

ROSA Newsletter

In the spotlight

A new research report published by the Sahel Working Group¹ in September 2011 puts the spotlight on the chronic and long term food crisis in the Sahel, arguing that the “business as usual” response is failing to address the needs of the populations, particularly for the groups most vulnerable to malnutrition. Even in good years, and regardless of the size of the harvest or the rains, many people in the Sahel struggle to survive. The level of child malnutrition also provides unequivocal evidence of the dire situation of the populations. Whilst the causes of malnutrition are complex, poverty and food insecurity are critical and growing determinants in the Sahel.

The report follows up on a 2007 study “[Beyond Any Drought](#)” which assessed the root causes of chronic vulnerability in the Sahel exposed by the 2005 food crisis in Niger. The new study provides evidence on the changing face of hunger in the region. It calls for an adapted aid approach that will break the hunger cycle for people in the Sahel and provide new opportunities for leading them down the “path to resilience”.

The report examines how, and if, policies and programmes put in place in 2010 reflected lessons of the 2005 food crisis. It also sets out recommendations aiming to guide decision making and improve the effectiveness of aid to address the “permanent emergency” in the Sahel. This comprehensive study is based on interviews with over 70 people from all major groups of actors, relevant literature and reports, and field visits to areas in Niger and Chad most affected by the crisis in 2010.

Escaping the hunger cycle: Pathways to resilience in the Sahel



Escaping the Hunger Cycle Pathways to Resilience in the Sahel

Sahel Working Group

September 2011
Peter Gubbels

More than 10 million people in the Sahel were severely affected by the 2010 food crisis, resorting to drastic coping strategies. Whilst the food crisis struck people all across the Sahel, the impact and the responses varied significantly from one country to another. However, there are some commonalities in the responses across the region. In particular, they were based on nutrition and food security analytical tools such as the Household Economic Analysis (HEA) which have been critical in improving understanding, monitoring and assessing of food and nutrition insecurity.

Whilst the report argues that progress on the delivery of aid has been made since 2005, efforts remained insufficient both in terms of timing, funding, quality and scope, with a critical gap between emergency relief and development, resulting primarily from most Sahel governments,

¹ This is an informal inter-agency network based in the UK. The commissioning agencies for this report are CAFOD, CARE International UK, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, Oxfam GB, Plan UK, Save the Children UK, Tearfund and World Vision UK.

donors, UN, NGOs' and decision makers' inability to consider the chronic state of food insecurity and malnutrition as a "permanent crisis". This perpetuates a reactive – arguably late – response which does not put the emphasis on protecting livelihoods and preventing the massive loss of assets.

As a result, urgent and sustained efforts, including through long-term and flexible funding, are needed to enable recovery. The report argues that current strategies are not sufficient and greater emphasis and investments need to go towards critical initiatives in particular social protection programmes. It however recognises key challenges including i) lack of political leadership, poor governance and weak institutional capacity at both national and decentralised levels; ii) Sahel governments' scepticism of the benefits of investing scarce resources in social protection (with the exception of Niger); and iii) the limited capacity to absorb significantly more aid while also engendering a true sense of national ownership of initiatives, in accordance with the Paris declaration of aid effectiveness.

The report calls for leadership and strong determination and coordination among main stakeholders building on progress and using a conceptual framework "The pathways to resilience" which, if followed, will arrest and reverse the alarming trend of deepening vulnerability in the Sahel. The proposed framework is designed to guide major groups of actors (governments, CILSS, donors, UN agencies, and civil society actors including INGO) in decision-making, and setting priorities for overcoming the largely neglected chronic dimensions of the food and nutrition crisis.

The report concludes with proposed pathways to resilience in the Sahel through six priorities for immediate action at the national and regional levels:

1. Strengthen preparedness and early response by applying the Cadre Harmonisé Bonifié (IPC) in the Sahel.
2. Design national policies and implement programmes for social protection that meet the needs of the most vulnerable and poorest people.

