



National and international responses to protracted crises

Analysis of aid flows to countries in protracted crisis

Key message

Official development assistance (ODA) contributes to a large share of public expenditure in most countries in protracted crisis. Yet the level of ODA to these countries remains low and unevenly distributed, with key sectors such as agriculture seriously underfunded, and is not adequately linked to development objectives.

Aid to countries in protracted crisis is a major tool used in mitigating the effects of food insecurity and in addressing the structural issues that cause it. As noted earlier (see page 13), countries in protracted crisis are characterized by a relatively high dependence on humanitarian assistance. In most countries in protracted crisis, a large part of the investment in the country's capital – such as schools, roads, railways, hospitals and land improvements – is also financed by aid. For the 18 countries in protracted crisis for which data were available, external funds accounted for about 80 percent of gross capital formation in 2007, indicating significant dependence on external aid.⁵⁴ This section examines trends and volumes of aid flows that went to countries in protracted crisis between 2000 and 2008 and related policy implications.⁵⁵ Overall trends are contrasted with data from other least-developed countries (LDCs).⁵⁶ Afghanistan and Iraq are excluded because the dramatic increase of development assistance to these two countries risked distorting the overall analysis of aid flows to countries in protracted crisis. Development ODA to Iraq, for example, increased over 120-fold between 2000 and 2008, from US\$23 million in 2000 to US\$2.8 billion in 2008; while in Afghanistan, development ODA increased more than fifty-fold, from US\$63 million in 2000 to US\$3.5 billion in 2008. These increases are associated with the conflicts and related security and anti-terrorism concerns that have affected these two countries and, to some degree, a number of other countries in protracted crisis.

Recent trends have seen increased allocation and targeting of development and humanitarian assistance according to security criteria – a phenomenon often labelled the “securitization of aid”. This trend is based on the argument that security is a precondition for emergence from crisis situations. However, some observers are concerned that targeting assistance by security criteria – rather than by poverty or humanitarian criteria – allocates a disproportionate share of resources to the most conflict-affected countries or areas at the expense of other places with equally pressing needs and potentially higher probability of developmental or humanitarian impact from assistance.

■ Development aid and humanitarian aid are increasing but better balance is needed

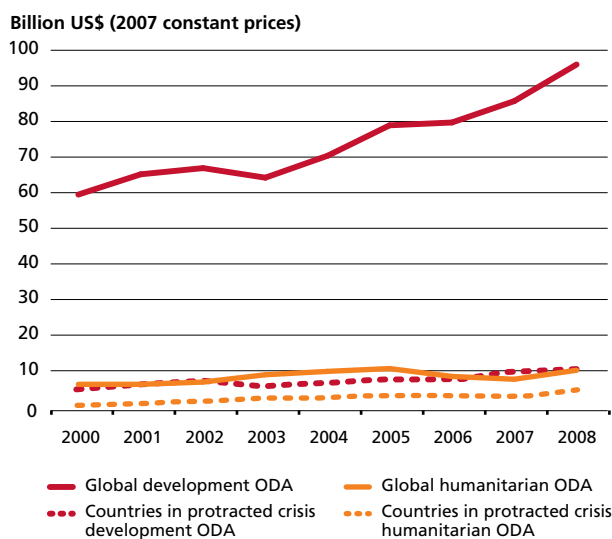
Globally, both development ODA (excluding debt relief) and humanitarian ODA grew by roughly 60 percent between 2000 and 2008 (Figure 11). Development aid rose from US\$59.2 billion in 2000 to US\$95.2 billion in 2008, while humanitarian aid increased from US\$6.7 billion in 2000 to US\$10.7 billion in 2008 (2007 constant prices).

Development aid⁵⁷

Development aid to countries in protracted crisis (excluding Afghanistan and Iraq) grew slightly faster than the global average over the period, rising from US\$5.5 billion to US\$11.0 billion, representing a 100 percent increase between 2000 and 2008. However, it started from very low levels in 2000 (US\$5.5 billion), representing 9 percent of all development assistance, while by 2008, it accounted for only 12 percent of all development assistance. Considering the average over the years 2000–02 the per capita rate was equivalent to US\$17.87, below the LDC average of US\$28.69. Accordingly, 14 of the countries in protracted crisis still received less development aid per capita than the LDC average in the most recent period analysed (2006–08; Figure 12).

FIGURE 11

Globally, development and humanitarian aid increased by about 60 percent between 2000 and 2008



Note: Data for countries in protracted crisis exclude Afghanistan and Iraq.

Source: OECD-DAC online database.

Humanitarian assistance to countries in protracted crisis (excluding Afghanistan and Iraq) has risen steadily, resulting in a five-fold increase between 2000 and 2008, from US\$978 million to US\$4.8 billion. Humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and Iraq, overall, has also climbed significantly. In the case of Afghanistan, humanitarian assistance increased from US\$155 million in 2000 to US\$802 million in 2008. Iraq, in 2000, was receiving US\$141 million in humanitarian assistance. By 2008, this had more than doubled to US\$359 million, with a peak of US\$1.2 billion in 2003. Over the same period, humanitarian assistance has become increasingly concentrated among countries in protracted crisis; the proportion of total global humanitarian assistance going to countries in protracted crisis tripled over the period, increasing from 15 percent to 45 percent (56 percent if Afghanistan and Iraq are included). The amount of humanitarian assistance per capita varied widely among countries in protracted crisis and across years, as would be expected given the nature of the response to emergencies (Figure 13). However, unlike development assistance, all countries in protracted crisis received more humanitarian aid per capita than the LDC average.

■ Sectoral analysis of aid flows shows that key sectors for food security are underfunded

This analysis of aid flows to different sectors focuses on agriculture and education – two sectors that are particularly crucial for food security. Regrettably, the way ODA data are organized preclude a more detailed analysis

of the kinds of programming that appear to be most relevant to protracted crises, such as assistance to livelihood promotion or social protection.

Based on 2005–2008 ODA commitments, only 3.1 percent of development ODA received by countries in protracted crisis is dedicated to agriculture (Figure 14), compared with an average of 5.8 percent for LDCs. Yet the agriculture sector accounts for an average of 32 percent of protracted crisis countries' GDP and employs an average of 62 percent of their populations (see Annex table 2), proportions similar to those of the group of LDCs. The case studies presented in this report (see, in particular, pages 18–21) illustrate the importance of agricultural and rural-based livelihoods to the groups most affected by protracted crises.

Similarly, the percentage of development ODA allocated to education is very low in countries in protracted crisis (3.8 percent, compared with an average of 9.6 percent for LDCs), while basic (i.e. primary) education receives just 1.6 percent, compared with an average of 3.5 percent for LDCs.

All but three (Angola, Eritrea and Guinea) of the 22 countries in protracted crisis receive a lower percentage of development ODA targeted to basic education than the average for LDCs (Figure 15). However, given the low level of per capita ODA that these three countries receive, aid flows to basic education remain very low even here.

Yet education is vital to achieving food security in the long-run. There is ample evidence that investing in education, particularly basic education, contributes to reducing hunger and undernourishment by increasing the productivity of smallholders and subsistence farmers. Low levels of school attainment are associated with high levels of undernourishment.⁵⁸ A survey conducted for the World Bank found that a farmer with four years of primary education is, on average, almost 9 percent more productive than a farmer with no education.⁵⁹

■ Food aid remains the best-supported humanitarian response, especially in countries in protracted crisis⁶⁰

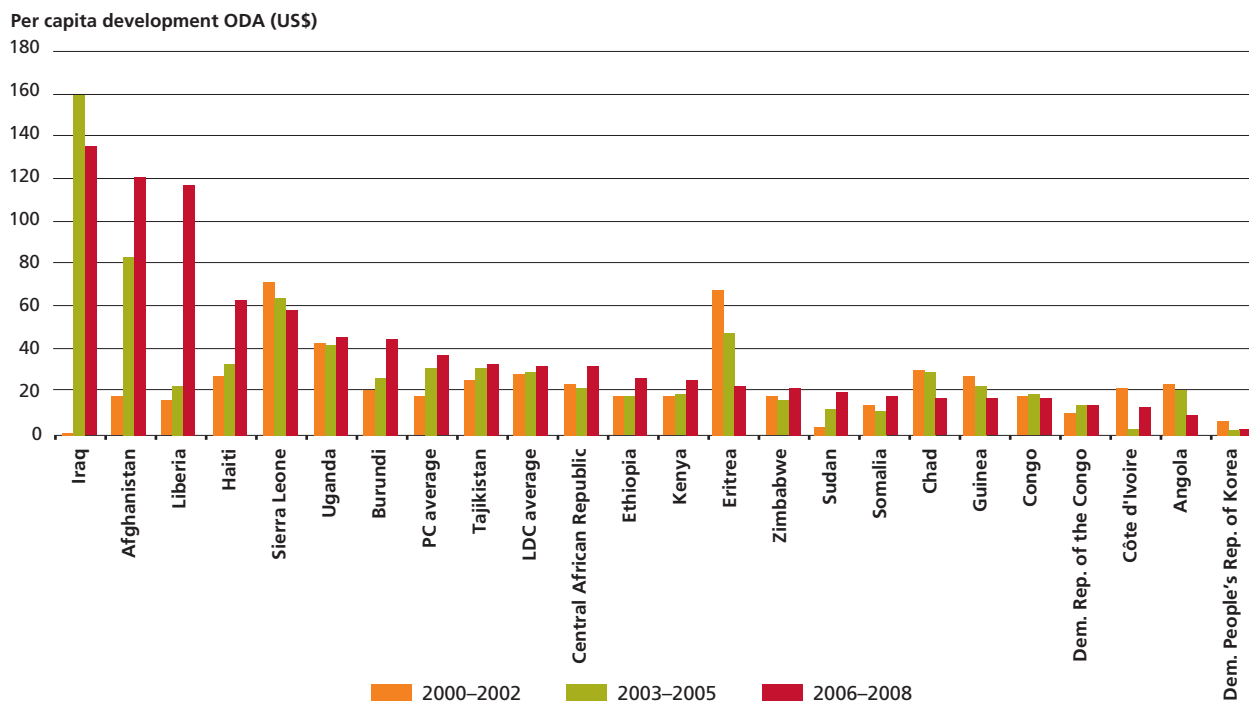
As with development ODA, agriculture received a small proportion of total humanitarian assistance (3 percent of total commitments globally in 2009, and 4 percent in protracted crisis countries). Education received a mere 2 percent of humanitarian ODA.

