



## Report: Dialogue on Building Resilience to Hunger in South Sudan

### Background and Summary

The level of food insecurity in South Sudan is unprecedented with more than half the population severely food insecure. The humanitarian needs have been escalating each year since the outbreak of conflict in 2013. South Sudan has, however, been in a state of protracted crisis for the last six decades with the combination of conflict and climate related shocks. Addressing food insecurity requires going beyond short-term humanitarian response and trying to reduce humanitarian needs in the first place. The *Dialogue on Building Resilience to Hunger* was a special session of the Agriculture Livelihoods Donor Working Group (ALDWG). The event brought multiple partners together on October 24th-25th 2017 to discuss how to most effectively support the resilience of South Sudanese households.

On October 24th, discussions focused on the challenges and opportunities for building resilience to hunger, as well as on priorities for action. The conflict between the government and armed opposition, and resulting macro-economic crisis, makes the work of humanitarian and development actors extremely challenging. There are still areas where communities are able and willing to engage in productive activities to protect and promote their livelihoods. With increasing humanitarian needs and limited capacity to maintain and increase funding, donors, UN agencies and NGOs should have a collective vision and approach. Achieving this level of collaboration and coordination will require a shared definition of resilience, joint analysis and tools to measure resilience. Participants also emphasized the need for a multi-sectoral approach with a locally driven and locally appropriate coordinated package of services. At the same time, humanitarian and development actors must be honest about analysing value for money, what interventions are prioritized, and how we can reach the greatest number of people given the magnitude of the crisis in South Sudan.

On October 25th, discussions among ALDWG members resulted in five commitments to move the resilience agenda forward. Working group members committed to developing a common vision of what resilience to hunger means in the context of South Sudan and testing new business models to implement multi-sector resilience programming at the local level.

### Day 1 (24 October 2017): What are the Challenges and Opportunities in Building Resilience to Hunger?

The following priorities for action represent an emerging consensus among workshop participants:

#### 1. Humanitarian and development actors in South Sudan need a common understanding of resilience programming that is realistic, with interventions that can be scaled up and reduce humanitarian needs

- It's important to define what we mean when we talk about building resilience in South Sudan. We must define the scope, depth and reach of our efforts. Given the context, many agree that building resilience to shocks that impact food security and nutrition is central.
- We should be careful to avoid a resilience strategy becoming everything at once, thereby becoming a development and poverty reduction strategy. There must be some process of prioritization that's clear about what approaches or activities are excluded.
- Structural changes are needed, ranging from common principles and a statement of accountability, to the possibility of a joint strategy in the future.
- There must be a deliberate strategy to focus on helping people cope better with the shocks they face that reduces the humanitarian needs.
- UN agencies and NGOs also raised the need for donor flexibility to switch between development and emergency funding and long-term commitment outside short funding cycles in both humanitarian and development funding modalities.

**2. Programming that builds resilience to shocks must be informed by a strong multi-hazard risk analysis that can map shocks and vulnerabilities at the local level**

- There is analysis of the main shocks and factors that improve resilience to shocks in South Sudan at the country level with the Resilience Context Analysis, but large data gaps exist, and mechanisms are needed that would enable more localised analysis for joint planning.
- We must understand the characteristics (or capacities) that make households resilient to shocks, and the multi-dimensional causes of vulnerability.
- Integrated programming (including humanitarian-development coordination) will require data on vulnerability and resilience that can help categorize and understand different groups of people. Tools such as the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis or others could be used across sectors to measure progress on building resilience to hunger.