3. Boost rural livelihoods in marginal or degraded agricultural areas through sustainable intensification of food production using agro-ecological techniques, and in pastoral areas, through support for animal health, production, and marketing.
4. Develop and apply a regional disaster risk reduction strategy in the Sahel.
5. Support coordinated, multi-sectoral investments to achieve sustainable reduction in level of child malnutrition.
6. Address market failures and price volatility through the definition of a regulatory framework for the development of a regional system of "buffer stocks" or "food security stocks" as provided for in the Regional Compact for Implementation of ECOWAP/CAADP.

The report also includes 24 more detailed recommendations. It is available in French and English at:

<http://community.eldis.org/sahelworkinggroup>

The UK launch of the report will take place on Friday 21st October 2011, 13.00-14.30 (GMT+1), including a presentation by the author, and a panel discussion with members of Sahel Working Group, donors, partners and experts.

To join this event live online, please go to:

<http://www.odi.org.uk/events/details.asp?id=2750&title=escaping-hunger-cycle-pathways-resilience-sahel>

Further launches are being planned across the Sahel.

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Views on current news

Linking humanitarian and development interventions: An EC joint framework for food security

The recently approved EC food security thematic programme (FSTP 2011-2013) states that a Joint Humanitarian-Development Framework (JHDF) should be prepared to help tackle the issue of coherence, coordination and complementarity between humanitarian operations and development interventions². In this interview given during a training seminar on the JHDF³, Jacques Prade (DG ECHO) highlights the main objectives of and rationale for this joint framework and the importance of improving coordination between the Commission's services. He states that this first requires a strong desire to work together. This should involve EU delegations, experts from ECHO, colleagues from both EuropeAid and ECHO headquarters and if possible, different donors and actors involved at grass-roots level.

Why a joint humanitarian-development framework and what are the advantages of designing a JHDF through a common process?

The link between humanitarian and development interventions is a subject that has been debated for many years. Since the mid-1990s⁴, the European Commission has invested to promote a more effective response in transition situations and to counter the difficult situations of fragility with multifaceted tools and strategies. The EC approach is still evolving and despite progress, much remains to be done in ensuring the link between the provision of relief and rehabilitation with longer-term sustainable development. In a context of increasingly frequent and severe crisis, it is becoming extremely important to strengthen coordination and synergies to achieve greater effectiveness and coherence.

The JHDF is a strategic tool for responding to these challenges. Designing a joint framework could help facilitate the articulation between ECHO actions and development/cooperation instruments. Through a common process, differences (in viewpoints, objectives, modalities and levels of interventions) could be presented and discussed. As a result of this shared exercise, a joint response is designed that integrates both humanitarian and development actions and builds on the existing complementarities.

We also need to ensure that objectives related to post-crisis interventions, development and humanitarian policy are mainstreamed into EU

foreign policy objectives. The Lisbon Treaty⁵ reinforces the obligation for a stronger "policy mix" for addressing situations of fragility. But how can we ensure that policies with different objectives are mutually reinforcing? The JHDF could contribute to leverage synergies so as to reconcile objectives and principles within the framework of the Union's external action.

How should a JHDF be prepared and who is involved in this process?

It is important to support a bottom-up process led by EU Delegations and experts from ECHO, with the support of HQs and in collaboration with partners. This exercise is not simply a procedure but rather a joint process of mutual learning and teaching as, indeed, everyone sees the food crisis from one's own position and responsibilities.

The JHDF is based on a five-step process. After establishing a common analysis of the crisis (step 1) and identifying the food insecure group targeted (step 2), participants conduct a joint analysis of all the causes that explain the vulnerability and food insecurity of the targeted population (step 3). Through a causal model exercise, we identify the interactions between the different causes and their effects at different levels (individuals, households, communities and local authorities, national and regional levels). By adding links between each cause and its effects, it is possible progressively to draw an overall picture of the linkages between different causes at various levels. In steps 4 and 5, each group identifies respective interventions (past, current or planned) and the coherence of such interventions. The main goal is to reach an agreement on priorities and on a "joint humanitarian-development framework"⁶.

Building on the outcomes of work done with colleagues in Dakar and Ouagadougou, EuropeAid and ECHO have developed a methodology for designing the JHDF. One of the objectives of the training seminar "Working in transition" (July 2011) was to present this methodology, and discuss possible improvements and the way forward. To date, the FSTP is the only programme requiring this joint analysis. We hope to start applying the methodology for food security and once tested, it could be improved and used in different areas.