The allocation of humanitarian assistance through the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) illustrates the current priority given to food aid over other forms of assistance – globally and in countries in protracted crisis.⁶¹

Food aid is the best-funded sector of humanitarian aid, receiving on average 96 percent of funding requested globally through the CAP between 2000 and 2008.⁶² Countries in protracted crisis fared slightly less well, receiving 84 percent of funding requested for food aid over

FIGURE 12

Patterns of development ODA per capita vary widely among countries in protracted crisis

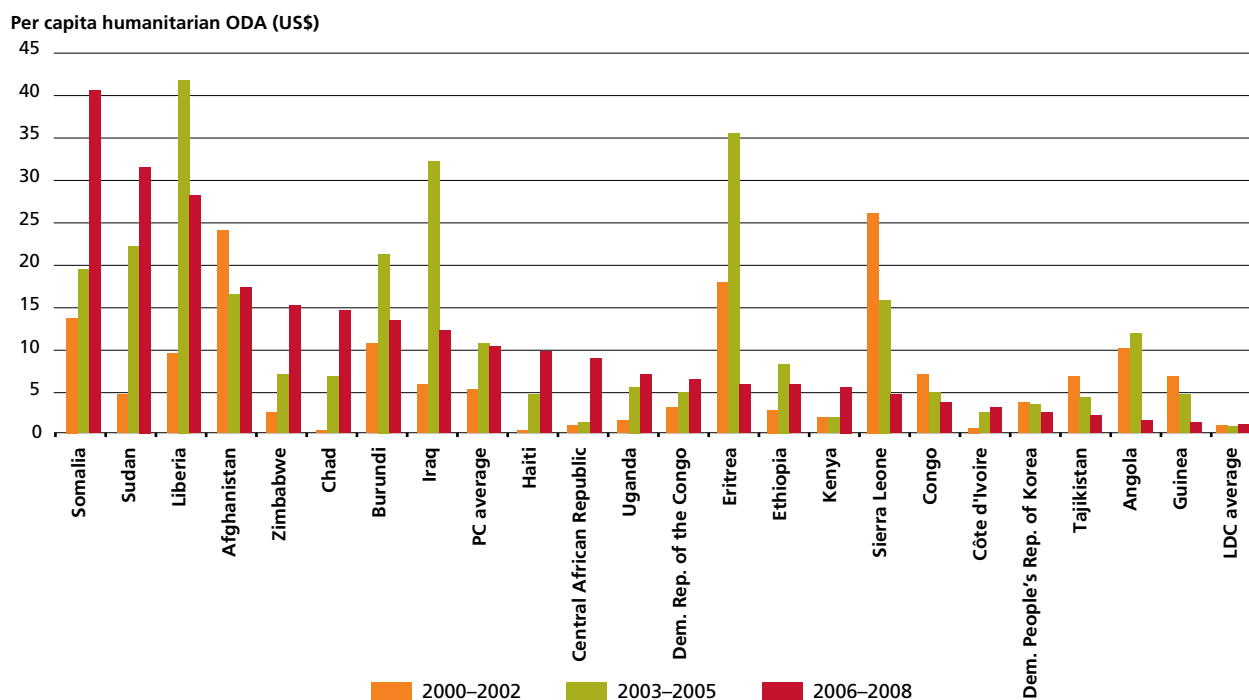


Note: PC = countries in protracted crisis; LDC = least-developed countries (excluding countries in protracted crisis).

Sources: OECD-DAC online database; World Bank World Development Indicators website.

FIGURE 13

Humanitarian ODA fluctuates widely from year to year, but countries in protracted crisis receive more than the average for least-developed countries



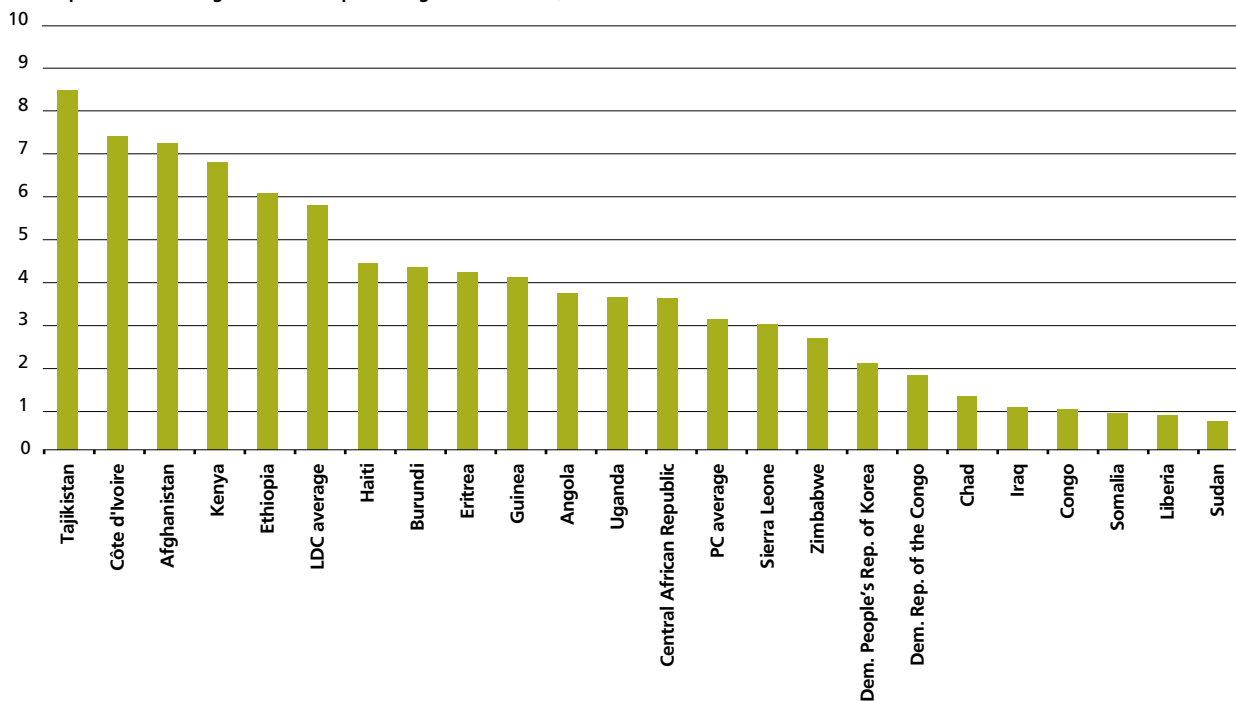
Note: PC = countries in protracted crisis; LDC = least-developed countries (excluding countries in protracted crisis).

Sources: OECD-DAC online database; World Bank World Development Indicators website.

