

2010



The State of Food Insecurity in the World

Addressing food insecurity in protracted crises





Key messages

- **The number and the proportion of undernourished people have declined, but they remain unacceptably high.** After increasing from 2006 to 2009 due to high food prices and the global economic crisis, both the number and proportion of hungry people have declined in 2010 as the global economy recovers and food prices remain below their peak levels. But hunger remains higher than before the crises, making it ever more difficult to achieve the hunger-reduction targets of the World Food Summit and Millennium Development Goal 1.
- **Countries in protracted crisis require special attention.** They are characterized by long-lasting or recurring crises and often limited or little capacity to respond, exacerbating food insecurity problems in those countries. Appropriate responses thus differ from those required in short-term crises or in non-crisis development contexts.
- **Improving food security in protracted crises requires going beyond short-term responses in order to protect and promote people's livelihoods over the longer term.** People living in protracted crises are often forced to make radical adjustments in their way of life that require longer-term responses. This disruption to traditional livelihoods and coping mechanisms also has very different implications for men and for women.
- **Supporting institutions is key to addressing protracted crises.** Protracted crises, whether human-induced or the result of repeated natural disasters, often undermine the institutions that are necessary to contain and recover from crises. Local institutions often remain or emerge to fill crucial gaps when national institutions have failed, and these have the potential to play a key role in addressing protracted crises, but they are often ignored by external actors.
- **Agriculture and the rural economy are key sectors for supporting livelihoods in protracted crises, but they are not properly reflected in aid flows.** Agricultural and rural-based livelihoods are critical to the groups most affected by protracted crises. Agriculture accounts for a third of protracted crisis countries' gross domestic product and two-thirds of their employment. Yet agriculture accounts for only 4 percent of humanitarian ODA received by countries in protracted crisis and 3 percent of development ODA.
- **The current aid architecture needs to be modified to better address both immediate needs and the structural causes of protracted crises.** The current system uses humanitarian assistance to support short-term efforts to address the immediate effects of a crisis, and development assistance for long-term interventions to address underlying causes. Areas of intervention that are important in protracted crises (including social protection and risk reduction) are often underfunded. In general, weak governance structures in protracted crisis situations condition aid allocations.
- **Food assistance helps build the basis for long-term food security, and is particularly important in countries in protracted crisis.** Humanitarian food assistance not only saves lives, but is also an investment in a country's future, because it preserves and strengthens the human assets and livelihoods that are the foundation of future stability and development. The use of a varied set of food assistance tools (such as food, cash or vouchers), complemented by innovations in how food is procured (including local purchase), 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.
- **Broader social protection measures help countries cope with protracted crises and lay the foundation for long-term recovery.** Key interventions include providing safety nets, insurance when appropriate, and services such as health and education, which build bridges to longer-term development. In countries in protracted crisis, however, financial, institutional and implementation capacity are limited, so social protection programmes are generally short-term, relief-oriented and externally funded.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Support further analysis and deeper understanding of people's livelihoods and coping mechanisms in protracted crises in order to strengthen their resilience and enhance the effectiveness of assistance programmes.

Recommendation 2. Support the protection, promotion and rebuilding of livelihoods, and the institutions that support and enable livelihoods, in countries in protracted crisis.

Recommendation 3. Revisit the architecture of external assistance in protracted crises to match the needs, challenges and institutional constraints on the ground. This could entail the organization of a High-Level Forum on protracted crises followed by the development of a new "Agenda for Action" for countries in protracted crisis.

2010

The State of **Food Insecurity in the World**

Addressing food insecurity in protracted crises

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) or of the World Food Programme (WFP) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The mention of specific companies or products of manufacturers, whether or not these have been patented, does not imply that these have been endorsed or recommended by FAO or WFP in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in the maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO or WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.

ISBN 978-92-5-106610-2

All rights reserved. Reproduction and dissemination of material in this information product for educational or other non-commercial purposes are authorized without any prior written permission from the copyright holders provided the source is fully acknowledged. Reproduction of material in this information product for resale or other commercial purposes is prohibited without written permission of the copyright holders. Applications for such permission should be addressed to:

Chief
Publishing Policy and Support Branch
Office of Knowledge Exchange, Research and Extension
FAO
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy
or by e-mail to:
copyright@fao.org

© FAO 2010

4 Foreword

8 Undernourishment around the world in 2010

8 The number of undernourished people has declined but remains unacceptably high

10 Undernourishment by region

12 Countries in protracted crisis: what are they and why do they deserve special attention?

12 Common features of countries in protracted crisis

18 How livelihoods adapt in protracted crises

21 Gender issues in protracted crises

24 Learning from, and building on, community responses

27 National and international responses to protracted crises

27 Analysis of aid flows to countries in protracted crisis

32 Humanitarian food assistance in protracted crises

36 Towards social protection in protracted crises

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

43 Success stories: the example of Mozambique

45 Towards ensuring food security in protracted crises: recommended actions

50 Technical annexes

50 Table 1
Prevalence of undernourishment and progress towards the World Food Summit (WFS) and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets in developing countries

53 Table 2
Selected development and food security indicators for countries in protracted crisis

54 Notes
