

Inter-Cluster Operational Responses in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Nigeria

Promoting an Integrated Famine Prevention Package: Breaking Bottlenecks

Call for Action



Despite extensive efforts to address global food insecurity, 108 million people were facing *crisis* levels food insecurity or worse in 2016, which represents a 35 percent increase compared to 2015 when the figure was almost 80 million¹.

North-eastern Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen experience the most severe levels of food insecurity, with more than 30 million people facing an unacceptably high level of acute food insecurity, with millions of them already on the brink of famine. Almost 5.7 million children are acutely malnourished, out of which 1.4 million children suffer from severe acute malnutrition or will be severely wasted by the end of the year, and at increased risk of dying. Twenty-seven million people lack safe water, increasing the threat of cholera spread of other water-borne diseases. In addition to food insecurity, outbreaks of measles and malaria put more children at risk of dying from acute malnutrition. Breakdown of healthcare infrastructures, including a non-payment of health workers' salaries, contributed to the deterioration of the situation and the provision of life-saving nutrition services.

The primary driver of food insecurity across the four countries is protracted conflicts. Conflicts affect trade and economic dynamics and the overall ability of households to access food resources, including through devaluation of local currencies, markets functionality and supply chains. It also affects agricultural productions and productivity, e.g. limited access to inputs disrupted land preparation. In Somalia, the crisis is further exacerbated by a severe drought and three consecutive crop failures.

A famine is declared when:

1. At least 20 per cent of households in an area must face extreme food shortages with a limited ability to cope;
2. Prevalence of acute malnutrition exceeds 30 percent; and
3. Death rate exceeds 2 persons per day per 10,000 people.

Without the above-mentioned evidence, famine cannot officially be declared. However, we should not wait for a declaration of famine to act. The Somalia Famine of 2010 - 2011 resulted in the death of 258,000 people and 50 percent of all deaths occurred before the famine was declared in July 2011. Therefore,

¹ FSIN Global Report on Food Crises, 2017

in order to avoid the same tragedy from reoccurring, we must act in sustaining and quickly scaling up the responses.

Averting the threat of famine and saving lives will require working in partnership and across sectors as a matter of paramount importance. Food security and nutrition interventions are key elements of the humanitarian response in addition to health and water, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH). The response should also effectively integrate and address the protection risks in the delivery including from a gender dimension. Clusters should also promote a stronger engagement with the affected communities in the assessment of the needs, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the response and ensure systems for monitoring beneficiary satisfaction and complaint mechanisms are integrated.

Following the call from Cluster Lead Agencies of the Food Security and Nutrition Clusters, a number of partners who are supporting the humanitarian response in the four risk-famine countries met in Rome on April 26, 2017 to take stock of the on-going humanitarian response and to jointly discuss solutions for addressing the existing bottlenecks in the four countries.

While Nutrition, Food Security, WASH and Health Cluster Coordinators, Cluster-Lead Agencies and partners at country level will continue to take leadership on the integration of food security, nutrition, water sanitation and hygiene and health interventions, global stakeholders commit to supporting the process through a series of actions that are described below.

✓ First category of actions: commitment to address structural operational bottlenecks

1. We commit to coordinate data collection between sectors and share all data available in order to conduct systematic multi-sectoral analyses, under the umbrella of the existing OCHA-facilitated inter-cluster working groups at country level.

2. We commit to participate and support the development and operationalization of joint action plans in all of the four countries that are promoting integrated response between Nutrition, Food Security, WASH and Health.

3. Under the umbrella of existing inter-cluster working groups, we commit to working towards joint programming and integrated responses that are based on vulnerability and composite indicators so that all the factors contributing to increased malnutrition, diseases and mortality within the current famine context are addressed.
4. Recognising that resources are limited and might not allow for a full coverage of all needs, we commit to working at cluster and inter-cluster levels in order to ensure prioritisation based on geographic convergences.
5. Acknowledging the importance of information sharing, we commit to share beneficiary lists, with respect for confidentiality, through the set-up, to the extent possible, of a single beneficiary database for the four sectors in each country.
6. Recognising the need to demonstrate our collective outcome, we commit to conducting regularly, through clusters and inter-cluster, joint monitoring of our integrated interventions through the set-up of joint indicators as well as to document lessons learned.
7. We commit to support the local governments and national partners, based on their operational capacities and comparative advantage, in delivering an integrated famine response. We also commit to the provision of minimum technical capacity to improve programme quality for national partners who are front-line implementers.
8. We commit to ensuring that, across four countries, integrated approach is defined and understood by all partners. For the purpose of the call for action, integration is defined as “an intentional combining of sectoral interventions in order to improve humanitarian outcomes”. Based on this definition, an integrated package of interventions will be outlined for each country based on context, situation and vulnerabilities in the respective countries.

We will ensure that affected communities are reached with an integrated package of interventions that reduces the risk of famine, malnutrition, diseases and mortality, by effectively utilising the respective cluster partner’s comparative advantages.

✓ Second category of actions: commitment to influence enablers to humanitarian actions

9. Recognising that conflict and insecurity have affected access to affected population in the four countries, we commit to support one another in facilitating access, through the development of country level task teams with membership from all relevant actors. In so doing, we commit to uphold and fully adhere to humanitarian principles.

10. Given insecurity and access-related challenges, maximising the effective use of common services such as logistics and access/corridors of tranquillity will be the key in four countries' contexts. We, therefore, commit to effectively sharing logistics and access information and the delivery of integrated response where access has granted. Linked to this, we pledge to share and coordinate communication on access problems that hampers delivery of services and systematically report to HC/HCT and relevant authorities to take action in addressing the access problems.

11. We also commit to engage donors in strategic discussions related to risk sharing in hard to reach areas.

12. Recognising that the current format of the Humanitarian Response Plan are not agile enough to support multi-sectoral programming, we commit to initiating discussions on complementary or alternative options to the sector by sector approach.

✓ Third category of actions: commitment to advocate for solutions to external operational bottlenecks

13. FAO and WFP, as the Cluster Lead Agencies for the Food Security Cluster commit to report periodically to the United Nations Security Council on the food security situation in the four countries as well as on other conflict-affected countries and to call on the parties to conflicts to grant urgent and unrestricted access to deliver humanitarian assistance to affected populations.