FIGURE 14

Agriculture is vital to the economies of countries in protracted crisis, yet receives a small fraction of development ODA

Development ODA to agriculture as a percentage of total ODA, 2005–08



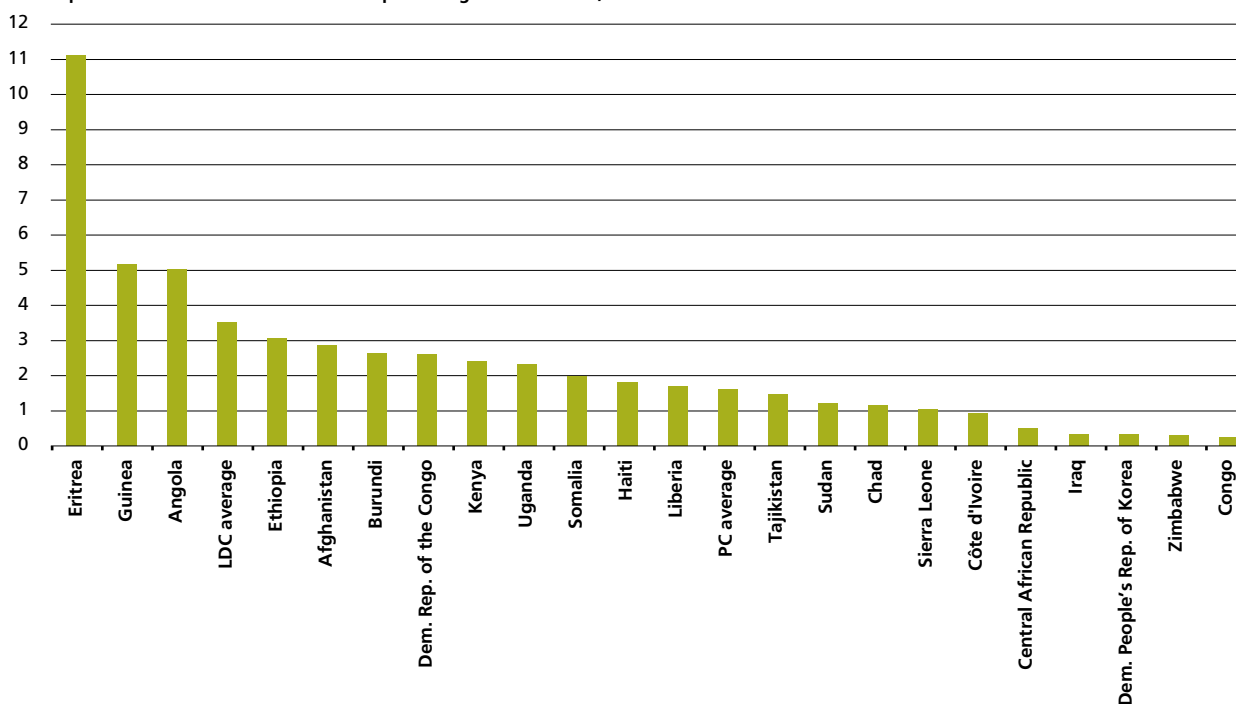
Note: PC = countries in protracted crisis; LDC = least-developed countries (excluding countries in protracted crisis).

Source: OECD-CRS database.

FIGURE 15

Only a small percentage of development ODA is dedicated to supporting basic education in countries in protracted crisis, less even than the average for LDCs in most cases

Development ODA to basic education as a percentage of total ODA, 2005–08



Note: PC = countries in protracted crisis; LDC = least-developed countries (excluding countries in protracted crisis).

Source: OECD-CRS database.

the same period (Figure 16). On average, the agriculture sector fares less well than the food aid sector, receiving on average just 44 percent of funds requested globally and 45 percent in countries in protracted crisis between 2000 and 2008. Education and other key sectors such as water and sanitation also received less than 50 percent of assessed needs.

■ Aid flows: what does this mean for food security in countries in protracted crisis?

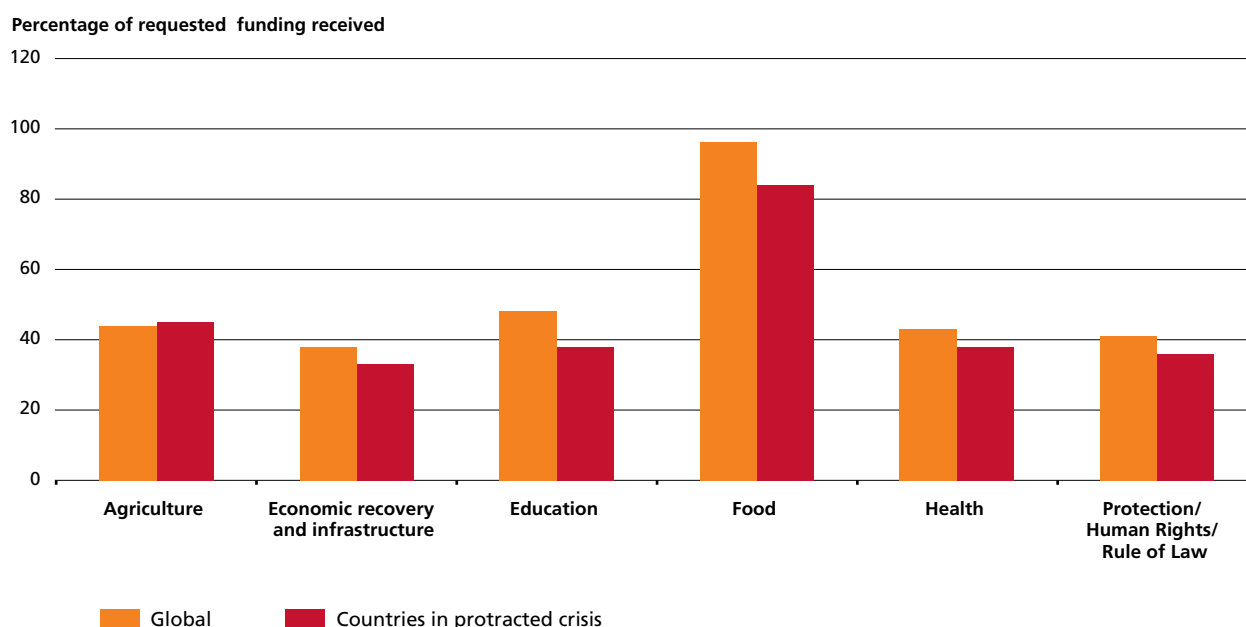
The current low level of ODA to countries in protracted crisis should be reconsidered given that most of them still depend on external aid for a large part of their pro-poor public investments. At the same time, humanitarian assistance – which has increased rapidly and has been a major source of aid over prolonged periods of time – should be integrated with development assistance within a long-term policy and planning framework. This will require significant rethinking of the ways assistance is delivered to these countries.

Regarding food security, it is difficult to track investments aimed at reducing food insecurity using existing data sets, and almost impossible to identify key initiatives such as livelihoods promotion and protection and social protection. This limits the ability to formulate policy decisions that would contribute to reducing food insecurity.

Despite these limitations, a sectoral analysis of aid flows provides a number of indications. Both development and humanitarian assistance to agriculture in countries in protracted crisis are below the LDC average, despite the fact that such investments are crucial for rebuilding and promoting livelihoods. Basic education is also underfunded relative to the key role it has in promoting long-term food security. Long-term gains in food security are therefore compromised. At the same time, food aid receives support close to actual needs. Food aid is vital for preserving lives and protecting livelihoods in countries in crisis, and must continue to receive support from donors, but action is needed to raise awareness of the shortfalls in funding for other areas that can help these countries build the foundations of long-term food security.

FIGURE 16

Most sectors received less than half of the funds they requested through the Consolidated Appeal Process between 2000 and 2008



Source: Financial Tracking System (FTS) database.



Humanitarian food assistance in protracted crises

Key message

Humanitarian food assistance not only saves lives in protracted crises, but is also an investment in long-term food security and future development.

Humanitarian food assistance is a significant feature of protracted crisis environments. It saves lives and helps address the scarcity or deprivation that underlies many protracted crises. Humanitarian food assistance is also an investment in a country's future. Emergency food support that safeguards nutrition and livelihoods and supports education provides a strong basis for food security in the longer term and represents a potentially crucial investment in future development. The many operational and political challenges of working in protracted crises, however, should not be underestimated.

■ From food aid to food assistance: a strategic shift

Year after year, the largest share of the commitments made in response to UN appeals for emergencies worldwide goes to food assistance, which includes in-kind food aid, cash contributions for the local and regional purchase of food, food vouchers and cash provided directly to the beneficiaries.⁶³ Forty-four percent of the original 2009 Humanitarian Appeal, for instance, was for food and food-assisted programmes (US\$3.1 billion of US\$7 billion sought).

Observers have long feared that humanitarian aid – particularly prolonged food aid – can undermine local economies and damage local agricultural production. Recent years have seen a notable shift away from food aid imports to more sustainable and developmental procurement practices. Food assistance in crisis situations no longer means just food aid; new tools are available to WFP and other agencies working in protracted crisis environments. In countries or areas where markets are functioning poorly, food assistance might mean the provision of food directly to families, as the most basic form of safety net. Where markets are in place and distribution infrastructure exists, it can mean the provision of cash or vouchers, which enable recipients to purchase food items directly at selected shops. The possibility of tailoring interventions to specific contexts has made it possible to provide more nuanced and context-specific interventions

and helped alleviate concerns about the possible disincentive effects of prolonged assistance.

