



## Anticipating Disasters: Forecast-based Financing in WFP

Side event on the margins of the Second Regular Session of the Executive Board, 2020  
Wednesday, 18 November 2020, 13:15-14:15  
Virtual Session via ZOOM

The Nobel Peace Prize winning World Food Programme (WFP) is inviting its members and partners to a side event that showcases the role of forecast-based financing (FbF) and anticipatory action in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The event will focus on the improvement of humanitarian and national disaster response systems to prevent predictable climate emergencies.

### Context

Extreme weather events and conflict are two of the gravest global risks to food security. Between 1970 and 2019, 79% of disasters worldwide involved weather, water, and climate-related hazards. These disasters have accounted for 56% of deaths and 75% of economic losses from disasters during that period. Over the last 10 years (2010-2019), the percentage of disasters associated with weather, climate and water related events has increased by 9% compared to the previous decade – and by almost 14% with respect to the decade 1991-2000<sup>1</sup>. To address the increasing number and severity of extreme weather events, which is exacerbated by climate change, humanitarian organizations need to support a transition from repetitive crisis response to forward-looking and preventive risk management.

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

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

Strong and diverse partnerships are fundamental for the success of anticipatory action. WFP's FbF programme has established systematic institutional linkages with key actors including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the START Network and the World Bank. Some of these partnerships are facilitated by the Early Action Focus Task Force, the Interagency Standing Committee's (IASC) early warning and early action readiness group, and the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) that was launched at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in September 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> World Meteorological Organization (WMO), 2020 State of Climate Services October 2020.

## Objectives

The side event is an opportunity for WFP's membership and interested partners to gain an overview about WFP's approach to forecast-based action in a rapidly changing climate and in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. The session will explore:

- The need for innovative, forecast-based approaches to address the increasing frequency and intensity of climate disasters, coupled with other emergencies;
- The logic and setup of FbF programmes at country level;
- Institutional perspectives on FbF from donor partners and recipient countries, as well as relevant technical units in WFP;
- Challenges and lessons learned from pilot projects; and
- The way forward developing FbF capacity in WFP, the humanitarian system and its partner countries.

## Agenda

### **(5min) Welcome and opening comments**

- Ms Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, WFP

### **(10min) Presentation: WFP's Global Forecast-based Financing Programme – How it works**

- Mr Jesse Mason, Global FbF Coordinator, WFP

### **(10min) Presentation: Example of an FbF intervention: Bangladesh, 2020**

- Mr Richard Ragan, Bangladesh Country Director, WFP

### **(30min) Institutional perspectives - Facilitated panel discussion**

- **Moderator: Mr Gernot Laganda**, Chief of Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes, WFP
- **Mr Pit Köhler**, Head of Division on Multilateral Policy on Humanitarian Assistance, Germany
- **H.E. Morten von Hanno Aasland**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway
- **Ms Jette Michelsen**, Deputy Permanent Representative, Denmark
- **Mr Ben Webster**, Head of Secretariat, Risk-Informed Early Action Partnership (REAP)

This panel aims to share perspectives by donors and partners on FbF and anticipatory action, and how FbF programs can help reduce growing humanitarian needs in a changing climate. It aims to encourage a critical discussion on opportunities and challenges in the scale-up of anticipatory action programs.

### **(5min) Closing comments**

- Mr David Kaatrud (TBC), Director of Programme - Humanitarian and Development Division, WFP

**Q&A from the audience** will be addressed through the Zoom chat function concurrent with the session.