 SPIAC-B. 2016. Leaving no one behind: How linking social protection and humanitarian action can bridge the development-humanitarian divide: A joint statement of social protection actors to the World Humanitarian Summit. Available at <http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/sites/default/files/SPIACBstatementWHS.pdf>

2. INTERNAL MOTIVATION AND RATIONALE

THE IMPERATIVE OF DEFINING A WAY FORWARD

More than half of the world's food is produced by people who do so to meet their own needs and derive their livelihoods almost exclusively from natural resources: smallholder farmers, fisher folk, and forest-dependent people. In many cases, they are also **at the frontlines of disasters and crises** that affect soils, crops, supplies, markets, animals, and forest. Natural hazards trigger damages and losses and set back families' plans for the future (FAO, 2016b). Food chain crises also threaten livelihoods, as trade becomes more connected than ever due to globalization, and transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases constitute greater threats to livelihoods and people's well-being. Protracted crises, including violent conflicts, interrupt markets, destroy livelihoods, and directly undermine people's ability to consume enough food needed for a healthy and productive life.

Given the context, **social protection is a central component of FAO work on reducing rural poverty and strengthening resilience**. FAO strategic objectives – to reduce rural poverty and increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises – call for engaging with and building up social protection that addresses root causes of crises and that responds appropriately when crises unfold. **FAO is**

part of the major paradigm shift in humanitarian aid that is at present moving from crisis response to preventative and proactive initiatives which save human lives, strengthen people's livelihoods, reduce economic losses and find innovative ways to end poverty in all forms in all places, especially addressing vulnerability to disaster.

This paper reflects FAO renewed focus presented in its Strategic Framework (SF). The Framework was developed taking into account the pressing challenges, including the modest progress in terms of rural poverty, as well as the threat posed by human-induced and natural disasters to sustaining economic and social development gains made in the rural sector. The Framework reflects FAO commitment to a **new way of working and a comprehensive vision around rural poverty and resilience**: focusing on **prevention**, strengthening economic and productive capacities at household and community level, while promoting innovative **sustainable solutions** and livelihoods strategies in the context of **rural transformation**.

In recent years, FAO has been working towards a comprehensive approach to resilience building and poverty reduction, on the one hand recognizing that the poor and politically marginalized are disproportionately affected by crises;¹⁰

10 The 2015 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report highlighted that in 2013, 93 percent of the people living in extreme poverty were living in politically fragile or environmental vulnerable contexts (or both).

on the other hand, recognizing that limited assets and/or non-existent protection mechanisms can lead households and communities to resort to negative coping mechanisms that can contribute to increasing vulnerability to threats and crises (HLPE, 2012).

Social protection is a corporate priority for FAO (FAO, 2013a). In this context, FAO is committed to promoting a system approach to social protection to avoid fragmentation of interventions and, together with partners, **build and strengthen systems that are well integrated in broader livelihood promotion and rural development strategies**. Moreover, social protection has been recognized as a critical component of the FAO approach to resilience, contributing to break the vicious cycles of social and economic deprivation, increased vulnerability to poverty and exclusion, and heightened exposure to shocks and stresses (FAO, 2016c).

As discussed by the **FAO Social Protection Framework** (FAO, 2017), **social protection can contribute to help break the vicious cycle of social and economic deprivation, increased vulnerability to poverty and exclusion, and heightened exposure to threats and crisis** by:

- ▶ **Protecting households from the negative impacts of shocks**, including the erosion of economic and productive assets. This includes helping to mitigate the negative impacts of crises, while at the same time preventing negative coping strategies (e.g. selling assets, withdrawing children from school, reducing food intake and resorting to distress migration).
- ▶ **Helping to build capacity of households and communities** over time to withstand and overcome shocks and stresses through social transfers that allow families to increase and diversify their asset base and increase savings.

- ▶ **Addressing some of the underlying causes of crises** (e.g. political distress). In some contexts, social protection interventions can address some of the economic causes of violence and conflict and thus can serve as key components of peacebuilding strategies (i.e. “peace dividend”).
- ▶ **Progressing towards a lesser state of vulnerability** by complementing support of families to sustain gains with economic and productive interventions to go beyond maintaining their status quo.

In recent years, FAO has been working towards a strengthened approach to resilience building and poverty reduction; recognizing that:

- ▶ the **poor and politically marginalized are disproportionately affected by crises**. The 2015 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report highlighted that in 2013, 93 percent of the people living in extreme poverty were living in politically fragile or environmental vulnerable contexts (or both);

Box 2 IMPACTS OF CRISES IN AGRICULTURE

22 PERCENT of the damages caused by natural hazards and disasters affect agriculture.

25 PERCENT of the damages caused by climate-related disasters affect agriculture.

AGRICULTURE is the sector most affected by drought, absorbing 80 PERCENT of its economic impact.

TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL AND PEST DISEASES constitute greater threats in globalizing trade.

UNDERNOURISHMENT IS THREE TIMES AS PREVALENT in protracted crises than in other developing contexts; stunting and wasting is also higher.

EACH YEAR, VIOLENT CONFLICT REDUCES GDP BY 2.2 PERCENT directly affecting agriculture that constitutes 32 percent of GDP in these contexts.

FAO (2016) *Strengthening resilience to threats and crisis*. Rome

Box 3: WHAT IS SOCIAL PROTECTION?

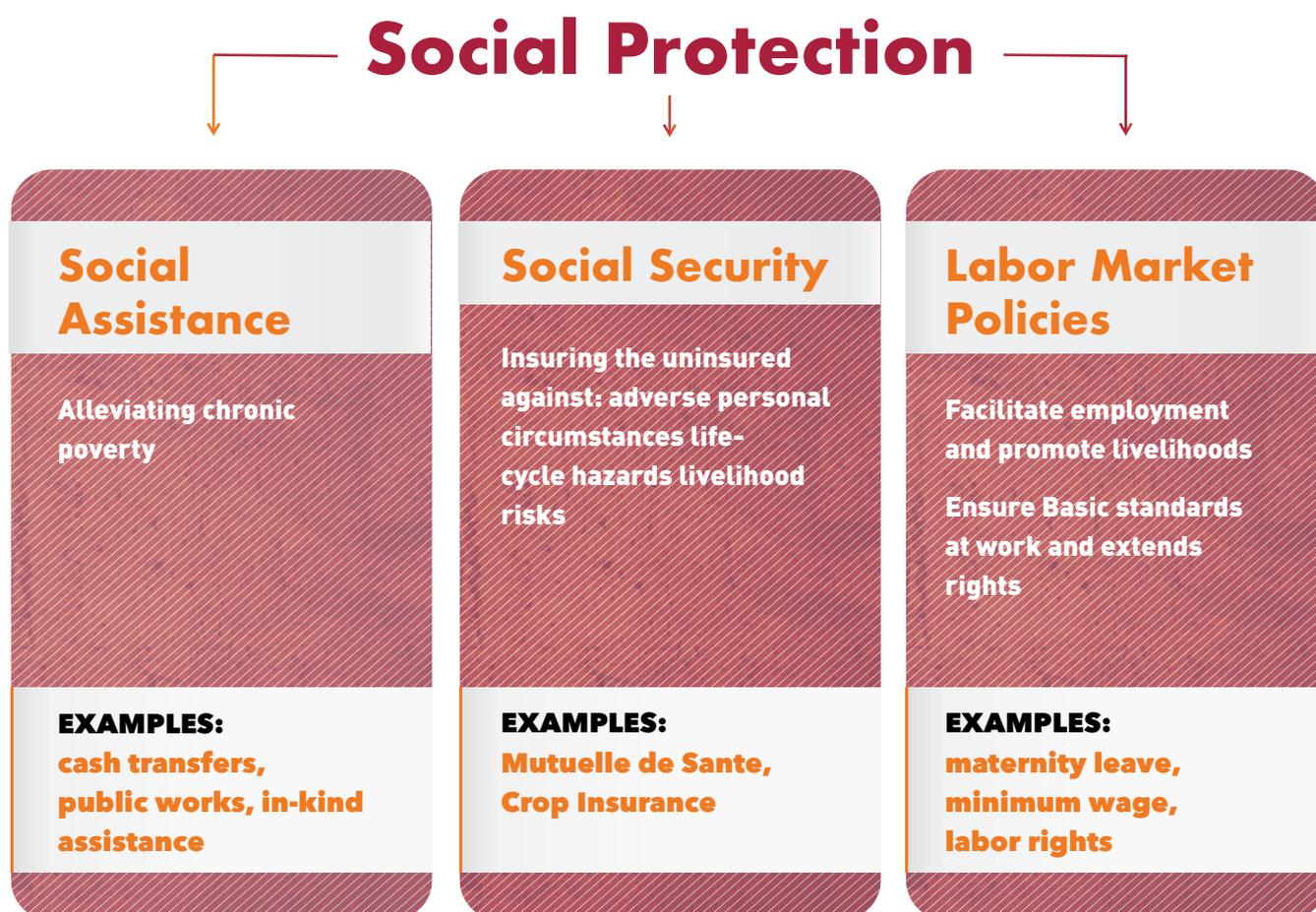
Within the Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B), social protection refers to the set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion throughout their lifecycles, with a particular emphasis towards vulnerable groups. Social protection can be provided:

- > In cash, in kind, or with a combination of cash and in-kind assistance (CASH+), through non-contributory schemes, providing universal, categorical or poverty-targeted benefits such as social assistance;
- > Within contributory schemes, such as social insurance;
- > Through labour market protection, that promotes human capital, access to jobs and productive assets.