The largest food assistance agency, WFP, now buys more food for distribution than it receives in kind. In 2009, 80 percent of WFP's purchases were made in developing countries, including in 12 of the 22 countries in protracted crisis considered in this report. WFP has also realigned the way it buys food to address more effectively the root causes of hunger: "Purchase for Progress", begun in 2008, is designed to enhance smallholders' and low-income farmers' access to markets where they can sell their produce at competitive prices. In Liberia, for instance, the initiative involves 5 600 farmers and is expected to improve their linkages to markets and build national capacity in production, processing and marketing of agricultural produce. Eight countries in protracted crisis are among the initiative's pilot countries, including Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and the Sudan.

■ Humanitarian food assistance as an investment in a country's future

During the acute phase of a crisis, food-assistance safety nets – including blanket and targeted food or cash transfers, mother and child nutrition and school meal programmes – are life-saving interventions and are often funded from specifically humanitarian resource pools. Yet these activities also help to preserve the human assets that are a necessary foundation for a country's future stability, food security and growth.

Food assistance given to safeguard mothers' and young children's nutrition, for example, is a powerful basis for longer-term development – even a few months of inadequate nutrition in young children can have irreversible, life-long negative effects on health, education and productivity (see Box 6). Estimates of GDP lost to malnutrition range from 2–3 percent in many countries⁶⁴ to 11 percent in some Central American countries.⁶⁵

School meals have proved effective in protecting vulnerable people while providing nutrition, education and gender-equity benefits, along with a wide range of socio-economic gains.⁶⁶ In an emergency or protracted crisis context, school feeding encourages children to enter and remain in school by providing food to the household on condition that children attend class. In a post-crisis or transition context, school-feeding programmes can restore the educational system and encourage the return of IDPs and

BOX 6

Nutrition in countries in protracted crisis

Adequate nutrition is essential for growth, good health and physical and cognitive development, and requires a diverse diet including staple foods, vegetables, fruits, animal-source foods and fortified foods.¹ Nutrition is affected not only by food availability and access but also by disease, sanitation – including access to safe drinking water – and availability of preventive health services.

Countries in protracted crisis are characterized by high or very high levels of undernutrition and recurrent high levels of acute malnutrition (wasting, or low weight-for-height). These limit the development of individuals and societies: undernutrition kills (contributing to a third of the 8.8 million annual child deaths worldwide²) and increases morbidity. Children who are stunted (short for their age owing to inadequate nutrition) by the age of two years are highly unlikely to reach their full educational and productive potential. In 18 of the 22 countries in protracted crisis, the prevalence of stunting is above the developing-country average of 34 percent.³ This affects both the individuals and their countries' long-term prospects for recovery and development.⁴

Preventing and treating undernutrition in protracted crises requires a combination of actions. Emergency actions are needed to meet immediate nutritional needs, while interventions that restore food security are the basis for improving nutrition in the long term. Action is also required to stabilize and improve food consumption and nutrient intake. This may best be achieved in the short term by distributing foods formulated to meet the nutrient

needs of specific target groups, such as young children at risk of undernutrition and households that cannot cook because of displacement or lack of cooking fuel.⁵

Prevention of undernutrition (stunting) among children between conception and two years of age is as important as treatment of wasting. Thus, priority must be given not only to treating acute malnutrition but also to preventing undernutrition among young children by improving the nutrient intake of the children themselves as well as their pregnant and lactating mothers. In practical terms this means targeting such food interventions to pregnant women, lactating women, children aged 6–24 months, and children suffering from moderate or severe wasting.

¹ See, for example, M. Golden. 2009. Proposed nutrient requirements of moderately malnourished populations of children. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 30: S267–S343; and S. De Pee and M.W. Bloem. 2009. Current and potential role of specially formulated foods and food supplements for preventing malnutrition among 6–23 month-old children and for treating moderate malnutrition among 6–59 month-old children. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 30: S434–S463.

² R.E. Black, L.H. Allen, Z.A. Bhutta, L.E. Caulfield, M. de Onis, M. Ezzati, C. Mathers and J. Rivera. 2008. Maternal and child undernutrition: global and regional exposures and health consequences. *Lancet*, 371: 243–260; UNICEF. 2009. *The State of the World's Children 2009*. Maternal and Newborn health. New York, USA.

³ UNICEF (2009), see note 2.

⁴ C.G. Victora, L. Adair, C. Fall, P.C. Hallal, R. Martorell, L., Richter and H.P.S. Sachdev. 2008. Maternal and child undernutrition: consequences for adult health and human capital. *Lancet*, 371: 340–357.

⁵ See, for example, S. De Pee, J. van Hees, E. Heines, F. Graciano, T. van den Briel, P. Acharya and M.W. Bloem. 2008. Ten minutes to learn about nutrition programming. *Sight and Life Magazine*, 3(Suppl.): 1–44.

refugees by signalling that basic services are operating and it is thus safe to return home. Food-assistance safety nets also include productive activities such as food- or cash-for-work to rehabilitate community assets, preserve livelihoods and increase households' resilience. In Haiti, food- and cash-for-work are used to meet the immediate needs of food-insecure populations while supporting the rebuilding of vital economic and social community assets that will increase households' resilience to disasters (see Box 7).

■ Humanitarian activities in the “gap” between relief and development

The role of agencies providing humanitarian food assistance is significant: crisis-affected populations need the basic services and livelihood opportunities that they provide. And the capacity – or, in some cases, willingness – of states to meet these needs is often lacking.

Development initiatives for poverty reduction and employment investments are often non-existent during protracted crises, too slowly introduced or insufficiently targeted to the poorest and the hungry. Humanitarian food assistance can begin to facilitate a movement towards development, helping to reduce underlying risk factors, build resilience and provide a basis for eventual national social protection. However, it is not a substitute for other forms of effective international engagement in crises, including the provision of alternatives to humanitarian assistance. Moreover, no international engagement is a substitute for effective and accountable national government and social protection systems.

The fact that humanitarian food assistance can be a basis for development does not mean that it alone should be held accountable to development objectives and principles. Acting according to humanitarian principles, which stress independence and neutrality in order to meet

BOX 7

Using humanitarian food assistance to increase household resilience to disasters in Haiti

Haiti is in a situation of protracted complex crisis shaped by urban violence, recurrent natural disasters and the impact of the global economic crisis. Emergency food assistance was provided following food-price-related riots in April 2008, three consecutive hurricanes and a tropical storm in August and September 2008, and an earthquake in January 2010.

New thinking was required on how best to use the extensive humanitarian effort to support longer-term recovery and food security, which meant building

resilience to future disasters. The initial emphasis on blanket food distributions shifted towards more targeted transfers as acute needs subsided. Changes included ramping up school meal and nutrition programmes in the affected areas. Taking into account people's exposure to future rapid-onset shocks, agencies began emphasizing work programmes, supported through food- and cash-for-work, to help vulnerable households recover and build community and household assets that would reduce future disaster risks and increase their resilience.

the acute needs of individuals in a timely and impartial manner, is not always compatible with working through and building the capacity of state or local institutions. Because states in a protracted crisis usually have insufficient capacity to meet people's needs, and may even be perpetrating the crisis that causes them, state structures cannot be counted on to facilitate or channel life-saving assistance and to reach people in need impartially. Humanitarian investments may in some cases support state institutions but may also not be optimal for longer-term capacity-building. This is not necessarily counterproductive for the state; on the contrary, maintaining all parties' perception of humanitarian agencies' neutrality is essential if agencies are also to be able to work with states and affected communities in the post-crisis phase as a credible and trusted development interlocutor.

Humanitarian food assistance can also help to lay a foundation for food security and future development by improving disaster preparedness and risk reduction, as well as by safeguarding nutrition, education and livelihoods. Where a protracted crisis results from, or is compounded by, recurrent natural disasters, humanitarian food assistance represents an opportunity to begin such measures. The development of Ethiopia's well-known Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP) – which reaches about 7.3 million rural dwellers with transfers of food or cash to help bridge food-deficit periods while generating community assets – was based in part on decades of experience in responding to individual disasters and famines through humanitarian food assistance. The PSNP marries the humanitarian food agencies' understanding of vulnerability with, among other components, the lessons learned from successful community-based asset development schemes such as MERET – a WFP-supported government programme supporting sustainable land and water management and increased productivity in food-insecure communities. The PSNP is also an example of how countries emerging from

protracted crises can build long-term assistance programmes for vulnerable groups on the basis of experience with humanitarian food-assistance safety nets.

In contexts where state capacity is especially weak or where violence and rights violations are perpetuating the crisis, the possibility of handover to a responsible and responsive state is more distant, but the assistance itself still serves to protect human and community assets from further harm and loss. This was for years the case in southern Sudan, where conflict and associated human rights abuses caused famines in which many civilians perished. The limits of what humanitarian food assistance could achieve were clear as long as the underlying causes of hunger (e.g. the conflict and rights abuses that provoked the 1988 famine in which 250 000 died) were not stopped.⁶⁷ The 2005 Consolidated Peace Agreement represented the beginning of a period in which it was possible to envisage a transition to humanitarian food assistance that more meaningfully supported recovery. At that stage, food distributions helped to meet immediate basic needs while also contributing to building communities' confidence in the peace process. Returnees, in particular, were targeted with food assistance to help tide them over during the months until they could resettle and harvest from their own farms. A recent study in the Sudan concluded that returnees had the greatest food assistance needs upon arrival, and that the provision of this assistance had one of the most significant positive impacts on reintegration and recovery for this group.⁶⁸

■ Challenges and risks for food assistance in protracted crises

Protracted crises pose many challenges and risks that agencies must manage effectively if humanitarian food assistance is both to meet its life-saving objective and to provide a strong basis for food security in the longer term.

