



Ending cyclical need: The Humanitarian Nexus in Southern Africa and the Sahel

Wednesday, 28 February 2018, 08:30–09:45 (Aula 1)
WFP Headquarters

Background

Cyclical shocks exacerbate humanitarian needs and reverse development gains in Southern Africa and the Sahel, while investing in resilience building, preparedness actions and taking early action saves lives when disasters strike and can significantly reduce the cost of an emergency response. Therefore success can be achieved through acting early and preventively; reinforcing national and local systems; and strengthening actions bridging the humanitarian-development-peace nexus undertaken by both humanitarian and development actors.

WFP is committed to bridge the operational gap between humanitarian and development, and there is an urgent need to bridge the political and funding nexus. Despite the commitment, investments remain largely concentrated on humanitarian response rather than actions designed for multi-year resilience building and preparedness. Evidence demonstrates investment in early response, community resilience and preparedness is more cost-effective than repeated humanitarian action.

Objectives

1. To alert Member States of the impending La Niña drought crisis in Southern Africa and the Sahel and the resultant impact on food security, nutrition and conflict and trade; and
2. To activate discussion and leveraging support for the ongoing humanitarian-development nexus programming.
3. To highlight examples of how WFP implements programmes that seek to build resilience and end need.

Event outline

The discussion will be opened by Mr David Beasley, WFP Executive Director, who will be joined by a panel of speakers, including:

- Ms Denise Brown, Director of Emergencies, WFP, to highlight the *Economics of Early Resilience*
- Ms Lola Castro, Regional Director for Southern Africa, to highlight *Breaking the Cycle through the Nexus*
- Mr Abdou Dieng, Regional Director for West Africa, to highlight *Resilience and Fostering the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*.

A question and answer session will follow the presentations.

Proposed participation

The session will be open to all delegations and partners and interpretation will be provided.

Context

WFP operationalizes the New Way of Working by recognizing that longer-term visions and better collaboration with development actors can address crises' root causes and contribute to long-term sustainable development.

Southern Africa's recent recovery from El Niño is threatened by an analogous La Niña, underscoring the need for proven resilience-building programming. Deepening cyclical risks, coupled with new shocks such as the Fall Armyworm, threaten agricultural production and long-term food security. Interventions capable of overcoming these shocks, bridging the nexus and strengthening resilience, require even greater levels of investment and deployment.

The Sahel continues to face challenges including growing insecurity, rapid population growth, economic instability, underinvestment in social services, persisting poverty, expanding drylands and climate variation. This year, due to conflict and rainfall deficit, a food security and nutrition crisis, is expected to affect millions of people. Actions addressing these immediate needs alongside massive investment in the nexus and scaled-up resilience-building programming is required to avoid further escalation.

In Southern Africa, WFP's engagement has been repositioned, wherever possible, to ensure that interventions meet both the immediate humanitarian needs as well as for recovery and long-term resilience building to develop capacity to respond to recurrent shocks. The recent seven-country Level 3 response to the effect of El Niño, demonstrates the benefits and challenges of this new approach to secure longer-term resilience. WFP's approach was outlined in the paper [El Niño: Undermining Resilience – Implications of El Niño in Southern Africa from a food and nutrition security perspective](#).

In the Sahel, WFP's efforts are documented in the paper: *Tackling hunger at the source – A call for an operational partnership for scaling up resilience in the Sahel and fostering the humanitarian-development-security nexus*. An integrated approach of convergent activities at scale in geographically concentrated areas in support of national government plans aiming to create jobs for the youth, build livelihoods with women and youth at the centre, rehabilitate lands and restore ecosystems, invest in health, nutrition and education and build cohesion at community level.