In terms of FAO engagement and support to countries, social protection comprises a set of policies and programmes that addresses economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty by protecting and promoting livelihoods.

Social Protection encompasses three pillars: social assistance, social insurance and labour market regulations.

Social assistance instruments have been mostly widely used in emergency contexts, particularly cash transfers. However, insurance mechanisms such as weather-index crop insurance or livestock insurance can also contribute to help small scale farmers to effectively manage shocks.



Source: (graph) author's modification based on FAO Social Protection Framework (2017).

- **limited assets and/or non-existent protection mechanisms** can lead vulnerable households and communities to resort to **negative coping mechanisms** that contribute to **increasing vulnerability to risks and crises**.

FAO recognizes the role social protection can play in prevention: anticipating impacts and minimizing coping negative strategies, strengthening resilience capacity at national, subnational and community levels; **response:** mitigating the negative impacts of crises; and in **promotion and recovery:** enhancing productive capacity while facilitating investments and innovative solutions for sustainable livelihoods. These roles and contributions are also recognized in context of conflict and forced displacement.

- **Prevention and enhancing capacity to respond.** Social protection can play a role in risk prevention addressing the root causes of economic, social and environmental vulnerability (chronic poverty, inequality, exposure to climate and conflict-related risks), Social protection can play a role in risk prevention addressing the root causes of economic, social and environmental vulnerability (chronic poverty, inequality, exposure to climate and conflict-related risks),¹¹ while also preventing loss of assets during an emergency. Access to social protection enhances the economic capacity of the poor, allowing them to accumulate assets, smooth consumption and effectively manage risks. Social protection minimizes negative coping strategies that families may resort to including selling of productive assets, diminishing dietary intake of children or over-exploitation of natural resources.
- **Response:** In the aftermath of a shock – be it a conflict, natural disaster or food chain crisis – social protection can support communities by increasing consumption and enabling people to

Box 4 ADDRESSING ECONOMIC CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Violent conflict disrupts livelihoods and food systems, increasing morbidity and mortality, undernutrition, stunting and wasting, as well as distress and forced migration. In fragile contexts, conflict, occupation, terrorism, natural resource pressure, climate change, inequalities, poverty and governance factors are often underlying causes of food insecurity, undernutrition and vulnerability (CFS, 2015). Social protection can address poverty and inequality by transferring resources to those who are poor, marginalized and food insecure. Social protection has the potential to address peace and social cohesion by building institutions, policy and partnerships although the empirical evidence supporting this is very thin. In fact, there is still a gap in terms of evidence to show which are the most effective pathways to maximize this potential (Schultze-Kraft and Rew, 2014; Mc Candless, Smith and Prosnitz, 2012).

In conflict-affected situations, delivering social protection through a conflict-sensitive approach is essential to first "do no harm". Building on what communities are doing to effectively respond to crises and protect community members as well as supporting transitional service delivery may also build peace and social cohesion, although more research is needed to understand if and how supporting social protection or service delivery can contribute to peace and state-building (CFS, 2015).



West Bank

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11 Some 93 percent of people living in extreme poverty are in countries that are either politically fragile, environmentally vulnerable or both (http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/GHA-Report-2015_-Interactive_Online.pdf)

fend off hunger and malnutrition. In severely shock-ridden and poor places, transfers keep desperation at bay and prevent loss of life. Moreover, following a crisis, social protection programmes such as social transfers or cash for work enable people to use resources to rebuild, restore market function, rehabilitate critical infrastructure, increase and diversify their asset base and increase savings and shore up risk mitigation strategies to build resilience to subsequent crises (Longley *et al.*, 2007; Carpenter, Slater and Mallet, 2012). This can be achieved by designing systems that are effectively linked to mechanisms to anticipate and pre-empt a trigger event; for example, through weather-indexed insurance, or through programme scale-up to meet immediate and basic needs in affected areas.

› **Promoting Recovery Through Sustainable**

Practices: Social protection programmes can be important entry points to promote sustainable practices, including watershed management, re-forestation and building of terraces, among other. Moreover, social protection contributes to enhance the financial and human capacity to invest in and increase the uptake of effective and innovative natural resource management practices, as outlined by the 2012 High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) Report on Climate Change and Food Security (HLPE, 2012).

Other key aspects to consider is the potential role of social protection in forced displacement and distress migration contexts. FAO echoes the Secretary-General's call for reducing and addressing forced displacement as a critical priority. On this regard FAO sees a role for social protection in strengthening the capacity (particularly through social services and the

provision of labour and productive opportunities) of host communities to absorb the shock of mass migration in settings already characterized by systemic fragility. Moreover, in these settings social protection benefits could expand vertically to cover possible negative impacts of mass forced migration on fragile settings (i.e. reduced access to land for agriculture and livestock, overexploitation of natural environments and services); and horizontally to cover and benefit refugees, asylum seekers, forced migrants and internally displaced populations (IDPs) in need of humanitarian protection. On the other hand expanding the coverage of flexible national social protection systems in the agricultural sector at origin could contribute to prevent the economic and food insecurity-related causes of distress migration.¹²

FAO COMMITMENTS

FAO is positioned to influence rural recovery by working to build social protection systems to improve resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises at household, community and systemic levels. Taking advantage of entry points to work jointly with governments and partners to establish flexible, scalable systems leads to more sustainable investment over time.

The growing role of social protection programmes is recognized also in FAO position paper for the World Humanitarian Summit (FAO, 2016a). FAO main focus for the WHS, and its commitments as an Organization to the Agenda for Humanity, largely fall under Core Responsibilities three, four and five. Core Responsibility three, in particular, builds on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to prioritize the most vulnerable groups, including those in situations of chronic

12 FAO is currently developing a corporate position paper on Migration and Forced Displacement, where the role of social protection in these settings will be discussed. Forthcoming.



Lesotho

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poverty, conflict, disaster, vulnerability and risk. The WHS has provided an opportunity to define, particularly in the context of recent and ongoing massive population displacements, the critical role played by social protection systems and the next steps to be taken to release its potential.

On this regard FAO committed to:

- ▶ Scaling up its work on the role of social protection in fragile contexts, as well as

engagement in social protection work, through operational research on CASH+,¹³ and livelihoods work in over 15 countries by 2017.

- ▶ Building and strengthening strategic partnerships with national and subnational governments and local actors as well as UN partners to enhance their capacity to effectively address prevention and response to crises, including through shock-responsive social protection systems.

13 CASH+ types of intervention combine transfers of cash with productive assets, activities, and inputs, and/or technical training and extension services to boost the livelihoods and productive capacities of poor and vulnerable households. For more information, see Box 15.

3. OPERATIONALIZING A NEW APPROACH

FLEXIBLE AND SCALABLE SYSTEMS: SOCIAL PROTECTION AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

In the past years, social assistance structures have been instrumental for the effective delivery of humanitarian social assistance (Kukrety, 2016). For instance, national cash transfer programmes have been able to scale up and down according to seasonal or otherwise variable needs and in response to shocks (Slater and Bhuvandendra, 2013). In this context, the concept of risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection has increasingly gained momentum. This refers to systems that can swiftly and effectively respond to threats and crises and thus designed with specific mechanisms that enhance their flexibility to respond in the event of crises, including contingency funds, price indexing to respond to seasonal or unexpected variability, expanded management and information systems (MIS), as well as predetermined plans to be able to scale up (e.g. expansion in number of beneficiaries and/or increase in size of transfer) in the event of seasonal or recurrent crises. Table 1 below provides a typology for options in scaling up social protection in response to shocks (OPM, 2015).

For instance, large safety net programmes, such as the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia and the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) in Kenya, have been designed to expand vertically or horizontally. The PSNP has contingency funds in the programme budget to allow for variations in need during the year so that benefits and caseloads can be increased in response to shocks.¹⁴ When the shock is larger than the capacity of the programme contingency funds the PSNP can be scaled up further using contingency funds, which are indexed to drought or humanitarian appeal.

In the Philippines, following typhoon *Haiyan*, the government and humanitarian actors worked together to provide food and cash assistance through the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps), reaching people in need faster by utilizing existing targeting, registration and delivery systems. It was the first time the programme was used for this purpose and it was not part of the original design.

14 Contingency funds of 20 percent of the base programme cost are budgeted. A risk-financing facility enables the programme to respond to transitory needs in chronically food insecure households. Households that cannot meet their own food needs because of a shock – but can in regular years – are considered to be transitory food insecure. Van Domelen, J and Coll-Black, S. (2012) Ethiopia - Designing and implementing a rural safety net in a low income setting: lessons learned from Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program 2005-2009. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/247601469672211732/Ethiopia-Designing-and-implementing-a-rur>; PSNP Operations: A "Nuts and Bolts" Primer.

Table 1 Options for scaling up in response to covariate shocks

Option	Description
Vertical expansion	Increasing the benefit value or duration of an existing programme. May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjustment of transfer amounts • introduction of extraordinary payments or transfers
Horizontal expansion	Adding new beneficiaries to an existing programme. May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extension of the geographical coverage of an existing programme • extraordinary enrolment campaign • modifications of entitlement rules • relaxation of requirements/conditionality
Piggybacking	Using a social protection intervention's administrative framework, but running the shock-response programme separately. May include the introduction of a new policy.
Shadow alignment	Developing a parallel humanitarian system that aligns as best as possible with a current or possible future social protection programme.
Refocusing	In case of a budget cut, adjusting the social protection system to refocus assistance on groups most vulnerable to the shock.

