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REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **EASTERN AFRICA**

Research, Assessment and Monitoring (RAM)

2021 Regional Achievements & Outlook

MAY 2022

Regional Overview

Prolonged conflict, macro-economic challenges occasioned by COVID-19 pandemic, persistent climatic shocks (drought and floods) have markedly increased the severity of food insecurity and malnutrition across the region. As at the end of 2021, approximately 63 million people are food insecure, including refugees and IDPs, with highest prevalence in **Sudan (9.8 million), Ethiopia (approximately 7.4 million) and South Sudan (7.2 million).** Following escalated geo-political and economic knock-on effects of the recent Russia-Ukraine conflict, and short of sustained interventions, the number of food insecure people is likely to accelerate beyond 80 million by June 2022.

Regional Achievements

RBN continued to advance the evidence-building agenda, promoting integrated and cross-functional approaches to inform programme, policy, and financing. Deliberate efforts were directed to increasing efficiency and quality of data collection and analysis by leveraging innovative digital technologies, and building strategic and operational partnerships to meet broader food security and nutrition evidence needs.

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, RBN maintained its agility and commitment in tracking and reporting on key population and programme outcomes. This was made possible by remote Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) and monitoring approaches, adjustments of methodologies, tools/checklists, and guidance. Additionally, RBN generated numerous evidence products that ensured WFP and other stakeholders were reliably kept abreast on the evolving food security and nutrition situation. Products include the static cartographic maps, Concept of operations, studies on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on food security and livelihoods, market and trade updates, food security and monitoring bulletins , and so forth

RBN supported the COs to provide credible, relevant and timely evidence that forms the basis for the design of WFP operations - providing the necessary information for strategic and operational decision-making, resource mobilization and accountability to beneficiaries. Specifically, RBN provided targeted support on food security and nutrition assessments/analyses, roll-out of risk- based monitoring framework, setting up of monitoring systems, structures and practices, emergency food security assessments as well as targeting and prioritization initiatives.

Throughout 2021, RBN strengthened technical capacity of the COs and provided support ranging from online trainings on Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB), monitoring foundations, Market functionality index (MFI), integrated context analysis (ICA) among others. There was continued focus and emphasis on qualitative research training, to enhance qualitative research knowledge and competencies in the region.

Strengthened internal collaboration led to increased joint analyses in collaboration with Nutrition, CBT, Evaluation and Supply Chain thematic areas on the Regional School Health and Nutrition Assessment, Joint Essential Needs Assessment (ENA) and Market assessment, Joint Food Security and Nutrition assessments and updates, the Theory of Change (ToC) of the SBP and Knowledge Management Strategy. An important milestone was the contribution to the new Strategic Plan Line of Sight and Corporate Results Framework Working Groups.

The continued pursuit for programmatic evidence called for the forging of new and strengthening of existing partnerships, that saw improved monitoring of and reporting on food security and nutrition via Geopoll and mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) collaboration, improved market and cross-border trade monitoring and analysis via WFP/Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET)/ The Eastern Africa Grain Council and the Market Analysis Subgroup (EAGC MAS) of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) collaboration, and the enhanced of targeting/prioritization via the Joint UNHCR/WFP Targeting Hub, new partnerships with UN-HABITAT and IOM on understanding the COVID-19 implications on food security and livelihood among the urban poor and displaced populations. Equally important was, the partnership with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) on climate risk analysis for early warning and early action as a well as flood Risk profiles assessment in the region. Continued collaboration with other stakeholders via FSNWG, substantially contributed generating the Global and Regional Reports on food crises and IPC analyses.

CO Support

RBN continued to work with all the COs in the region in promoting the evidence generation agenda through numerous initiatives.

Djibouti was supported in planning and implementation of the Food Security and Nutrition Assessment focusing on HIV patients on ART/ ARVs as well as rural and urban livelihoods food security and nutrition assessment.

Ethiopia was supported in setting up of M&E systems structures and practices for the Tigray emergency operation as well as support to the food security analysis. RBN also provided support on the analysis for the MEB, which defines what a household requires in order to meet their basic needs, including food, water, clothing and housing, on a regular or seasonal basis, and its average costs in the local markets.

Uganda was supported in defining a prioritisation strategy for the refugee response.

Rwanda was supported in the evaluation of targeting effectiveness and improvement of the targeting approach.

Monitoring oversight and support were provided to **Ethiopia, Djibouti, South Sudan and Uganda**, whose overall objective was to identify strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in the existing monitoring systems and practices at the CO and Sub-Office (SO), in line with the corporate oversight principles, and to provide more focused and relevant technical support.
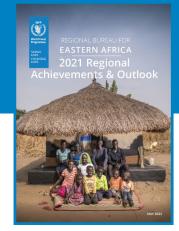
Challenges

With the advent of COVID-19 pandemic, data quality continued to be a challenge due to the adoption of remote data collection and monitoring approaches which may affect the accuracy, completeness, and consistency of data. The COs' increased need of regional support on key evidence generation processes and products, as well as the competing priorities, also placed a challenge.

Lessons Learned

Grounded on above-mentioned achievements and challenges, RBN recognises the need for continued tracking of and adaptation to the ever-changing programme context, which calls for leveraging on new and innovative data collection methods and technological platforms to optimise evidence generation. Additionally, the need for continued establishment of new partnerships and collaboration beyond the traditional ones, is critical in strengthening the evidence building agenda.

COs in the Region will continue to require sustained support from the Regional Bureau, while institutionalising systems for improved in-country technical capacities including partners and Governments.

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