² This will be done for countries in transition and fragile situations (priority 3 under the FSTP).

³ Held in Brussels from 18-20 July 2011.

⁴ Originally developed in 1996, the EC approach in LRRD was reviewed in the early 2000s.

⁵ The overarching legal and political framework for EU interventions in situations of fragility is provided by the Lisbon Treaty.

⁶ A [short video](#) presentation jointly prepared by ECHO and EuropeAid is available on ROSA's website. An illustration is provided inspired by the recent flooding in Burkina Faso.

Agenda

Past events

- **Meeting on the regional food stock in West Africa** (3-5 October, Dakar, Senegal): At the invitation of the ECOWAS Commission, a meeting of the task force working on the setting up of a regional food stock was held in Senegal. Key stakeholders participated in this meeting: CILSS, NEPAD, Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC), WFP, bilateral donors (United States, Japan, Spain), IFPRI, Hub Rural, experts and representatives from the ECOWAS and the WAEMU Commissions. Participants established a roadmap for the adoption of an operational strategy in the region, and clarified stakeholders' responsibilities in this process. It defined the next steps in the implementation of this strategy programmed into the ECOWAP/CAADP and the regional investment programme. [>>>](#)
- **UN high-level meeting on nutrition** (20 September, New York): On the margins of the 66th session of the UN General Assembly, took place this meeting that marked the one-year anniversary of the launch of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement that aims to improve maternal and child nutrition. During this High-level meeting, the Heads of State of 20 countries, and leaders from the UN, private sector, and civil society provided a strong support for SUN movement. In the follow-up workshop on September 21st, participants also discussed i) progress thus far with the SUN movement and ii) future commitments for enhancing its growth. The UN high-level meeting was streamlined and available online. [>>>](#)

Forthcoming events

- **17-20 October:** 37th session of the FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS) - Rome (Italy) [>>>](#)
- **3-4 November:** G20 Summit – Cannes (France)
- **28 November-9 December:** The 17th United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 17) - Durban (South Africa)
- **3 December:** Agriculture and Rural Development Day at COP17 – Durban (South Africa)

- **8-10 December:** Meeting of the Food crises prevention Network (RPCA) - Cape Verde
- **17-19 January 2012:** International Scientific Symposium on food and nutrition security information. From valid measurement to effective decision-making – Rome (Italy) [>>>](#)

For further information: [Upcoming events](#)

EC's latest news

- **Public hearing at the European Parliament on food Security in developing countries** (4 October): Parliament's Committee on Development held a hearing on the issue of food security in developing countries. Among main participants were European Parliament deputies, Commissioners for Development Mr. Piebalgs, and for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr. Ciolos, representatives from UN organisations and civil society. Discussions were organized around three main themes: i) commodity speculation and foreign investment in farmland, ii) EU policies on food and agriculture and iii) sustainable agriculture.
- **Strengthening governance approaches for food security under the FSTP 2011-2013:** An EC call for proposals will be launched mid-October. It will focus on improving the capacities of specific groups (farmers' organisations, pastoralists' organisations, fishers' and aquaculture farmers' organisations) to participate in policy-making processes related to food security and nutrition. This call for proposal is related to the second strategic priority of the 2011-2013 FSTP that aims at strengthening food security governance. [>>>](#)
- **UNICEF and the EU announce new support to help improve nutrition in Africa** (October 2011): Through a €14.95 million grant, the EU will support the Nutrition Strategy in West and East Africa programme. It will benefit the entire region but place special emphasis on Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali and Uganda, where help is particularly needed. [>>>](#)

New online documents

➤ Nutrition

A review of global progress toward the Millennium Development Goal 1 hunger target, Fanzo et al., Food and Nutrition Bulletin - June 2011

This paper examines evidence from over 40 community-based programs as well as the most pertinent national and international efforts. Results show that although much effort has been dedicated to achieving this goal, there is still a lot of work to be done. Programs are still rooted in the health sector and address disease-related effects and emphasize the immediate determinants of undernutrition. Strategies that adopt multi-sectoral programming as crucial to address longer-term determinants of undernutrition, such as poverty, gender equality, and functioning food and health systems, remain under-developed and under-researched. The authors suggests that accelerating progress toward the MDG1 is less about the development of innovations and technologies and more about putting what is already known in to practice. [>>>](#)