Source: OPM, 2015, Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems. A research programme funded by the DFID's Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP) (Modified by author)

This is an example of piggybacking, building on a social protection programme's administrative system to deliver transfers in response to a shock.

Several examples of complex social protection systems scaling up in response to shocks can be found in Latin America's countries. Indeed, over the past decade Latin America and the Caribbean have implemented a diverse range of social protection policies to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable households. During the global economic crisis of 2008 and 2009 that sharply increased the price of food in the region, in response to the shock countries increased the pace of implementation of cash transfer programmes (CT) beyond the coverage originally planned and made adjustments to the amounts and timing of transfers:

- ▶ In Brazil, during the crisis, within the programme *Bolsa Família*, the following changes were made in response to the crisis: (i) decentralized management was strengthened, (ii) coverage was expanded to more than 1.3 million families and (iii) the total budget was expanded from USD234 million in 2009 to over USD565 million in 2010.
- ▶ In Mexico, the *Oportunidades* programme and the Food Aid Programme (*Programa de Apoyo Alimentario*) increased coverage to reach 1.35 million new poor families and added a new cash bonus aimed for children between 0-9 years (FAO, 2009).

On the one hand, databases for the identification and registration of participating families in social transfer programmes have been used for the delivery of emergency cash transfers. Such are the cases of the “Emergency Bonus” and “Human Development Bonus” beneficiaries in Ecuador or the “Bonus of Public Calamity” for Guatemala’s “My Secure Bonus” beneficiaries in places declared under any State of Emergency by the President of the Republic.

On the other hand, in the case of broader policies, Haiti’s National Programme to fight Hunger and Malnutrition (*Aba Grangou*) was developed in a strong humanitarian context to implement both urgent targeted actions and long-term strategies to improve access to food, increase agricultural production and improve access to basic services and infrastructure. Similarly, in the context of sectoral agricultural policy, Uruguay’s Agricultural Emergency Fund (*Fondo Agropecuario de Emergencias* - FAE) was established in 2008 to meet the material losses in agricultural production resulting from emergencies through: financial support; recovery and strengthening of productive infrastructure; and inputs transfers.¹⁵



Bolivia

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CASH-BASED PROGRAMMING

The rise of cash transfers as a tool offers opportunities to unite preparedness and response due to the recent availability of technological solutions. Both humanitarian actors and governments are using cash transfers for humanitarian response and for government social assistance programmes, respectively. As different actors register participants and administer cash transfers, new technologies make for efficiency gains. Smart cards, local bank expansion, digital payments, digitized registration systems and advanced technical capacity at local government level are some examples of opportunities that can enable more efficient responses to individuals and households (HLPHCT, 2015). The traditionally divided humanitarian and development spheres are meeting at a technical junction: offering the potential to respond to some crises before they happen by taking advantage of new technologies. Recommendations from the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers (HLPHCT, 2015) on cash transfers, presented in Box 5, illustrate how best to engage and deliver cash transfers in future programming.

In stable but risk-prone contexts, government-run cash transfer programmes have been integral components of poverty alleviation and food insecurity of disaster risk reduction strategies. In emergency contexts, whenever markets can respond to an increase in demand, cash transfers are recognized as flexible and cost-effective instruments for addressing the most pressing needs of populations affected by shocks, particularly those dependent on agriculture-related sectors or in rural areas. In both contexts, predictable, regular and sizable unconditional cash transfers can:

- ▶ minimize the resort to negative coping strategies such as selling off productive assets, decreasing intake of nutritious foods, over-exploitation of resources, etc.;

15 FAO. www.fao.org. Food nutrition and security platform for the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). (Available at: <http://plataformacelac.org/en>)

Box 5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON HUMANITARIAN CASH TRANSFERS

1. Give more unconditional cash transfers. These questions should always be asked: "why not cash?" And "if not now, when?"
2. Invest in readiness for cash transfers in contingency planning. Aid agencies have spent decades developing capacity for in-kind assistance. Similar investments need to be made in the skills, capacities and partnerships needed to undertake cash assistance swiftly. Donors need to put more resources into preparedness, including preparing social protection schemes for broader use in emergencies.
3. Measure how much aid is provided in cash transfers and explicitly distinguish this from vouchers and in-kind aid.
4. Systematically analyse and benchmark other humanitarian responses against cash transfers.
5. Leverage cash transfers to link humanitarian assistance to longer-term development and social protection systems. Safety nets designed for one purpose (i.e. poverty reduction) are not easily used for another (i.e. disaster response). Using them to scale up for emergencies requires planning and investment.
6. Capitalize on the private sector's expertise in delivering payments.
7. Where possible, deliver cash digitally and in a manner that furthers financial inclusion.
8. Improve aid agencies' data security, privacy systems and compliance with financial regulations.
9. Improve coordination of cash transfers within the existing system. The cluster system needs to be adapted for increased cash transfers.
10. Implement cash programmes that are large scale, coherent and unconditional, allowing for economies of scale and avoiding duplication. Rather than many organizations all setting up and running their own small cash programmes using different systems, the aim should be set up large-scale cash programmes to enable people to meet a range of needs.
11. Wherever the need, make humanitarian cash transfers central to humanitarian crisis response as a primary component of Strategic Response Plans, complemented by in-kind assistance if necessary.
12. Finance delivery of humanitarian cash transfers separately from assessment, targeting and monitoring.

Source: High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers (2015) *Doing Cash Differently: How cash transfers can transform humanitarian aid*.

- allow families to reduce their exposure to hazards: cash transfers have shown their ability to enhance the capacity of households to invest in productive and economic activities and thus to diversify their asset base;
- promote public works programmes to create and rehabilitate infrastructure that promotes the sustainable use of renewable resources;
- in the context of forced displacement, strengthen the capacity of host communities to counteract the strain on access to services and economic opportunities, as well as ensuring effective protection and support to refugees.

In fragile and humanitarian contexts where social protection structures are not in place but markets

function, there has been a shift towards cash-based interventions *in lieu* of in-kind assistance. The available evidence shows the advantage of cash, particularly in terms of cost-effectiveness and impact as well as flexibility and greater choice for beneficiary households. Nevertheless, in 2015, cash transfers and vouchers accounted for only six percent of humanitarian aid. Enhancing the potential of cash-based interventions requires integrating cash in preparedness and contingency planning, strengthening partnerships with the private sector (e.g. financial institutions, mobile phone companies), using e-payments, digital transfers and, when possible, leveraging cash transfers to build medium- and long-term social assistance structures that can be used in recurrent emergencies.

ENTRY POINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGN AND OPERATIONS

To build social protection systems that are sensitive to risk and shocks – contributing to prevention, resilience-building and mitigation – it is critical to bring together expertise from across the development and humanitarian sectors, as well as between government and communities. Linking social protection and early warning systems, emergency response, natural resource management, livelihood support programmes and financial services is essential.

New innovations are creating entry points to explore technological advances, particularly in cash transfers, to reduce duplication and build coherent systems. According to FAO Social Protection Framework, opportunities for synergies include:

- ▶ **Targeting:** Targeting of social protection interventions tends to be based on economic (wealth and income) related criteria. In order to be able to respond to the varied risks and vulnerabilities that households' face, targeting should instead take a multidimensional risk approach. This facilitates also developing programmes with common shared objectives and impacts, expanding their scope to include livelihood protection.
- ▶ **Multiple objectives:** Public works, including productive safety nets and other kinds of public works, can be designed in such a way as to contribute to meet a needed increase in household income, while at the same time engaging communities in climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and generating "green jobs" in areas such as waste management, reforestation, sustainable forest management and soil erosion

prevention. Reaching poor and vulnerable populations with social protection and access to key financial services, such as credit, weather and crop insurance, is a feasible strategy to reduce uncertainty and impacts of climate variability.¹⁶

- ▶ **Trigger events:** Especially for predictable crises, it is necessary to ensure that there are information systems in place for early warning – early action systems. Early warning – early action systems are designed to trigger anticipatory action prior to an emergency to mitigate impacts. At country level, this means the development of indicators with clear thresholds and triggers, early warning monitoring systems, the pre-development of early action plans and the establishment of funding mechanisms that can be rapidly released to implement early action initiatives. Using and linking early warning and action systems with existing social protection schemes can enhance their impact in protect livelihoods of at risk populations and thus mitigate anticipated shock impacts.

In order to facilitate the implementation of early action plans it is essential to have access to resources. A promising practice that has been showing interesting results in order to effectively link financial mechanisms with early action plans, moving the caseload of emergency intervention in the direction of long-term and predictable support, is the Forecast based Financing (FbF). This practice, if linked with national flexible social protection systems, has the potential to anticipate the needs of target beneficiaries with respect to predictable natural hazards, facilitating vertical and horizontal expansion mechanisms.

- ▶ **Common systems:** New technologies – smart cards, local bank expansion, digital registration systems and advanced technical capacity at local government level – are enabling actors to reach

16 Regarding this entry point there is a need for caution in potentially overloading programmes with too many objectives. In some cases public works programmes have failed to deliver lasting benefits through the assets being built.