Maintaining humanitarian space

Humanitarian actors in many of today's protracted crisis contexts confront tension between serving the humanitarian imperative – meeting people's immediate need for food – and adhering to core humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. Agencies may make compromises on principle in order to gain and maintain access to vulnerable populations. For example, WFP coordinated its operations in northern Sri Lanka in 2006–09 with the Sri Lankan military, which was essential to facilitate important food deliveries to the north of the country. This may also, however, have compromised perceptions of WFP's humanitarian effort as fully neutral or independent, a situation that may complicate future relations with communities in the Tamil north.

The need to balance conflicting priorities in order to establish and maintain "humanitarian space" is a constant characteristic of food assistance operations in many of today's protracted crises. The stakes are high; as explained above, maintaining perceptions of humanitarian agencies' neutrality is essential for the agencies' ability, during and following a crisis, to work effectively in areas affected by conflict. The perception that humanitarians' neutrality and independence from political agendas is compromised can be dangerous or deadly for humanitarians and the populations they are trying to assist. In Afghanistan, aid agency staff members have been attacked by armed insurgent groups because of their actual or perceived association with the government or coalition forces. This has had a negative impact not only on the safety of staff, but also on their ability to reach people in need. With the increased targeting of aid workers by insurgents, some organizations have completely halted their assistance in parts of Afghanistan. Arguably, in an increasing number of today's protracted crises, humanitarians must think beyond their need to be perceived as neutral, independent and impartial in a given country, to how they are associated with global political actors, trends and events, and the likely repercussions of those linkages on future operations.

Doing no harm

Humanitarian food assistance is sometimes the most valuable resource in underserved, remote and often insecure protracted crisis environments. The way it is targeted and delivered can affect local social and economic relationships. In southern Sudan in the 1990s, Nuer people from Ayod were recruited into militias to raid Dinka areas in part because of a perceived neglect in relief operations in Nuer areas.⁶⁹ In Somalia, the targeting of a community and not its neighbour, particularly when the status of both seem the same to the excluded village, can lead to conflict and raiding.⁷⁰

Agencies work to limit unintended negative consequences of their aid on the safety and security of recipients. For example, given the history of violence in

Haiti, and Port-au-Prince in particular, the prevention of violence during food distributions after the January 2010 earthquake was a key concern for WFP. Protection measures were immediately integrated into WFP's food assistance activities, including clear messaging on targeting and entitlements to prevent misunderstandings and conflict; the provision of safe spaces and extra support for pregnant women and elderly and disabled people at food distribution sites; and dissemination of WFP's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

■ What does this mean for food assistance in protracted crises?

Innovative and principled approaches are required to address the challenges of working in protracted crisis environments. Work by humanitarian food-assistance organizations in recent years to integrate a "protection lens" into their assistance activities is promising in this regard. Building on the work of Oxfam and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and working with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Protection Cluster, WFP over the past few years has introduced research and training intended to improve the analysis of beneficiary protection needs in complex environments, advocate more effectively for humanitarian access, manage perceptions of the agency's neutrality and impartiality and programme food assistance to "do no harm".

Humanitarian food assistance not only saves lives, but is also an investment in the future. The shift from standard food aid to a varied set of food assistance tools, complemented by innovations in how food is procured, helps to ensure that appropriate assistance is provided and to maximize the chance that humanitarian food assistance will serve as a strong basis for food security in the longer term.

First and foremost, humanitarian food assistance is about meeting acute individual needs. It is not a substitute for other forms of effective international engagement with crises or for required national structural or societal changes and good governance. While food assistance in protracted crises can be developmental in many respects, it should not be oversold and expected to be accountable to development objectives and principles; rather, it should be seen as part of a package of essential interventions in protracted crisis situations. Ultimate accountability for humanitarian action is to individuals in need.



Towards social protection in protracted crises

Key message

Social protection systems lay an essential foundation on which to rebuild societies in protracted crisis. However, in contexts where financial, institutional and implementation capacities are limited, social protection programmes are generally short-term, relief-oriented or externally funded.

Beyond improvements in humanitarian food assistance, interest in wider social protection measures in the development sector is growing dramatically. Social protection comprises safety nets, insurance and various sectoral interventions for health, education, nutrition and agriculture.⁷¹ New initiatives are emerging both at the global level, such as the United Nations' Social Protection Floor Initiative, and at the regional level, such as the Inter-American Social Protection Network. At the country level, a host of experiences is blossoming, including, for example, Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and the Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya. Sometimes, those components are enshrined in legislation governing specific domains, such as minimum wages in labour markets, and thus set the stage for the so-called "transformative" and rights-based engagement approaches to social protection.

Social protection can be provided formally and informally. The latter includes support and sharing practices within and between communities, while the former concerns arrangements provided publicly (by the state) or privately (through contractual agreements). Public measures can be funded domestically or externally (by donors), while private mechanisms mostly include market-based insurance products.

However, it is important to recognize a key difference between a "system" and a collection of programmes. Countries may well have components of social protection (e.g. insurance and transfers), but if they are not institutionalized in domestic budgets, structures, tax and labour market policy and overall political processes – if they are not part of a dynamic social contract between the state and citizens – then they are not a real social protection system. Many countries in protracted crisis have a collection of social protection measures, but not a social protection system as such.

One of the most challenging debates revolves around social protection in protracted crises. In those contexts, humanitarian and development issues overlap to a large extent, and as a result debates on social protection involve a complex blend of both sets of issues. While there is renewed attention to the need to combine those domains,⁷² progress in conceiving social protection systems in protracted crises remains tenuous.

■ Social protection in protracted crises

In broad terms, social protection can be looked at from a variety of perspectives, including the composition (e.g. mix of safety nets and insurance), form (formal and informal), source of funding (domestic or aid-supported) and level of implementation capacities in the system. Based on those general criteria, countries in protracted crisis show a number of intertwined characteristics.

Overall, there is a paucity of national policy frameworks that provide the foundations for social protection. Elements of social protection are often diffused and not adequately reflected in food security, poverty reduction or development strategies.⁷³

The combined effects of high poverty rates, binding budgetary constraints and limited tax revenues stifle countries' redistribution capacity.⁷⁴ As already noted, countries in protracted crisis generally rely heavily on external funding for key social and economic services and investments. This reliance poses serious questions about the domestic affordability and sustainability of social protection in resource-constrained countries.

With this magnitude of external investment, decisions relating to social protection clearly intersect with the aid effectiveness agenda. As stated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),⁷⁵ "... our actions [in social protection] must be aligned with national policy, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action". Therefore, the large shares of external investment in these countries may raise concerns over national ownership of social protection agendas.

Institutional capacities to provide oversight and guidance are often weak. Social protection functions are generally spread across various line ministries, authorities and actors; institutions that share responsibility for social protection may not be among the most influential, compared with, for example, finance ministries. Technical, administrative and

implementation capacities are generally limited, as recently documented in West and Central Africa.⁷⁶

Informal mechanisms often provide the bulk of social protection. Only about 20 percent of the world's population has access to formal social protection.⁷⁷

Social protection instruments and programmes have limited scale, coverage, duration and level of benefits. The largest safety net programme in Africa is the Ethiopian PSNP, which targets about 7.3 million food-insecure households. The average size of schemes in southern Africa is generally well below 500 000 beneficiaries.⁷⁸ Overall, countries like Afghanistan, Haiti, the Sudan and Zimbabwe tend to score poorly in terms of various social protection measures.⁷⁹

Safety nets play a dominant role in terms of composition of social protection, and sectoral interventions – including the supply of services (e.g. access to schools or clinics) – remain a key building block of social protection in complex situations. Safety nets are provided primarily in the form of food-based transfers, often as part of broader emergency interventions. For example, in 2008 more than 2.5 million tonnes of food were delivered to countries in protracted crisis, about 82 percent of which was in the form of relief assistance.⁸⁰ For safety nets in general, and emergency assistance in particular, the use of cash-based assistance remains comparatively rare, especially in post-conflict settings.⁸¹

Against this background, there are a number of compelling issues that may arise when formulating social protection plans in countries in protracted crisis, as well as a series of innovations that may help inform social protection policies and programmes.

■ Trade-offs and innovations

In general, social protection is an integral part of three key debates unfolding in contexts of protracted crises:⁸²

The first involves changing from annual relief to multiannual developmental approaches. New initiatives are

being explored to transform humanitarian assistance for chronic needs into predictable, longer-term development approaches (see Box 8).