Nutrition advocacy: Building opportunities in Europe, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and CCS Consulting - August 2011

This study conducted for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is a mapping exercise of the landscape of European organisations that have existing or potential involvement in activities addressing undernutrition in low and middle income countries. An analysis of the research findings highlights several opportunities for the nutrition community to prioritise efforts to scale resources and attention to nutrition. [>>>](#)

Progress report from countries and their partners in the Movement to Scale Up Nutrition (SUN) - September 2011

The report has been prepared for the High Level Meeting on Nutrition hosted by the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General at the UN General Assembly on September 20th 2011 and the follow-up workshop for the Scale-Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement on September 21st. It provides a global overview of progress one year after the launch of the Movement. The accompanying compendium of country fiches provides information on progress in individual countries. [>>>](#)

Bringing agriculture to the table: How agriculture and food policy can play a role in preventing chronic disease, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs - September 2011

This report finds that if the agriculture and food sector works more closely with the health sector, the rising prevalence of diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) can be reduced through better nutrition. The report asserts that agriculture must offer consumers a better mix of locally available, less-processed, and culturally appropriate items. It calls on the agriculture and food sectors to play a larger role in addressing increasing rates of NCDs. [>>>](#)

➤ Information systems and food security indicators

Measuring food insecurity: Meaningful concepts and indicators for evidence-based policy making. Background paper for the CFS Roundtable on monitoring food security – August 2011

This paper frames the issues discussed during the CFS roundtable. Its main objective is to review different methods to assess food security and to identify the evidence-base for more effective food security policies. Section 2 discusses definitions and ways to assess different forms of food insecurity. Section 3 focuses on the country-level indicator that is routinely calculated by FAO to measure the prevalence of undernourishment. Section 4 examines the need to enhance the capacity of countries to collect and validate basic data on production, trade and storage of food, both at national and household level. The efforts that are currently being made by FAO to assist countries in developing capacity in the field of agriculture, food and nutrition statistics are reviewed. [>>>](#)

➤ External links

Field Exchange, Emergency Nutrition Network – August 2011: Field Exchange is a tri-annual magazine containing field articles, research and news pieces for those working in emergency nutrition and food security. This issue focus on the role of data and analytical tools in guiding and evaluating emergency programming figures.

<http://www.enononline.net/pool/files/fex/fx-41-web.pdf>

INSTAPA: Improved Nutrition through Staple Foods in Africa: A new “[Useful link](#)” has been added to the ROSA network. The INSTAPA project focuses on the improvement of millet-, sorghum-, maize-, and cassava-based foods for young children in sub-Saharan Africa to safely prevent deficiencies of iron, zinc, and vitamin A to improve immune function and cognitive development. The project is conducted by research scientists from Europe, Africa and United States. Find out more about the INSTAPA Project:

<http://www.instapa.org/instapa>

eLENA: e-Library of Evidence for Nutrition Actions of the WHO: The WHO e-Library of Evidence for Nutrition Actions (eLENA) is an online library aiming to help countries successfully implement and scale-up nutrition interventions by informing as well as guiding policy development and programme design.

The new WHO eLENA includes a wide variety of intervention topics. Nutrition actions ranging from topic areas such as: breastfeeding, complementary feeding, micronutrient supplementation, severe acute malnutrition treatments, and deworming are included. eLENA continues to add to its catalogue of nutrition actions. 6 brand new guidelines on vitamin A supplementation for women, infants and children are also profiled. To be included within the WHO electronic Library of Evidence for Nutrition Actions (eLENA) are new and updated guidelines on iron and folic acid supplementation for women and children.

eLENA has been added to the list of “[Useful links](#)” in the ROSA.

<http://www.who.int/elen/en/>

Network activities

- **Reminder to respond to ROSA network's survey:** We recently invited you to participate to a survey to assess the services and tools that ROSA offers and how satisfied you are with them. Your opinion is important for us. If you have not yet completed the survey, we encourage you to respond.

This bulletin was written by the GRET team in charge of animating ROSA. The network is an initiative of EuropeAid.

The points expressed do not reflect the official position of the European Commission.