Box 6 LINKING SOCIAL PROTECTION WITH INFORMATION SYSTEMS, INCLUDING EARLY WARNING AND EARLY ACTION SYSTEMS

Innovations in scaling up social protection to respond to shocks offers new ways to effectively link a broad range of information systems, including registry, monitoring and evaluation, as well as early warning, response and recovery systems. The early warning – early action system, for instance, triggers the implementation of pre-developed early action plans before the emergency, whereas the response mechanism within the social protection programme gets activated after an emergency has hit. Both mechanisms are designed to scale up social protection schemes to either support vulnerable populations before the shock to better withstand the anticipated impact or, after the shock, in order to meet emergency needs, typically involving cash transfers. For example, the Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya is linked to the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) Early Warning System. The NDMA assesses drought phase classification down to sub county (formally district) level and uses the Vegetation Condition Index (VCI) to determine which areas require scaling up. This information is used by HSNP to trigger raising coverage in severe drought and extreme severe drought.* Insurance programmes, for livestock and for crops, are designed to be triggered by a shock at an early stage so that payments can be made to clients in advance of the shock impact.

In the context of unprecedented strain on the humanitarian system and the failure to meet related gaps in humanitarian funding, new approaches are needed more than ever before. It is now possible to meet needs in humanitarian settings including seasonal, protracted crises, slow-onset and sudden-onset natural disasters or food security crises and non-predictable crises such as natural hazards or conflict, as well as fragile contexts, including those facing violence conflict, with shock-responsive social protection approaches in new and different ways.

* HSNP (2016) Hunger Safety Net Programme scalability guidelines standard operating procedures for scaling up HSNP payments. Produced by the Programme Implementation and Learning Unit (PILU) within NDMA, Annex to HSNP Operations Manual.

economies of scale by working together and investing in systematic solutions where possible and appropriate.

- ▶ **Strengthening the capacity at local and community level:** In many instances, community- or member-based mechanisms are the first sources of response during a crisis. Members of local communities and local organizations (e.g. family groups, cooperatives, farmers' organizations) are able to put in place different forms of mutual assistance and risk management. Examples include contingency funds, distribution of inputs and assets, member-based micro-insurance and other complementary agricultural and financial services that improve the resilience of rural communities in contexts of chronic vulnerability.¹⁷ FAO is currently developing a promising approach, the “*Caisses de*

Resilience”, based on the integrated provision of social, financial and agricultural services (see box 8). Investing in communities and member-based institutions can be a powerful instrument to link immediate assistance interventions and the long-term resilience of poor rural communities. Strengthened member-based community institutions are capable to run their own services and, at the same time, support the development of assistance programmes, promote the targeting of the right beneficiaries, inform their members, respond promptly to early-action mechanisms and smooth the logistics of external interventions (FAO, 2017).

- ▶ **Improving access to financial services for rural vulnerable groups:** Access to financial services can play a key role in supporting vulnerable population in their pathway to become resilient

17 FAO (forthcoming) *Harnessing the role of rural organizations in social protection – An inventory of practices*

Box 7 LINKING SOCIAL PROTECTION EXPANSION MECHANISM WITH FORECAST BASED FINANCING MECHANISM

The capacity of social protection systems to anticipate potential disasters and protect the poor and vulnerable from their impacts can be enhanced through the use of climate risk management tools, such as forecast-based financing (FbF), to trigger Early Action (EA) plans. FbF is a financial mechanism whereby humanitarian funding is released to take anticipatory, pre-defined, action after a forecast is issued and before a hazard event strikes. Since 2012, this approach to financing preparedness is being piloted by humanitarian actors, in at least fifteen countries, tackling hazards as diverse as droughts, floods and cold waves, and demonstrating how response-oriented actions can bridge the gap between humanitarian and development actions. In 2015, in a humanitarian action triggered by a scientific forecast of flood risk, the Uganda Red Cross distributed 5 000 preparedness items to flood-prone communities. Since 2016, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society is piloting a mechanism that would trigger cash-based support to communities based on the forecasted likelihood of floods and cyclones.

These examples show how FbF, if properly linked with national social protection systems, has the potential to not only help smooth climate-related shocks avoiding set-backs in development, but also to enable poor and vulnerable people to manage climate risks more effectively and in a proactive manner (Coughlan de Perez *et al.*, 2015). Flexible and shock responsive SP systems, whose financial mechanism are triggered by FbF can play an important role in protecting poor and vulnerable people from the impacts of climate-related disasters, anticipating needs before extreme events materialize, and avoiding losses of livelihoods and the erosion of development gains.

to recurrent shock and crisis; specifically access to specific mechanisms that would effectively enhance the capacity of the rural poor to protect their assets, such as agricultural and weather-based insurance. Approaches complementing regular cash transfers with a combination of skills training on financial education to accelerate livelihoods development have shown encouraging results in enabling extreme poor people to get access to financial services (e.g. loans, saving schemes, and insurance schemes) offered by both village based mutual groups (e.g. village savings and loans associations, rotating savings and credit associations) and formal financial institutions (MFIs, credit unions, community banks). These programmes, if linked with national social protection system, have the potential, in the long term, to substantially reduce the national budget allocated for emergency interventions by enhancing the capacity of vulnerable groups to access to private market insurance in order to protect their livelihoods.

- ▶ An interesting example of such an approach at a national scale is the Mexican national programme *Componente de Atención a los Desastres Naturales* (CADENA). The programme has two objectives: (i) provide direct financial support to low-income farmers with no access to formal insurance market, which are affected by natural disasters, in order to compensate their losses and boost their production cycles; (ii) boosting agricultural catastrophe risk transfer to specialized national and international insurance market through the purchase of insurance, in order to reduce the impact of natural disasters on public finances. CADENA has a unique institutional arrangement, because **the purchase of the insurance and the payment of the premium is done by the local State Governments which negotiates directly with public and private insurance companies**, at the beginning of the fiscal year. The Federal Government **subsidizes between 80-90 percent of the premium**, on the basis of the degree of vulnerability of the local States to natural catastrophes. The State

government covers the remaining 10-20 percent. The insurance purchased by State Governments is index-based and it is linked to rainfall and other hydro-meteorological parameters at a defined weather station during an agreed time period. The parameters of the contract are set so as to correlate, as accurately as possible, with the loss of a specific crop type. The payout to recover losses and damages is triggered automatically when the levels of the weather measurement (e.g. cumulative millimeters of rainfall), are above or below the previously set parameters and indices. **All eligible farmers within the affected area, receive the payouts (unconditional CT) eliminating the need for in-field assessment.**

An additional aspect to be considered to ensure that social protection programmes will be able to bridge the gap between them and humanitarian

interventions is gender, cross-cutting across all entry points. Gender inequalities are often exacerbated in protracted crises. Women and children bear the primary responsibility for the collection of water and fuelwood in the vast majority of countries: a workload that is magnified by the scarcity of natural resources characteristic of protracted crisis situations. The impact of social protection on resilience requires a focus on the role of women in food security, and ensuring that social protection effectively reaches strategic vulnerable groups, including rural women heads of households. Particularly in fragile settings and to reach the most vulnerable groups in shock-prone settings, special attention needs to be paid to social cohesion to ensure inclusion. It will be of crucial importance in the next years to be able to use and assess these entry points to create a holistic approach able to move from a responsive approach to a "system" framework for resilience building.

Box 8 PROMOTING RURAL LIVELIHOODS THROUGH FAO INTEGRATED "CAISSES DE RÉSILIENCE" APPROACH

In 2007, FAO and its partners piloted a rural community-driven approach in Uganda, called "Caisses de Résilience" (CdR), to support resilient livelihoods. The approach promotes an integrated way of strengthening households' social, technical and financial capacities. These three key dimensions focus on: 1) encouraging social cohesion, solidarity and engagement of vulnerable households in farmers' organizations or women groups (social), 2) strengthening productive skills and technical capacities by working on good agricultural and environmental practices for disaster risk reduction (technical) and 3) facilitating access to rural finance opportunities (financial).

In Karamoja, a highly remote and disaster-prone area in Uganda, FAO supported farmer groups to improve sustainable crop and livestock production and adopt practices that reduce risks. Once the groups were dynamic, the social and technical aspects were complemented with financial empowerment. At local level, saving and loan schemes were initiated. In some contexts, this support was further complemented with cash transfers or cash for work activities to increase members' capacity to contribute, as well as allow households to save and invest in productive assets and to diversify income sources in order to become more resilient to sudden shocks. In Central America, this approach included community-managed contingency funds, to respond to emergency needs of the agricultural sector and to enable quick recovery. In the Sahel region, the CdR is bringing together FAO and partners through nutrition training, food and agriculture production support and reinforcement of savings and loans mechanisms.

An important aspect of this approach is that it remains flexible and can be adapted to various contexts addressing needs from emergency situations to development challenges. The integrated approach around CdR has the potential to strengthen resilience of poor rural households' contribution to increased sustainable production, diversification of livelihoods, reduced malnutrition and women's empowerment. This approach shows FAO capacity to deliver integrated approaches at local level, supporting community capital and capacity. It remains important to explore how to use this capacity and expected impacts, when linked with social protection interventions.

CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM BUILDING IN FRAGILE AND HUMANITARIAN SITUATIONS

Despite programmatic opportunities and current political momentum, there are nevertheless specific **conceptual, political, financing, programmatic and methodological challenges** to building social protection systems in fragile and humanitarian situations. As discussed, the lead-up to the World Humanitarian Summit has led to renewed calls for linking humanitarian and development approaches, and the growing policy agenda around resilience has created a new policy impetus for attempts to better link development and humanitarian instruments. There are, however, reasons why calls to better link relief and development have been made for more than 20 years with only limited success. There are fundamental tensions between how development and humanitarian actors view and work with states (Harvey, 2009). In addition, there are different sets of principles of action, some defined more concretely than others, which can be applied to different contexts and are not always consistently applied.

Social protection in development contexts should be managed and led by government and state actors. Building state capacity to deliver social protection is seen as critical to ensuring sustainability and accountability, and part of supporting a social contract between the state and its citizens. This includes, according to national capacity, adjusting current budget lines to effectively respond to crises. By contrast, humanitarian action responds, with or without state's involvement, based on the imperative to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity. So the core of the challenge lies with how to relate to state authorities, when feasible (at different levels) in providing social assistance. The challenge is not simply

a technocratic process of bringing together humanitarian and development instruments, but one of reconciling a number of more fundamental differences in terms of principles and approach.

Fragile and conflict-affected contexts are fundamentally difficult places in which to operate.

In emergency settings, data availability is often limited, staff turnover is higher, access is often constrained and insecurity makes monitoring and accountability challenging. Simply reaching populations most in need with any sort of assistance is difficult, expensive and challenging. So while the ultimate aims and objectives of social protection may well remain the same – with a responsive and accountable state able to assist and protect its most vulnerable citizens – there is a need to realize that achieving them is a long-term and challenging prospect, particularly in instances of protracted crises. The difficulties of the operating environment also mean that programmes have to be feasible under constraints, and this translates in many contexts into the need for there to be a clear recognition of limits and thresholds for operations, while at the same time a willingness to try out new, innovative and many, in some cases, risky approaches.

Further, the demand for expediency in addressing emergency needs takes precedence in the wake of disasters, so therefore **systems building must be carried out while meeting demands for lifesaving assistance.** This can raise issues with effective coordination, cooperation and coherence among stakeholders as well as country ownership, participation, stakeholder buy-in, and accountability (CFS, 2015), all of which are fundamental to social protection. FAO can build on its best practices, shifting instruments and approach to focus also on livelihoods contribution in humanitarian contexts, and emphasizing partnership and institution building.

Additional issues that may create challenges to adapting social protection programmes to an

emergency response when the programme was not expressly designed for this purpose are:

- the institutional viability of absorbing the additional case load;
- whether the type and location of those people affected by the shock overlaps with the caseload and geographic location of the existing programme;
- existing administrative architecture for early warning, contingency planning, pre-positioning of resources and a mechanism at local level to target effectively;
- clear understanding of how, when and why the emergency response mechanism should be triggered; and
- ensuring no exclusion due to political incentives that could prevent meeting the humanitarian imperative and upholding all humanitarian principles (Slater, Bailey and Harvey, 2015).

Financing. As discussed by DFID/ODI review of shock-responsive social protection (OPM, 2015b), the financing of shock-responsive social protection remains a key challenge. Even though

flexibility is core principle of Good Humanitarian Donorship principles, most of the funds continue to be earmarked for humanitarian response only activities. However, as per the recent commitment under the Grand Bargain, there is without doubt political will to make significant efforts to strengthen and increase financing not only for emergency response, but for prevention and resilience building activities.

However, beyond donor-funding, it is important for shock-prone and fragile contexts to strongly prioritize counter-cyclical risk-informed and shock-responsive interventions ahead of crises. This is the case for instance of the Kenya Hunger Safety Programme and the Ethiopian Productive Safety Net. The review goes into discussing some of the key options that has been put forth for government risk management financing including solidarity; savings and credit; traditional insurance; and innovative risk-pooling or risk-transfer mechanisms; and also informal risk-sharing more applicable for household and community level. In collaborating with key partners and in the context of the Grand Bargain, FAO is committed to supporting governments in exploring these options as well as to move forward commitments around flexible and contingency financing.



Bangladesh

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4. FAO CONTRIBUTION

FAO VALUE ADDED

Given the external context and internal motivation, FAO is well positioned to contribute to the call for an integrated approach to resilience, humanitarian action and risk-informed programming. In its capacity as an organization working across development and emergency contexts,¹⁸ FAO has complementary added value in: (i) being a source of technical knowledge on social protection and its linkages with rural development, food security, nutrition and resilience; (ii) being a strategic stakeholder in food security analysis, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and livestock value chains and rural development; (iii) providing experience in global, regional and country data collection and monitoring for disaster preparedness; (iv) providing a specific (rural development) perspective around saving livelihoods within humanitarian response and making livelihoods more resilient along the whole disaster management cycle; (v) joining global partners in the call for integrated, shock-sensitive social protection systems; (vi) promoting the strategic linkages between social protection and productive rural development; (vii) applying operational expertise at country levels, given its field presence before, during and after a crisis and (viii) developing innovative solutions in early action and early warning systems and their move towards more integrated responses.

The FAO specific contribution to an integrated approach to resilience building and saving livelihoods can be categorized as follows:

Box 9 FAO TWIN TRACK APPROACH BRINGS TOGETHER HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

FAO has a dual role to play, improving both short-term access to food as well as food production in the medium term. By building up public provision of social protection and additional, pro-poor resilience investments, FAO has a clearly defined dual role:

- › (i) Saving livelihoods by reducing the negative risk-coping strategies that might erode productive assets during the response phases to a crisis.
- › (ii) Making livelihoods more resilient by implementing medium- and long-term strategies along the whole disaster management cycle.

- › **Resilience and vulnerability analysis**, developing analyses investigating the specific components of vulnerabilities that threaten natural resources and agriculture-based livelihoods linking them to the social protection strategies that can be designed to improve resilience.
- › **Building a knowledge and evidence base** on the linkages between social protection, food security, agricultural and rural development, and developing analytical and policy tools to inform the design and assess the effectiveness of shock-sensitive social protection systems.
- › **Direct implementation (in emergency and complex contexts)**, such as: seeds, tools, inputs (fertilizer) and vouchers restricted to

18 See Box 9 on FAO twin track approach.

inputs and services; unrestricted cash; cash+ approaches; public works that support rural livelihoods; training, extension – other forms of support to agriculture or disaster risk reduction linked to or added on to cash and/or vouchers; or food programmes, including employment interventions specifically targeted to youth or young IDPs; insurance; livestock de-stocking or re-stocking, fodder provision; support to markets/value chain, etc.; rehabilitation after crises; support to gender-sensitive productive services as well as small-scale financial services, including community contingency funds and revolving funds, integrated with technical support in agriculture; and integrated approaches.

- ▶ **Providing policy support and advice** on the use of relevant policy tools and facilitating policy dialogue among multiple stakeholders (national, subnational community, international and other)

to strengthen the linkages between social protection and food security, agriculture and rural development in stable contexts, as well as in protracted crises.

- ▶ **Developing institutional capacities** at all levels and multiple contexts, to design, implement, monitor and evaluate comprehensive social protection programmes and systems which are well complemented by food security, agricultural and rural development policies.
- ▶ **Disseminating knowledge**, experience and good practices, for effective advocacy of the rights to food and social protection.

Vulnerability analysis and resilience

measurement. For a social protection system to be scalable, flexible and responsive, it must feature a strong early warning mechanism, good analysis

Box 10 RESILIENCE INDEX MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS TOOL

FAO started working on resilience measurement in 2007. Since then the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis tool (RIMA) has intensively evolved. Eventually, FAO released in early 2016 an introductory brochure on RIMA-II, the innovative approach that builds on previous experiences (see <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5298e.pdf>).

FAO also promoted and supported the establishment of the Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group (RM-TWG), which included the major UN agencies, international NGOs, the World Bank and a long list of international universities working on resilience measurement. The activities of RM-TWG led to the release of important guidelines and principles that are being employed as references for resilience measurement. The activities of the RM-TWG also contributed to validating RIMA as a comprehensive and robust approach that can serve both analytical and impact evaluation needs.

RIMA estimates household resilience to food insecurity by a) adopting a latent variable model for weighting the contribution of a long list of indicators to resilience and b) adopting regression analysis in order to estimate determinants of resilience and food security recovery over time.

The list of indicators adopted by RIMA has been peer-reviewed and builds on the existing literature on resilience and vulnerability analysis. Also, statistical properties of the indicators *vis-à-vis* their explanatory power for resilience are assessed. The list of variables includes indicators of Adaptive Capacity; of productive and non-productive Assets; of Access to Basic Services; and of Social Safety Nets.

Especially because of the inclusion of social safety nets, RIMA is particularly suited for the impact assessment of social protection interventions on resilience. The list of indicators is highly context specific; however a core group of variables are constantly included in the estimation process. These variables include social capital, social transfers, social networks, reliability of social safety nets and predictability of social safety nets.

The Lesotho Cash Grant Project (CGP) is a good example of applicability of RIMA. While the final report of the impact evaluation is still under refinement, preliminary findings show a positive and statistically significant impact of the CGP on household resilience as estimated through RIMA.