**3. Building resilience to hunger and malnutrition requires multi-sectoral programming based on joint analysis**

- Donors, agencies and NGOs should adopt a collective approach to programming, rather than staying in sectors, in order to have an impact on building resilience.
- Common zonal targeting based on a standard package of services is an option to guide programming. Resilience-based programming should also be people focused and relevant for priorities that are locally defined. We must be realistic in acknowledging and addressing possible tensions between participatory-community led processes and multi-sectoral interventions that can be taken to scale.
- The value for money of different approaches to build resilience must be considered given the unprecedented levels of food insecurity in South Sudan. We must be aware of the trade-offs that may occur with co-location of investments if resources are drawn away from other areas.
- Examples of priority interventions participants noted include: food security and nutrition interventions (nutrition sensitive agriculture); WASH; community asset-creation; livestock value chains with focus on treatment, vaccination and CAHWS; disaster risk reduction; health services; urban agriculture, interventions in social protection such as cash transfers; financial literacy with IGAs, savings/loans services, and functional literacy.

**4. Including the government or local community and their governance structures in resilience interventions will be essential for fostering the will and capacity to sustain long-term change**

- Despite weak state systems, there is an opportunity to invest in high capacity individuals and communities.
- Without embedding resilience approaches firmly within structures that will remain present in communities, gains will be lost. Interventions should be designed with an exit plan in mind.
- More ex-post evaluation is needed to judge the effectiveness of interventions two to five years after an intervention took place in order to assess the sustainability of locally driven change.

**5. In South Sudan, conflict is one of the biggest and most disruptive shocks people face and we need thorough analysis on how best to mitigate and adapt to this recurrent shock**

- Many of the challenges related to building households resilient to hunger in South Sudan stem from the devastating impacts of the macro-level political conflict in South Sudan. However, local level conflicts can be disruptive as well.
- There is a need to understand how we can work better within the existing circumstances and help people mitigate and adapt to conflict for those in both stable and unstable areas (E.g. investing in mechanisms for resolving community conflict, mobile assets, and the livestock migration conference).

## **Day 2 (25 October 2017): Key Commitments to Drive the Resilience to Hunger Agenda Forward**

Discussions on the second day of the workshop resulted in the following five commitments by members of the Agriculture and Livelihoods Donor Working Group (ALDWG):

### **1. Common Understanding of the Problem and the Vision Leading to Common Definition of Resilience**

Based on the Resilience Context Analysis, FAO and WFP will lead a working group to develop a common vision of what resilience means in the context of South Sudan. This will include identifying the scope of the resilience agenda, the target sectors (agriculture, WASH, nutrition, social protection/safety nets) and possible joint programming options.

- ✓ *Timeline – To be completed by mid-December*
- ✓ *Deliverable – 5-page document*

### **2. Testing of New Business Models for Multi-Sector Resilience Programming**

USAID will test a model of multi-sector resilience-building at the local level in five pilot regions of the country based on co-location, collaboration and coordination, and ensure that the lessons are shared. USAID has also invited other donors and technical partners to complement their efforts with coordinated interventions in the pilot regions.

- ✓ *Timeline – end of November for the choice of the pilot regions*
- ✓ *Deliverable – a discussion paper on a possible approach, including confirmation of pilot regions*

### **3. Information Sharing and Learning**

DFID, in collaboration with Canada and the EU, will lead the development of a learning agenda on resilience and establish an information-sharing mechanism (E.g. EU Quarterly Review Meetings could be expanded).

- ✓ *Timeline – ongoing process that will start in December*
- ✓ *Deliverable – a mechanism to ensure continuous learning and information-sharing on resilience. E.g. sharing lessons on best practices, value for money, and geo-mapping of project locations*

### **4. Resilience Measurement**

FAO/WFP in partnership with UNICEF, REACH and FEWSNET will develop a methodology to effectively measure resilience that could inform potential future baseline analysis.

- ✓ *Timeline – November after launch of IPC Report*
- ✓ *Deliverable – an agreed-upon method for resilience measurement and possible baseline*

### **5. Keep the Momentum of a “Resilience Conversation”**

FAO and WFP, in close collaboration with the chair of the Agriculture and Livelihoods Donor Working Group (ALDWG) and the humanitarian coordination leadership, will work towards mainstreaming the resilience agenda within and across the development and humanitarian interventions

- ✓ *Timeline – ongoing process*
- ✓ *Deliverable – Ensuring continued conversation on resilience*