In Ethiopia, for example, the adoption of an entitlement-based approach⁸³ such as that adopted by the PSNP followed various institutional evolutions. The PSNP draws on lessons learned about enhancing the predictability of the previous Employment Guarantee Scheme, a relief-oriented public works programme (until 2002) and various lessons learned in the first year of implementation (2005).

Second, it is essential to review the effectiveness and efficiency of available programmes. This includes the strategic and operational review of targeting, coverage and performance of various social protection instruments. For example, the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs is in the process of producing a National Social Protection Sector Strategy.⁸⁴ This is one of the first efforts to appraise social protection programmes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to unify them under a coherent strategic framework.

Third, innovation is taking place in terms of fostering empowerment and rights-based agendas. A number of initiatives are emerging to enhance social inclusion of marginalized populations and advocate for basic social-protection commitments. For example, in 2006, several African countries signed the "Livingstone Call for Action", which advocated for greater collaboration and commitments on social protection. These materialized in a new set of consultations led by the African Union in 2008, including recommendations to "establish specific budget lines for social protection that should not be less than 2 percent of GDP".⁸⁵

These examples show that a number of issues combine in social protection – debates invariably include the identification of an optimal mix of humanitarian and development interventions that could support the transition out of crisis. Although domestic funding of social protection presents daunting challenges, at least in the short term, there

BOX 8

Predictable support for predictable needs: the Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya

The Hunger Safety Net Programme is a programme under the Ministry of Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands. It targets the four largest and poorest districts in arid northern Kenya and uses cash transfers as a means of meeting the consumption needs of food-insecure households. The programme is supported through a UKaid grant from the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). Phase I of the programme will target 60 000 households by the end of 2010. Phase II will scale up to target approximately

300 000 households. The programme is highly innovative, testing approaches such as registration of households using biometrics, real-time data capture and an effective rural-outreach payment system using biometric identification, point-of-sale devices and mobile phone technology. This is a frontier of banking and other financial services in the poorest areas of Kenya.

Source: DFID. 2009. *DFID Kenya Social Protection Programme Annual Review*. Nairobi.

is new momentum for increasing the importance of social protection on the political agenda (e.g. see Box 8), including forging innovative alliances and sharing an array of successful implementation practices.⁸⁶ Future applied-research initiatives should build upon the growing interest and demand for social protection, while informing decision-making processes with credible and context-specific evidence.

From another perspective, these considerations clearly demonstrate the interrelated nature of social protection and growth-oriented interventions: without growth, there is little prospect of financing social protection through domestic resources, but without social protection, future growth patterns may be less inclusive and pro-poor than they might have been. This dilemma involves a number of choices around how interventions are implemented and their possible sequencing (reducing inequality versus promoting growth).

■ Sequencing of interventions for food security

Social protection is chiefly about public measures, which raises the issue of defining the scope and size of public assistance for food security. Historically, formal social protection measures in advanced economies were introduced following sustained economic development,⁸⁷ and this has led to a lively discussion in developing countries on the appropriateness and viability of a different sequence – namely, about whether sweeping social protection measures could be introduced before solid economic performance. How should limited public budgets be allocated among competing priorities? Should countries invest in enhancing agricultural productivity or expand safety nets for the elderly? Clearly, these issues are further magnified in contexts of protracted crises.

A number of considerations may help inform some of these choices. In situations of post-conflict countries, for example, it is argued that social protection may reduce the likelihood of future conflicts⁸⁸ and hence should be enacted before sectoral and macro policies.⁸⁹ Moreover, new evidence suggests that trade-offs between efficiency and equity may be less pronounced than is often perceived.⁹⁰ In particular, social protection may promote growth in three ways, rather than necessarily retard or jeopardize it.

The first way concerns investments in human capital. For example, improving child nutrition can enhance cognitive development, school attainments and future labour productivity, and thereby enhance earning potentials (see Box 9).⁹¹

A second stream of growth effects revolves around the adoption of higher-risk but higher-income livelihood options. This is an area where a number of linkages could be established between the social protection and food security agendas.⁹² Indeed, farmers may sometimes underperform because of overly conservative practices. Social protection could play an important role by guaranteeing a floor over which more risky but rewarding strategies could be pursued.

A third channel centres on alleviating some market failures (see Box 10).

Taken together, these considerations have helped change the perception of social protection from a mere cost to an investment. However, there are also important limitations and policy implications should be drawn cautiously. For instance, realizing the sustainable growth effects of social protection is likely to take a long time, even up to a generation (e.g. education outcomes). This may clash against shorter-term priorities that vulnerable households and countries often face.

BOX 9

Food-for-education in protracted crises: experimental evidence from IDP camps

Food-for-education (FFE) programmes include two modalities: on-site school feeding and take-home rations. Recent research investigated the impacts of FFE in 31 IDP camps in northern Uganda. Based on a sample survey of about 1 000 households conducted in 2005 and 2007, the evaluation found that on-site school feeding and take-home rations reduced anaemia prevalence by 19.2 percent and 17.2 percent, respectively, among children aged 10–13 years. Moreover, stunting of pre-school-age children declined significantly in households

with children receiving on-site feeding, possibly as a result of redistribution of food within the household. This gain was primarily concentrated among the younger preschoolers, aged 6–35 months, whose height is most responsive to changes in nutrition. Thus, even in protracted crises it is often possible to lay the foundations for long-term development.

Source: S. Adelman, H. Alderman, D. Gilligan and J. Konde-Lule. 2008. *The impact of alternative food for education programs on child nutrition in northern Uganda*. Draft. Washington DC, IFPRI.

BOX 10

Cash-based food assistance: insights from Afghanistan and the West Bank and Gaza Strip

In 2009, WFP and partners implemented a number of cash-based programmes that provided quality food assistance while stimulating local business and the farming sector. Two voucher programmes in protracted crises are highlighted here.

In Afghanistan, WFP implemented a six-month voucher pilot for 10 000 disabled, female-headed and large vulnerable households as well as IDPs in a district of Kabul. Each month, the beneficiaries received a coupon worth US\$30 that could be exchanged for food commodities in selected shops. The voucher programme

is expected to be scaled up to other urban areas of Afghanistan.

In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, WFP launched an urban voucher project targeting nearly 7 800 food-insecure households. In collaboration with NGOs, each month WFP distributed vouchers worth US\$56. Vouchers increased beneficiaries' access to protein-rich food.

Sources: WFP. 2009. Global workshop on cash and vouchers: final report. Rome, WFP; and S.W. Omamo, U. Gentilini and S. Sandstrom (eds). 2010. Innovations in food assistance: lessons from evolving experience. Rome, WFP. Forthcoming.

■ What does this mean for improving social protection in protracted crises?

Social protection programmes in protracted crises are generally relief-oriented, externally funded and of limited scale. They resemble initiatives present in other contexts but without the same level of domestic financial and institutional commitments and capacities to make them a national *system*. Progress in social protection in protracted crises could potentially help bridge the divide between humanitarian and developmental initiatives. A range of promising policy and programming innovations has emerged that deserves further attention and application.

It has been shown that some considerations are specific to social protection, such as what transfers to use or what targeting methods to employ, while others, such as the role of aid in sustaining social protection systems, raise issues of broader relevance. Indeed, in order to start building

national social-protection systems a number of key choices need to be fully recognized and tackled. These include choices between short- and longer-run interventions, domestic and external support, public measures and private incentives, productivity and equity, supply and demand of services, pursuing agendas and promoting ownership. Some of these may be relatively simple choices, while others may involve significant trade-offs and be more difficult to reconcile.

While external support may help unbundle some trade-offs in the short-to-medium term, there is a growing recognition that the current aid system needs to be improved, including fresh thinking on ways to enhance accountability and feedback mechanisms from both aid suppliers and recipients. Social protection platforms must not be developed in isolation, as they tend to be in countries in protracted crisis, but should be part of a broader process to inform decision-making on investment priorities alongside other social and economic sectors.



Using short-term responses to support longer-term recovery in agriculture and food security

Key message

Most responses to protracted crises take place in a humanitarian context that often limits the ability to address the real drivers of the crisis in a more comprehensive way. However, experience in Afghanistan, Haiti, Tajikistan and the West Bank and Gaza Strip shows how linking short- and long-term responses in protracted crises, and undertaking or promoting responses that address the structural causes of crises, can support longer-term recovery in agricultural livelihoods and food security.

Events such as drought, floods, conflicts and other human-induced disasters have tended to be the focus of humanitarian food-security responses and the concepts and tools used in addressing humanitarian crises. However, given the characteristics that differentiate countries in protracted crisis from other food-insecure countries – the breakdown or absence of governance, the presence of conflict or complex crises, types of aid flow, longevity of crisis – greater attention is necessary to ensure the application of available tools, coordination and conceptual frameworks in more holistic and integrated ways that focus on understanding and supporting community resilience and creating more sustainable, diversified livelihoods.