Box 11 FROM PROTECTION TO PRODUCTION: CONTRIBUTING TO BUILD THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

FAO, in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), national research institutions and the national governments of seven countries – Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe – in sub-Saharan Africa, has led the generation of evidence on the economic and productive impact of national cash transfer programmes in the region. The development of rigorous impact assessments was carried out in close coordination with government counterparts and embedded in national policy processes and platforms. This contributed to strengthening the case for social protection as an investment, not a cost, while addressing public misperceptions around dependency and labour disincentives. It provided a solid base to show how cash transfers can help poor and marginalized families to build assets, empower themselves and generate economically productive activities.*

Evidence coming from country-level impact assessment and learning agendas has contributed to increase the understanding, among policy makers, of social protection as an effective measure to combat hunger, reduce poverty and foster rural development. In addition, it contributed to concrete policy and operational changes in terms of programme design, contributing to adjustments and improvements in transfer size, strengthening community structures, targeting and access and links to complementary activities among other operational mechanisms. More importantly, building the economic case for social protection is FAO concrete contribution to country-level policy discussions and actions around the expansion of coverage of social protection and the development of social protection systems (SDG Target 1.3) as well as the allocation of domestic investment for such expansion in countries such as Lesotho, Zambia, Kenya and Ghana, among others.

* More information available at <http://www.fao.org/social-protection>

of risks, vulnerabilities and shock impacts, as well as analysis of prevention and rehabilitation after a crisis. Beyond its core work in food security analysis, agriculture, forestry and livestock value chains and rural development, FAO has a niche in developing technical expertise on vulnerability analyses, as well as work on monitoring systems and early warning systems and experience in global, regional and country data collection and monitoring for disaster preparedness. Its work on resilience analysis, particularly through RIMA (See Box 10), is a critical contribution to the global discussions around resilience measurement and analysis. These analyses are crucial to building a scalable and responsive system.

Building a knowledge and evidence base.

In recent years FAO has been able to contribute to the global agenda on social protection, specifically **by building the economic case for social protection systems** and highlighting its contribution to generating economic and productive impacts even among the poorest and marginalized sectors of the population (See Box 11).

This evidence has also stressed that despite the important impact of social protection, accelerating progress in terms of poverty reduction requires a comprehensive package of interventions. As highlighted by the 2015 State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) report, the alignment and effective coordination between social protection interventions and FAO technical expertise in agriculture development are likely to be effective in helping poor households to move out of poverty in a sustainable manner. FAO is well positioned to promote a systems and integrated approach to social protection, linking social protection with the promotion of rural livelihoods. The current research agenda of the social protection analytical team focuses on assessing the impact of cash transfers in mitigating the impact of shocks (including climate related), the operational implications of designing shock-responsive systems, as well as on the impact of integrated “social protection plus” combinations (See Box 15).

Box 12 INTEGRATED RESPONSE TO CHRONIC POVERTY AND DROUGHT IN LESOTHO

In July 2013 FAO-Lesotho began a pilot initiative called the Linking Food Security to Social Protection Programme (LFSSP). The programme's objective was to improve the food security of poor and vulnerable households by providing vegetable seeds and training on homestead gardening to households eligible for a national social cash transfer programme – the Child Cash Grant Programme (CGP). The decision to target these specific households was made with the idea that the two programmes, in combination, would result in stronger impacts on the food security of beneficiary households as compared to each programme in isolation.

Comparing changes between 2013 and 2014 for both CGP (treatment) and non-CGP (control) households, all of whom received the LFSSP, reveals large increases in the proportion of harvesting from their home garden plots. Households more than tripled carrot, beetroot, and onion harvests (all three included in the LFSSP package) over the study period, and experienced significant increases in the production of peppers, tomatoes, and other types of vegetables (not included in the LFSSP package). The programme also had strong positive impacts on agricultural assets: use of any kind of agricultural asset and more specifically of hoes, sprayers and tractors increased due to the programmes.

Given the result of this programme, FAO-Lesotho is currently working with the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) to expand this integrated package of interventions to poor families affected by the current drought.

FAO has solid experience in direct implementation of emergency response.

Over the past 14 years, FAO has implemented interventions with a cash transfer (CT)/voucher component in almost 40 countries reaching about 2.5 million households. In 2012, FAO established a policy for the organization's use of specific CT modalities to address hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity. This was followed

in 2013 by two sets of guidelines – *Guidelines for public works (cash-, voucher- and food-for-work)* and *Guidelines for input trade fairs and voucher schemes* – that provide practical guidance to design and implement selected cash transfer modalities. In this line of work, FAO supports the findings and recommendations of the Report of the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, particularly

Box 13 SOMALIA: CASH FOR WORK PROGRAMMES IN CONTEXT OF CRISES

In the late summer of 2011, FAO significantly scaled up its existing cash for work (CFW) interventions in the central and southern regions of Somalia in response to the famine that had struck the Horn of Africa. Since then, FAO has continued to support thousands of families with a range of activities, most of which are designed to improve the resilience of vulnerable communities rather than offer only short-term support for food security. In the absence of a functioning government, FAO provided basic services to households in areas classified as being in a "humanitarian emergency" or "humanitarian catastrophe / famine" according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Rural assets were delivered (e.g. livestock vaccinations) complementing them with an ambitious programme to build and rehabilitate rural infrastructure (e.g. water catchments and irrigation canals) through CFW activities.

These rural assets were chosen for their potential to increase the resilience of farmers and pastoralists to natural shocks. These programmes have been implemented despite the challenges due to the presence of Al-Shabaab and local militias that hamper access. Based on this experience, the next step would be to assess the extent to which the structures in place for the delivery of the CFW activities can be easily replicable at national level and/or used on a more sustainable basis. Moreover, it is important to identify what are the key elements that can be incorporated in a national system, wherever feasible. In addition, the FAO intervention in Somalia illustrates the potential of cash-based interventions, building a strong case for a corporate approach to cash-based programming in complex contexts. This experience shows also the capacity of FAO to effectively implement, deliver, and progressively scale up this type of programme and the management of the operational mechanisms, including data management and monitoring.

Box 14 FOOD VOUCHERS AND CRISIS RESPONSE KITS IN SOUTH SUDAN

The civil war that broke out in the newly independent state of South Sudan in 2013 today undermines people's ability to manage assets and livelihoods. According to IPC's acute food insecurity analysis released in February 2016, still 2.8 million people (23 percent of the population) are facing acute food insecurity.* The livelihoods of affected population are threatened by a very high risk of livestock disease outbreaks *because the cold chain system has broken down and livestock movements are being forced along unusual routes causing crowding*, and bringing together vaccinated and unvaccinated herds. Moreover, livelihoods are being threatened by violent cattle raiding, often closely associated with the conflict, and exacerbated by threat of disease.

The Government of South Sudan had limited capacity to deal with demands for services and social protection before the 2013 conflict (Maxwell, Gelsdorf and Santschi, 2012). In a nascent social assistance system, there are entry points for FAO to work with the government and partners to support linkages between different humanitarian and nascent social assistance structures, whether in delivery of livelihood support or cash, or in the support of monitoring and information systems for future targeting and MIS development. Some engagement at upstream policy levels as well as presentation of operational evidence will lay the grounds for building a coordinated system.

In South Sudan, FAO provided (until 2015) food vouchers and crisis response kits to enable households to rebuild livelihoods while providing veterinary support to avoid further breakdown of livelihoods. Moreover, FAO is providing support to strengthen the availability of food security information and analysis, including the Food Security Monitoring System, Emergency Food Security Assessments, Initial Rapid Needs Assessment, spot checks and other cluster-level and sector-specific assessments such as planting, pre-harvest, post-harvest and seed availability assessment.

* <http://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-detail-forms/ipcinfo-map-detail/en/c/379480/>

around expanding the use of cash-based approaches. And this value added and expertise needs to be applied in development, as well as in fragile, risk-prone and protracted contexts.

Given the fact that the provision of social protection services should be a nationally led process, FAO aims to concentrate its efforts on strengthening national systems to scale up and become more resilient to shocks. In the light of this, the categories of intervention presented above (development of resilience and vulnerability analysis, building evidence-based knowledge and direct implementation of humanitarian assistance) have to be seen as instrumental to the developing skills, expertise and building a trust relationship with national governments in order to:

- support processes of development of institutional capacities to design, implement, monitor and evaluate comprehensive social protection programmes; and

- provide policy support and advice on the use of relevant tools, facilitating policy dialogue among multiple stakeholders to strengthen the linkages between social protection and food security, agriculture, forestry, climate change, water, energy and rural development along the whole cycle of disaster management.

In order to do so, FAO is constantly exploring new and innovative approaches able to protect livelihoods in the short term, while providing the means to develop sustainable skills and capacities to step out of the vicious circle of poverty and vulnerability to disasters and negative coping strategies. One of the most promising instruments tested in the recent years is the "CASH+" approach, a flexible combination of cash transfers and productive assets, activities and inputs, and/or technical training and extension services.

Box 15 SOCIAL PROTECTION +: PRODUCTIVE TRANSFERS TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE TO SHOCKS

The “*Social protection +/ Productive transfers*” integrated approach aims at boosting the livelihoods and productive capacities of vulnerable households through the provision of a flexible combination of cash transfers and productive assets, activities and inputs, and/or technical training and extension services. The cash transfer component addresses basic household needs and protects assets from depletion and losses while the productive side of the transfer help kick-start a virtuous cycle of income generation, leading to economic empowerment, which is key to increasing asset ownership, food security and dietary diversity.

