



# Protracted crises: Governance and political economy of agriculture-based livelihoods

## Key messages

To effectively address the risk of protracted crisis, it is necessary to understand the governance and political economy of the prevailing contexts, the principal actors and their power dynamics, the impact of the protracted crisis and the nature of the assistance required.

Analysis of these issues helps bridge humanitarian and development intervention and helps minimize the risks of unintended consequences, including aid dependency.

Investing in resilient agriculture-based interventions has a great potential to save lives, protect or restore livelihoods, and contribute to lasting peace, security and development.

Ending conflict and ensuring food security in the long-term requires legitimate relations of power and authority. FAO plays a unique role in protecting, restoring and developing agriculture-based livelihoods for sustenance, security and prosperity.

## Facts about protracted crises

- Half a billion people in over 20 countries live in areas affected by conflict and protracted crises, of these approximately 167 million are undernourished people. About one in five of all chronically malnourished people live in protracted crises and conflict areas.
- The rate of hunger and malnutrition in conflict and protracted crises areas are almost three times higher than in developing countries as whole. The effects on human development are lasting and intergenerational; women and children are the most affected.
- About 98 million child laborers work in agriculture in conflict and protracted crisis areas, living in conditions that compound the already dangerous plight of child labor.
- Agriculture-based livelihoods underpin the survival of people in conflict and protracted crises and can effectively contribute to sustained recovery and improved food security.
- Bridging developmental and humanitarian assistance can foster further improvements in agricultural-based livelihoods, promoting and sustaining transformative recovery and economic growth.
- Resilience requires greater coherence and integration of humanitarian, development, investment and policy interventions to support local and national institutions and communities, backed up by effective coordination among global actors.

## GOVERNANCE AND POLICY SERIES DISCUSSION BRIEF 1

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### Resilient agricultural livelihoods in protracted crises

Human-induced factors and natural hazards (or combinations of both) are the main drivers of conflict and protracted crises, resulting in disruptions and threats to livelihoods, breakdown of food systems, lengthy food crises, ineffective or inequitable governance, limited institutional capacity of local or national authorities, and violence. Protracted crises deny people, especially the most vulnerable, access to a wide range of productive resources necessary to sustain livelihoods. Restricted access to land, natural resources, and to markets, either temporarily or permanently, further intensify the threat to livelihoods.

### The governance and political economy dimension of humanitarian and agricultural development interventions

Failure to understand the governance challenges and political economy of a protracted crisis and its associated humanitarian and agricultural development interventions can be a prescription for unintended consequences, including further intensification of the crisis. By introducing new perspectives, or by altering how decisions and policies are made, humanitarian or development assistance always has an impact on peace and conflict dynamics. Existing power relations can



#### FAO IN AFGHANISTAN

Improving governance remains the government's first priority, as rampant corruption, uncertainty about property rights, lack of state effectiveness, and conflicts between the host community and the returnees on land issues and legitimacy undermine other efforts to promote development. FAO as pioneer of the governance reform in the agricultural sector is leading such an intervention, supporting management of land and common property resources (such as graze land, water or forests); capacity development for the governance of the agricultural sector; and evidence-based policy making and participatory community.

Source: FAO, 2017. Country Programming Framework for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan 2017 to 2021.



be challenged or disrupted; conversely, when well planned, interventions can help bring competing groups together, promote more equitable use of natural resources, and help to create more peaceful solutions. The challenge of humanitarian and agricultural development interventions is to address all four dimensions of impact concurrently: environmental, social, economic, and governance.

In conflict and protracted crises, the governance and political economy analysis can help to identify and prioritize the needs or vulnerability to be addressed, to map out the institutional and governance arrangements, and their weaknesses. The political economy and conflict analysis can reveal the underlying or proximate causes

of a crisis, facilitate the assessment of existing institutions and governance arrangements, and inform conflict-sensitive programming. Political economy analyses go beyond institutional and behavioural analyses of actors involved in all aspects of the crisis. Governance analyses of sources of prevailing food insecurity can further improve the targeting and designing of humanitarian and developmental interventions and action plans. Governance, including both formal (legal) and informal (traditional, unwritten) rules and institutions can guide local communities' collective decision-making processes.

Other important governance issues also arise due to the working relations among the various partners



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## FAO IN WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP (WBGS)

UN agencies in WBGS have made progress in interlinking humanitarian and developmental interventions: The three-year humanitarian response plan 2018-2020 has prioritized programmes to address resilience building interventions, that also focus on livelihoods, in addition to social protection and the provision of basic services and needs. However, weakness in bridging humanitarian assistance and developmental investment remains, and the two often compete for resources. To overcome the above, there is a drive at the national level to bridge and link humanitarian and development interventions for their greater coherence and integration. FAO is spearheading investment for sustainable agriculture-based livelihood, resilience and food security, including institutional capacities development for government, private sector and civil society.

Source: FAO Office in West Bank & Gaza Strip, 2017.

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and between the UN agencies and the many other international actors operating in virtually every protracted crisis. Synchronization of activities and coordination among the UN agencies and donor partners are key to reinforce humanitarian and development assistance.

### Linking humanitarian-development-peace interventions

Bridging and linking humanitarian intervention and investment in building resilient agricultural livelihoods is the most effective way to address hunger and malnutrition and to rebuild lasting peace and security. This requires combining holistic short-term humanitarian assistance, long-term development intervention and sustained peace building.

FAO has taken a resilience-centric approach in designing and implementing assistance to break the cycle of recurring conflict. This recognizes that crises are not only humanitarian or political, but also developmental. At the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, FAO committed to improving conflict-sensitive programming and to 'do no harm', in developing related corporate principles and frameworks to address livelihoods and food insecurity in protracted crises and conflict-affected situations. To increase its effectiveness, FAO increasingly applies governance and political economy analysis in its work in protracted crises.

### Is development intervention and humanitarian assistance a form of governance?

Humanitarian and development interventions have their own policies, practices and involve a wide range of stakeholders, institutions and communities to guide who receives the assistance for what purpose, in what form and how to involve existing local governance and humanitarian structures and traditional administration. Humanitarian and development assistance influences local government and communities' decision-making process, policies, processes and institutions. Hence, both developmental and humanitarian assistance with their implementation policies are forms of governance since they have a bearing on the behaviour of the recipients and help build trust with members of local communities and constituents. Development intervention, agricultural development intervention, and humanitarian assistance are all forms of governance that need to be linked for long-term sustained success.

*"Ongoing conflicts continue to be a key driver of severe food insecurity, having triggered near-famine conditions in northern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, as well as widespread hunger in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo – and Syria."*

([www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1071595/icode](http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1071595/icode))

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