■ Lessons learned in food and agriculture by FAO and partners in protracted crises

There are numerous examples of how FAO and its partners either have sought or continue to seek creative ways to address key challenges in the agriculture sector that may include but go beyond short-term emergency responses. These responses aim at building more sustainable and durable food production and access in volatile and uncertain environments. They range from seeking to increase food availability and restore local markets through urban gardening in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to encouraging improved natural resource and land management and increased availability of and access to food through conservation agriculture in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe and supplying agricultural inputs to strengthen private-sector

seed production in Afghanistan. This section briefly reviews lessons learned by FAO and its partners from interventions linking short- and longer-term responses in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A final example briefly reviews how lessons learned in hurricane preparedness were used to guide the development of a new type of project in Haiti after the January 2010 earthquake.

Afghanistan: promoting sustainable livelihoods, food security and nutrition

FAO's work in Afghanistan provides important lessons in terms of addressing short- and long-term needs in a protracted crisis context. Decades of conflict, compounded by drought, have left Afghanistan with degraded infrastructure, high unemployment and widespread poverty. In 2005, 44 percent of Afghan households perceived themselves as food-insecure.⁹³ Agriculture plays a prominent role in the Afghan economy, generating an estimated 36 percent of GDP, excluding poppy cultivation and other services related to agriculture, such as food processing.⁹⁴

Two specific examples demonstrate the way that livelihoods have been transformed or constraints addressed through a more integrated approach in Afghanistan. These interventions are supported by an active food-security cluster,⁹⁵ jointly coordinated by FAO and WFP, as well as an Agricultural Task Force, supported by the members of the UN country team, that is focused on ways of responding in the immediate-, medium- and longer-term by addressing cross-cutting issues (including food security, agriculture, irrigation, social affairs and health).⁹⁶

First, FAO has implemented programmes in Afghanistan aimed at integrating emergency relief/recovery with nutrition, biodiversity preservation, food security and livelihoods objectives into relevant government policies and institutions, notably in agriculture, rural development, health and education. Strategies promoted to develop the agriculture sector and, in turn, the national economy, have been aimed at diversifying crop and animal production in ways that reach many segments of society. For example, FAO and the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock worked together to expand wheat seed production by supporting private seed enterprises with loans to produce certified and quality-declared seed for the 2008 and 2009 planting seasons. At the end of both seasons, 99 percent of the loans

had been repaid, with interest, by the seed enterprises. The proceeds (approximately US\$5 million) have been used to create a seed industry development fund, managed by the Afghanistan National Seed Association, that will help establish new private seed enterprises in other parts of the country with FAO technical support. The proceeds will be also be used to provide seasonal loans to seed enterprises as a means of supporting increased production of certified seed.⁹⁷

Second, nutrition programmes were also used as culturally acceptable entry points to address gender issues in Afghanistan. Strategies have aimed at strengthening women's technical skills by working in partnership with organizations that assist women to form self-help groups to access credit and markets and develop small, agriculture-based businesses.

Lessons learned: These interventions were implemented during a period marked by substantial changes in government structure. Such an evolving institutional context required flexibility that allowed for effective real-time adjustments without compromising longer-term goals, and interventions focused at local levels or other types of entry points – communities, households and small enterprise. Nutrition was a culturally acceptable entry point to address gender issues in Afghanistan, even when women remain excluded from public life. Assisting line ministries and local institutions in project planning and resource mobilization for food security interventions helped fill identified gaps and scale up successful interventions.

West Bank and Gaza Strip: improving understanding of food security for better programming.

WFP and FAO have worked closely with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) to establish a socio-economic and food-security monitoring system (SEFSec) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 2008. At the time SEFSec was conceived, no territory-wide, household-level socio-economic survey or monitoring had been done for almost ten years and the PCBS had stopped monitoring the impact of border-crossing restrictions in 2002. The PCBS had tried to establish a more traditional food-security information system, but there was little uptake of the system; users found that it did not focus sufficiently on access to food, which is the most critical and relevant dimension of food insecurity in the context of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

SEFSec was established to provide accurate and up-to-date socio-economic and food-security information in order to be able to: track trends over time and inform decisions about programming and targeting assistance; provide disaggregated information at governorate level and by type of person (for example, refugee or non-refugee); make data more readily available and more frequently monitored; and develop the capacity of the PCBS to analyse food security. Recent SEFSec reports confirmed that food insecurity in both results from insufficient and unstable access to food but, more significantly, that access and market-based indicators need to be selected

and systematically monitored over time. After a second year of joint surveying (2010), the PCBS will conduct the 2011 survey, with key indicators gathered twice per year or annually as part of the Bureau's regular programme of work.

The SEFSec approach has helped design new forms of safety nets in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. WFP and Oxfam launched an urban food assistance voucher programme for the Gaza Strip in late 2009 in response to high food prices identified by SEFSec. Thus, WFP was able to use short-term funding to identify needs requiring longer-term interventions related to monitoring and gathering information on food access. The longer-term impact of the programme is focused on strengthening urban livelihoods by supporting market development and identifying ways for small enterprises to remain viable when challenged with closure policy and income poverty. FAO's work in the West Bank has a similar focus on supporting rural livelihoods, in that the aim is to protect access to land and help alleviate pressures on farmers to abandon their land. Moreover, SEFSec has enabled statistical profiling of food-insecure households (including size, age/gender composition, education, employment, dependency ratio), which has significantly improved humanitarian targeting; for example, FAO has enhanced the women and youth focus of its field programme.

Lessons learned: The strong shared history of collaboration between FAO and WFP has provided the foundation for a more unified approach to working with the PCBS on food security monitoring, and this collaboration has helped facilitate communication on food security among various departments and ministries within the Palestinian Authority. Capacity development in food security analysis and monitoring takes time, and in the case of the PCBS has been largely driven by strong collaboration between FAO and WFP over the past eight years. A more holistic approach to the analysis of food insecurity has helped illustrate its full extent in terms of income poverty, closure policy and the undermining, and in some cases destruction, of livelihoods. It has also provided the basis for greater advocacy and messaging related to food insecurity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Tajikistan: institutional and gender-sensitive land reform

Tajikistan remains one of the poorest countries among the former Soviet republics, with poverty concentrated in rural areas. Civil conflict from 1992 to 1997 resulted in a large number of IDPs, disabled people and widows. The collapse of state social safety nets exacerbated poverty, particularly for rural women. Women were, in many cases, the primary source of financial support for their families and households, and while 73 percent of all agricultural workers were women, only 2 percent of private farms were owned by women. There was a need for greater awareness of gender-related issues in agriculture, particularly in the context of the unfolding land reform process.

Between 2006 and 2008, FAO and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) implemented a project to improve land reform management and monitoring systems, with a special focus on promoting gender equality and consultative processes. One of the aims of the project was to support women in securing their land-use rights and livelihoods, and focused on campaigns to raise awareness of impending land reform for ten state farms. More than 60 seminars were conducted on the state farms, reaching 3 784 participants, 55 percent of whom were women. To enhance the gender responsiveness of key government institutions, a network of national gender specialists was formed in the Agency of Land Tenure, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources, Association of Dekhkan Farms, Agroinvestbank and the Agency for Statistics. Throughout this process, FAO and UNIFEM worked closely with the former State Land Committee (now renamed the Agency for Land Management, Geodesy and Cartography).

Lessons learned: Efforts at land reform were weakened by the lack of capacity to undertake sustainable actions aimed at achieving gender equality and a poor understanding of gender analysis and a gender mainstreaming approach. Interventions needed to be developed by specialists with a holistic perspective. Traditional technical experts may not necessarily adopt people-centred approaches in addressing technical problems. Adoption of consultative processes and participatory approaches helped reduce the disproportionate emphasis on external support in rural areas, and helped women secure their land-use rights and livelihoods.

Haiti: strengthening climate resilience and reducing disaster risk in agriculture to improve food security post-earthquake

The earthquake that hit Haiti on 12 January 2010 left Port-au-Prince and surrounding villages in ruins, displaced an estimated 2 million people and injured or killed hundreds of thousands. The situation in rural areas was made all the more difficult given reports of as many as 600 000 people who had to move back to rural areas, compounded by the disruption of markets and livelihoods caused by the earthquake. The agriculture sector has become increasingly vulnerable over recent decades because of a combination of population pressure, environmental degradation, inefficient land-use systems, poverty, governance problems and high exposure to recurrent natural hazards such as hurricanes, drought, landslides, earthquakes and tidal waves.

FAO formulated a project, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), World Bank, that for the first time under this funding window explicitly integrated emergency relief (agricultural inputs) with identified good practice in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. FAO had previously undertaken a regional project in the Caribbean that had identified good practice in adapting to climate change and identified and multiplied seed of high-

quality, shorter-cycle crop varieties that were developed as part of hurricane preparedness for Haiti. Lessons learned from the previous work were used in planning the GEF-funded project interventions.

Interventions include promoting soil conservation and agroforestry practices that have proved effective in reducing risks associated with climate hazards; identifying, multiplying and distributing seed of short-cycle, drought- and flood-tolerant crops that had already been accepted by local farmers and adapted to changes in local climatic conditions; and promoting good agricultural practices that enhance risk reduction and risk management.