Targeted vulnerable households are supported with an integrated package of: (i) productive assets, activities and inputs (such as poultry, seeds, small ruminants, etc.); (ii) cash transfers (the amount and frequency of which are to be defined according to each specific context); and (iii) technical training (on climate resilient practices, sustainable forest management practices, nutrition and income-generating activities) or extension services. A nutrition-sensitive approach is promoted through the selection of nutrient-rich and short reproduction cycle varieties and species as well as through a dedicated support to women.

The approach has recently been implemented in Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Somalia. Available evidence shows that the approach significantly improves households' incomes, assets, productivity potential, as well as dietary diversity and food security, and reduces the frequency of families resorting to negative coping strategies.

Impact assessments conducted in Burkina Faso one year and two years after the transfers came to an end show a quicker and more cost-effective livelihood recovery for households as compared to either traditional cash transfers or agricultural input distributions. Over the period, households' resort to negative coping strategies was reduced by 72 percent. Many very poor households have doubled the value of the support they received in just one year and sometimes tripled it in two years: an increase in income (on average by 50 percent) and in the value of assets possessed (by around 80 percent).

Increases in incomes directly contributed to improvements in diet diversity with an increase in proteins and lipids consumption in the two-year period. This translated into a 30 percent increase in households having an adequate diet.

This approach is a tool for quick recovery that can be complemented by other FAO interventions, such as land access facilitation, support to agricultural production and processing, income-generating activities, microfinance, access to credit, etc., to strengthen its impact. FAO also supports ownership of the “*Social protection +/ Productive transfers*” approach by governments through multisector policy and operational dialogue, bringing together social protection and agriculture/livestock line ministries.

**Mali**

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The specialized knowledge that FAO has developed through its field presence, technical staff and its training and research capacities, adds value to better understanding the current gap of knowledge in social protection in humanitarian and fragile settings. FAO expertise in sustainable agriculture, seeds, livestock, crops, land, fisheries and forests, as well as agribusiness and green job promotion can be used to design livelihood support that builds on cash transfers to address vulnerabilities related to shocks. Natural hazards, food chain crises and protracted crises, including violent

conflicts, each have different causes and effects rooted in livelihoods that are dependent on natural resources. FAO understanding of the gender gap as a major impediment to efforts to reduce hunger and poverty underlies the commitment of the organization to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in all of its work (FAO, 2013c). The experience of supporting rural women as rights holders and active agents working toward achieving food security and promoting resilient agriculture provides a clear advantage in the design of social protection systems that not only



Tanzania
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address the gendered dimensions of vulnerability, but also support women's productive roles, and enhance their control over income for stronger food and nutrition security impacts (FAO, 2013c; FAO, 2015).

To work towards flexible and scalable national social protection systems that address root causes of vulnerability and build resilience, FAO credibility in working with governments and dependable partners can support a systems-building approach. FAO experience with cash, public

works, and vouchers in emergencies contexts, and management of potential livelihood shocks are all of great value to developing social protection systems that increase human capital, social cohesion, productive investment and improved ability to manage risk. Particularly in countries with nascent social protection systems, which face situations of protracted crisis, FAO value added in bringing livelihood support to the social protection agenda is unique and in great demand, particularly in crises anticipation and management.



5. A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION ACROSS DIFFERENT CONTEXTS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

The social protection strategies and interventions that FAO will implement vary widely according to the specific contexts at local level. The table below summarizes different scenarios which can be used to define the most appropriate social protection intervention strategy. The scenarios include levels of system maturity based on state capacity, as well as flexibility and capacity to respond. As reference scenarios, these would need to be complemented by an assessment of the specific risks and shocks, as well as actors and financial capacity on the ground. The five categories range from a case in which the provision of social protection is completely absent, to a situation in which the social protection system is flexible and able to respond in an appropriate and efficient manner after a shock.¹⁹

In conflicts where the state is an active party to the conflict and does not control all of its territory then even well-developed social protection systems may only be able to reach part of the population. And there may be non-conflict contexts where regimes are deliberately excluding particular population groups from assistance and

are complicit in problematic abuses of human rights.

Category one (no system) and category five (highly shock responsive system) should be considered as “reference scenarios”. The three intermediate categories range from a situation in which **a coherent social protection system is not yet developed** to a case in which **the national social protection system exists, but is only partially able to adapt and respond to shocks**:

- ▶ **Nascent social assistance system**: a coherent social protection system is not yet developed, or exists but there are nascent structures (i.e. information capture, targeting, monitoring) that are being developed and used either by the state and subnational actors, or by UN agencies, the private sector and other actors. In this context, there is limited provision of timely and appropriate services to the beneficiaries, especially after a crisis due to limited capacity, the lack of multidimensional vulnerability profiles and harmonized targeting systems, among other factors.

¹⁹ Please note that this reference matrix does not attempt to reflect all multiple and compounding complexities, but to serve as a reference point to help initiate discussions at country levels.

- State system with repeated humanitarian response: social protection services have been and are being provided in the form of short- to medium-term support, e.g. in the form of assets, vouchers or cash transfers, but the system is rigid and inflexible and hence unable to adapt or effectively respond in the event of a crisis. A humanitarian, externally supported, response is thus required in case of threat and crisis. These are contexts where the humanitarian caseload may be shifted towards existing systems if these are reformed/adjusted.
- Limited shock-responsive social protection system: the national social protection system exists and is partially able to adapt and respond to shocks. Examples of response may include (i) increasing (for a short period of time) the coverage of social protection benefits to those households affected by the shock, and/or (ii) topping up the transfer to those households already covered by social protection so they can counteract additional impacts to their livelihoods as the result of the shock or crisis.

The FAO role varies according to the identified category. When a social protection system is already in place, flexible and able to expand, FAO would tend to prioritize **upstream policy work** and **knowledge dissemination** as the preferred support mechanism in order to maximize the coverage of social protection, including promoting the use of threat- and shock-related indicators in the targeting and provision of benefits. The key focus would be on promoting linkages between social protection and the promotion of rural livelihoods. In this case, minimal resources should go to field interventions, unless there is a strong reason to pilot or test a specific and innovative livelihood support measure.

On the other hand, in cases where the provision of social protection by the national state is absent, deficient or mostly donor led, FAO will, responding to its mandate of protecting livelihoods and in partnership with other UN and international agencies, engage in **providing emergency and livelihood support** in crisis situations. Critical emphasis should be dedicated to creating an enabling environment, strengthening mechanisms to anticipate and/or prevent crises, focusing on



Haiti
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Table 2 FAO social protection (SP) intervention strategy*

N. Type of SP services**	Description	Potential areas of FAO intervention: protecting livelihoods and building resilience
1 Shattered or severely weakened system	Context where there is no formal provision of social protection and/or existing structures (formal and non-formal) have been shattered or severely weakened by crises or conflict.	In coordination with partners, FAO can contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of emergency response interventions, while at the same time assess their potential replication or use to develop a nascent social protection programme and/or livelihood support structure.
2 Nascent social assistance system	Initial components of a social protection system are being put in place, providing short- to medium-term support, mostly in relation to acute risks, threats or crisis, yet a coherent system is not developed.	In coordination with partners, FAO can contribute to the assessment of nascent structures, and their potential scale up and use for the delivery of livelihood support or cash on a more predictable basis. In addition, FAO can support the establishment of robust multisector monitoring and information systems to enhance programme targeting in the event of a recurrent crisis. When some structures are available (formal or non-formal), some level of engagement would be promoted in terms of upstream policy discussion, capacity development, implementing on-the-ground jointly through government at all levels, as well as development and dissemination of operational evidence to develop shock responsive and coordinated systems.
3 State SP system unable to respond to repeated crises	A social protection programme or system exists and is institutionalized within the state structure, yet it is rigid and inflexible or too overloaded; it is unable to adapt to the increasing burden of need in the event of a shock or crisis.	In this situation FAO should work with the national systems to complement what is provided, supporting the integration of livelihood dimensions to the targeting system and expansion of coverage to rural areas, as well as to enhance the capacity of the system to effectively respond to predictable crises. Where possible, FAO should work with relevant sections of the state to strengthen delivery capacity at national and subnational levels.
4 Limited shock-responsive SP system	A SP programme or system exists that includes committed state involvement (even if it is donor funded). The system is partially able to respond to predictable shocks and increase coverage of those households affected by the shock and eligible to receive SP.	FAO should prioritize upstream policy work, capacity building knowledge dissemination, as well as support to operationalize linkages between social protection and productive and agricultural development, including the promotion of climate-smart and sustainable practices. Analysis, early warning and vulnerability analysis should inform trigger mechanisms in the SP system. Underlying vulnerability analysis should inform disaster risk reduction and social protection linkages. Minimal resources should go to on-the-ground parallel interventions, unless there is a strong case for testing an innovative model, or it is necessary to implement on-the-ground interventions, and this is done jointly through government at all levels.
5 Highly shock-responsive SP system	An ideal scenario where a social protection system is institutionalized within state structures and is prepared to respond nimbly and flexibly to predictable and unpredictable shocks and stresses.	FAO can contribute to strengthen the linkages between social protection and agriculture development, including prioritization of upstream policy work, knowledge and evidence generation, as well as the facilitation of south-south collaboration so that countries can learn about experience and operational dynamics of shock-responsive systems.

* The overall framework was developed jointly by SPIAC-B subgroup on social protection and resilience's conceptual framework. Table 2 provides specific FAO contribution to this approach.

** These reference-only categories were developed based on the Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI). CODI is one of the tools developed as part of the SPIAC-B set of diagnostic inter-agency tools. <http://ispatools.org/core-diagnostic-instrument/>

analysis and livelihood development, while also engaging actively in national **policy processes** aimed to set up, in the medium to long term, a predictable and reliable SP system. In this regard, **impact evaluation** of the social protection systems implemented by different actors will be of crucial importance in order to inform the decision-making process. When viable, the provision of SP should not be conceived as being a stand-alone initiative, and the involvement of national government should be a priority for the organization in order to ensure the sustainability of the intervention.

The implementation modality of the organization will also change according to its positioning within the national policy context and whether the context is one of conflict or natural disaster.

In cases where FAO is already present in the policy discussion and has a strong recognized role within relevant ministries (social services, agricultural development, disaster management, climate change, environment, sustainability), focus should be on supporting knowledge uptake and dissemination, providing capacity building and influencing the policy dialogue, thus reinforcing nationally-led processes and strengthening state capacity to manage and implement a flexible and shock-responsive social protection system. On the other hand, in some cases it will be important to pilot best practices and methodologies, such as integrated approaches (social protection, cash and complementary productive and livelihood interventions) that have been proven to be efficient in other contexts on the ground in order to (i) test their reliability in the specific context and (ii) show governmental stakeholders the validity of such approaches in order to gain an entry point to policy-level discussions and support national decision processes. In this regard south-south cooperation and peer-to-peer learning experiences might be a valuable tool to strengthening policy and programmatic linkages between social protection, agriculture, forestry, climate change, water and food security and nutrition.

In conflict contexts where the state is an active party to the conflict, FAO engagement with the state needs to respect humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and recognize that the state may not control all of its territory or be able to reach some of the people most in need of assistance.

Apart from the social protection system in place, FAO interventions will vary according to a set of different parameters, including: (i) types of threats and crises, (ii) specificities of the territory, (iii) types of livelihood and seasonality, (iv) coordination with donors and governments and (v) human capital and community cohesion:

- ▶ (i) Different types of threats and crisis will shape FAO intervention. In the case of predictable and/or slow onset natural hazards (drought, environmental degradation, desertification, typhoons), the provision of CASH+ type of interventions have the advantage of being able to prepare in advance for the anticipated shock. Moreover, the “plus” (including complementary agricultural and nutrition interventions and training) can be easily adapted to the most pressing needs of the beneficiaries. On the other hand, in the case of non-predictable and/or rapid onset disasters, timely transfers will provide the flexibility needed to protect livelihood and productive assets. In case of protracted crisis, the combination of different social protection interventions will have to take into account parameters such as price increase index, security, political stability and subnational power dynamics.
- ▶ (ii) The specificity of the context will play a crucial role. In local contexts systematically affected by low access to market and lack of a viable economic and secure environment, the provision of cash transfer might have limited impact. At the same time, physical and weather related parameters will have to be taken into account in the provision on in-kind and productive inputs.

- ▶ (iii) Social protection interventions will have to be shaped according to the Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) livelihood type. Medium and small agriculture-based livelihoods, depending from the type of shock affecting them, might need higher cash components in order to protect the productive assets compared with, for example, forest and fishery livelihoods.
- ▶ (iv) FAO aims to work in partnership with governments and development partners as well as civil society. The type of partnership and coordination will vary according to the presence of relevant stakeholders on the ground. Wherever possible, FAO will always aim to support nationally-led activities, while in cases of fragile contexts and where there may be no full governance coverage at subnational level, FAO will coordinate with international and local actors in order to achieve the goals of (a) protecting livelihoods and (b) make livelihoods more resilient to shocks and crises.
- ▶ (v) Human capital, community cohesion and local leadership and governance structures will drive the strategy to be implemented. As stated by the Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit (United Nations, 2016), it will be critical to enable people to be the central drivers in building their resilience. Social protection programmes should aim to build on and strengthen positive local coping strategies, capacities and techniques, depending on the situation on the ground, and maximizing the involvement of local communities in the whole decision-making process.



Gaza Strip

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SUMMARY: KEY MESSAGES TO TAKE FORWARD

Box 16 FAO VALUE ADDED AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION IN CRISIS SETTINGS

- › FAO core work in food security analysis, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and livestock value chains and rural development – that enhances our understanding on the multiple and compounding vulnerabilities of rural producers, farmers and workers.
- › Role as honest broker, working to “save livelihoods” and build resilience in crises and fragile contexts.
- › Mandate to bring together humanitarian and development perspectives: (i) saving livelihoods by reducing the negative risk-coping strategies that might otherwise erode productive assets and (ii) making livelihoods more resilient by implementing medium- and long-term strategies along the entire disaster management cycle.
- › Field presence before, during and after a crisis, including in contexts with limited government presence and field experience, in rural development, nutrition and cash-based programming in development and crises settings.
- › Building the economic case for cash transfer programmes. Working with UNICEF, research institutions and national governments, FAO From Protection to Production (PtoP) project, has produced evidence of the economic and productive impacts of national cash transfer programmes.
- › Expertise in assessing the drivers of risks and vulnerabilities. FAO has developed a rigorous tool for resilience measurement, the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA), which provides policy-makers with key elements to better articulate policy decisions around strengthening resilience at household and community levels.
- › Expertise in direct implementation of cash-based interventions (in emergency and complex contexts). Over the past 14 years, FAO has implemented interventions with a cash transfer (CT/voucher) component in 40 countries reaching about 2.5 million households.
- › Rapidly developing field experience around CASH+ to accelerate results for poverty reduction and resilience. FAO flexible CASH+ interventions combine transfers of cash and productive in-kind assets with the objective of boosting the livelihoods and productive capacities of poor and vulnerable households.
- › Facilitating policy and operational linkages between social protection and agricultural and productive interventions.
- › Experience in global, regional and country data collection and monitoring for disaster preparedness.
- › Development of early action and early warning systems and their move towards more integrated responses.
- › Long experience in building and strengthening technical capacities at local and country levels.

Box 17 KEY MESSAGES, WAY FORWARD AND COMMITMENTS

FAO commits to:

- › Integrate social protection, risk reduction, and livelihood support alongside acute humanitarian response to ensure a long-term prospective.
- › Support governments and national actors to enrol chronic caseloads of affected populations into social protection programmes is an effective strategy to promote national leadership in the management of threat and crisis.
- › Undertake multiyear planning and programming to support resilience-building programmes in protracted crises and greater alignment across humanitarian, development, peace and human rights actors.
- › Strengthen the capacity of decentralized offices to design, implement and monitor cash-based and Cash+ interventions in the event of a crisis.
- › Strengthen the capacity of subnational, and community actors, recognizing their role in identifying warning signs of crises, and developing effective ways to counteract their negative impacts.
- › Further study and document the operational implications of designing risk-informed and shock-responsive systems: how to integrate the lessons and effective delivery mechanisms used in emergency contexts to enhance national social protection systems.
- › Support governments in systematically linking early warning systems related to agriculture, food security and nutrition to inform the design of social protection programmes, and using this information to trigger support before a crisis (particularly relevant in the context of predictable crises, such as El Niño, La Niña, or similar).
- › Further develop solid and empirical impact assessments of the best combination of Cash+ approaches and their impact on poverty alleviation and resilience building.

This position paper has provided an overview of the rationale supporting the role social protection, including cash-based interventions, can play in protracted crises, as well as in humanitarian and fragile contexts. Based on FAO holistic approach to resilience and poverty reduction, the paper also highlights FAO contribution and value added given the current context and changing nature of humanitarian systems.

In this context, FAO comparative advantage lies in knowledge generation, policy work and operational know-how to effectively support governments in the design and implementation of shock-sensitive and responsive social protection systems, and in the direct implementation of cash-based and cash plus interventions in emergency contexts. But, most importantly, FAO works through a twin-

track approach to effectively gather key lessons and operational expertise to progressively and effectively contribute to bridging the humanitarian and development divide.

FAO needs to continue to streamline its social protection approach and contribution in national policy level processes, design and implementation of innovative practices, as well as in building solid evidence for designing effective interventions in fragile, humanitarian and protracted contexts.

As FAO moves forward with this agenda, concerted efforts are needed to further strengthen staff capacity at global, regional and decentralized office levels. This capacity must be built in linking social protection and cash-based programming in both humanitarian and risk-prone stable settings.

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“With social protection, the hungry are no longer a mere statistic. They become individuals, with registered names and addresses. They become empowered to escape hunger through their own efforts, and thus lead dignified and productive lives.”

José Graziano da Silva

FAO Director-General

Today, member states face an increasing myriad of demands and challenges in agricultural development. To support them, FAO has identified five key priorities on which it is best placed to intervene. These priorities or Strategic Objectives represent the main areas of our work to achieve a world without hunger, malnutrition and poverty and do so in a sustainable manner – contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To help accomplish our Strategic Objectives, FAO works through five Strategic Programmes, incorporating gender, governance, nutrition and climate change impacts in all aspects of our work.



HELP ELIMINATE HUNGER,
FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION



MAKE AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES
MORE PRODUCTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE



REDUCE RURAL POVERTY



ENABLE INCLUSIVE AND EFFICIENT
AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS



INCREASE THE RESILIENCE OF LIVELIHOODS
TO THREATS AND CRISES

- ▶ This publication specifically contributes to our work to reduce rural poverty and increase the resilience to threats and crises.

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