Lessons learned: Actively seeking ways to link short-term and long-term needs through one programming and funding window may provide a good opportunity to ensure that Haitians' livelihoods are restored and transformed, and that results are sustainable. Accessing good practice and lessons learned from a wide variety of disciplines have provided ways forward in terms of integrating multiple programming entry points. One of the key challenges in integrating short- and long-term needs has been resolving the tensions between the more operational and relief-focused humanitarian actors and the more systematic and longer-term focus of development practitioners, particularly in terms of cost-benefits, coverage of beneficiaries and concepts related to sustainability.

■ Ways forward

For all the examples above, activities were developed through a unified food-security strategy that integrated short- and longer-term dimensions. However, they are still far from a comprehensive approach for addressing short- and longer-term issues such as institutional weakness affecting livelihoods. Most responses to protracted crises take place in a humanitarian context that often limits the possibility of addressing the different drivers of the crisis in a more coordinated and holistic way. However, humanitarian food-security clusters in protracted crises can provide important platforms for strengthening linkages between immediate humanitarian responses and longer-term development assistance aimed at addressing underlying structural factors limiting livelihoods. At a more global level, a similar arrangement could further facilitate these efforts (see Box 11). Clusters can develop transition strategies to ensure a smooth handover to development structures and processes and bring together the main national and international partners active in the food security sector.

From a conceptual point of view, simultaneously addressing short- and longer-term food-security issues in protracted crisis situations is not a new idea. What has perhaps changed in recent years is the extent to which such thinking has been put into practice and, in a growing number of instances, mainstreamed. Major donors have highlighted the need to link humanitarian food assistance

BOX 11

Global Food Security Cluster

The “cluster approach” is a key element of the 2005 Humanitarian Response Review, commissioned by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the subsequent Reform Initiative for improved efficiency, increased predictability and higher accountability in international responses to humanitarian emergencies. FAO and WFP have been fully engaged in the process since the onset; WFP as global lead of the logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters and as lead for food assistance at the country level, and FAO as global lead of the agriculture cluster.

Country-level clusters or coordination arrangements for food security have long existed between FAO and WFP – for example, in late 2009, FAO and WFP were already

co-leading food security-related clusters in 11 countries and co-leading along with other partners in a further 5 countries. The Phase 1 cluster evaluation by the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, completed in late 2007, proposed that WFP and FAO give consideration to the co-leadership of a global cluster on food security, together with other partners. The provisional report of the Phase 2 cluster evaluation recommends that this now be implemented. Similarly, the 2008 conference on Rethinking Food Security in Humanitarian Response (see Box 13 on page 48) encouraged FAO, WFP and key partners to move ahead in establishing such a global cluster. Since February 2010 WFP and FAO have embarked on a structured process to establish the Global Food Security Cluster before the end of the year.

and efforts to promote sustainable, agriculture-led growth as part of an integrated food-security approach. Donors have increasingly recognized that this is necessary in order to address comprehensively the underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition while maintaining necessary support for humanitarian food assistance.

The challenge is to identify those lessons that provide common entry points in protracted crises even in the absence of effective institutions or governance. For example, context-

specific gender analysis or an increased understanding of local concepts of risk and hazards and community-based risk reduction measures, as well as the constraints related to enhancing resilience and diversifying livelihoods, may broaden the range and scope of response options available.

All of these elements are related and should be seen as important parts of a more integrated approach in a renewed overall aid architecture aimed at addressing short- and longer-term dimensions of food insecurity in protracted crises.



Success stories: the example of Mozambique

Key message

Countries can move out of protracted crisis situations. This requires improved governance, understanding structural drivers of the crisis and addressing them with sound policy action. Involvement of local communities and enhanced donor coordination are also essential.

After its independence in 1975 Mozambique descended into three decades of armed conflict that left the country socially and economically devastated. One million people died and 5 million were internally displaced or made refugees in neighbouring countries. By the end of the conflict in 1992, 40 percent of first-level health posts and 60 percent of

primary schools had been closed or destroyed and GDP was only half of what it could have been.⁹⁸

Since the signing of the peace accords in 1992, Mozambique has enjoyed a period of remarkable stability and has become a success story in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction. According to the World Bank,⁹⁹ economic growth averaged 8 percent a year between 1996 and 2008. Since 1992, agricultural output has grown by 5.6 percent a year, mainly as a result of expansion of the area cultivated but also in part because of growth in the agricultural labour force and increases in productivity. The country also saw a 15 percent fall in poverty between 1997 and 2003. There has been a substantial increase in human development indicators such as education, child mortality and access to safe water, although the country still ranks

172nd out of the 182 countries in the Human Development Index. Finally, incidence of hunger in Mozambique is continuing to decline steadily (Figure 17), but the country has some way to go to achieve MDG 1.

The country's successful post-conflict recovery has been attributed to a variety of macro-level factors, including macro-economic stability, policy reform, pro-poor government expenditures and the massive inflow of aid in support of economic and social development. In recent years, increased decentralization, strong donor coordination and harmonization in support of government-led programmes and private-sector investment have also played important roles. However, the foundation for post-conflict recovery was laid in the immediate aftermath of the conflict through the successful demobilization of fighters and resettlement of displaced people, without which economic and social development could not have taken hold. A governance structure that focused on disaster prevention and mitigation was also instrumental in this process.

■ Social engagement in dealing with key issues: the example of land access

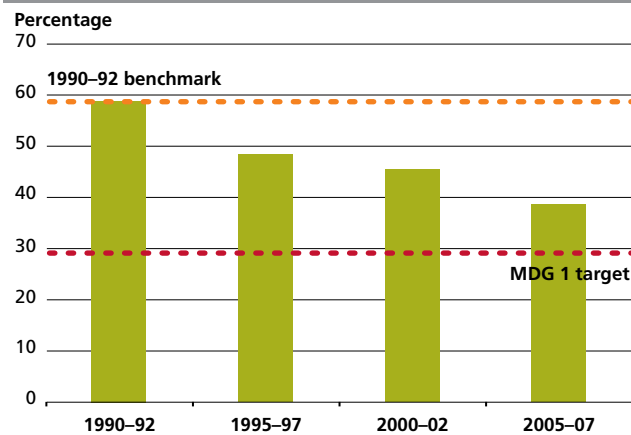
Another key to the post-conflict recovery was the effort made to deal with land access issues.¹⁰⁰ Conflict over access to land, a key driver of the civil war, re-emerged in the immediate aftermath of the war as a potentially explosive source of tension. When the millions of displaced people and former fighters returned to the land they had abandoned, they often found their land had been occupied by others. Private investors were also rushing to the rural areas to bring apparently "free" land into production. As a result, occupants, returnees and private investors often clashed over who had the right to use the land. Such disputes were often aggravated by a dysfunctional state administration weakened by years of war. The situation was also not helped by the 1979 land legislation that was still in place. This land law was based on the post-independence socialist agrarian model and did not reflect customary land-tenure systems, which were still alive and respected despite the long conflict and official policy changes.

A key instrument in the process adopted for dealing with the land issue was the creation of an Interministerial Land Commission, with FAO support, which provided an open and democratic forum for developing a new land policy. Great efforts were made to involve many different groups, including civil society, peasant organizations, the nascent private sector, national academics and all those public sectors with some stake in how land and other resources are accessed and used.¹⁰¹ The policy review process began with an extensive and inclusive consultation process that was started in the immediate aftermath of the war and was informed by a thorough analysis of the social and economic realities of land tenure in Mozambique.

What was most evident was the continuing legitimacy and role of customary authorities in the aftermath of the war, and

FIGURE 17

Prevalence of hunger in Mozambique



Source: FAO.

how they were effectively managing the vast majority of land access and conflict issues in this critical period. This experience led to the recognition of the usefulness of these customary systems and the rights people had acquired through them, and informed the integration of aspects of customary and formal law into the development of the new land legislation. This key policy move successfully dealt with a range of emerging tensions and provided the bedrock for a new land law, enacted in 1997, that also provided secure tenure for new private investors, seen by the Government as a key element for post-war recovery in a decapitalized and still poor country. This was done by making "community consultations" a mandatory part of the investment process, promoting a negotiated and consensus-building approach to the complex issue of giving land to new investors.

The result has been a policy and law with great social legitimacy and a strong sense of national ownership, both critical ingredients in any post-conflict settlement. The legislation was designed to serve simultaneously the social and economic needs and rights of local communities and broader national economic development objectives, both of which are essential for the consolidation of the post-conflict recovery process.

Today, over ten years later, the Land Policy is still in place and the 1997 law has achieved its basic goal of maintaining order and food security while also promoting new investment. This policy and legal framework has done much to promote a more equitable and sustainable path towards economic growth and social development in a country with a still predominantly rural population.

The way in which the land challenge was met in the mid 1990s has created a strong awareness in the wider society of the value of a negotiated and participatory approach to complex policy questions and has led to the expectation that the Government will continue to build on past experience and address the land issue – and indeed other pressing social and economic issues – through a similar process of broadly-based social and political engagement.