

Report on
Three Capitalization Workshops focused on Good Practices and
Lessons Learned by the Food Security Sector
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Haiti
(Abridged English Version)



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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACF	Action Contre la Faim	Action against Hunger
ASEC	Assemblée de la Section Communale	Assembly of the Communal Section
BAC	Bureau Agricole Communale	Communal Agricultural Office
CNSA	Coordination Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire	National Coordinator for Food Security
COUC	Centre d'Opération d'Urgence Communale	Emergency Operations Center
COUD	Centre d'Opération d'Urgence Départementale	Departmental Emergency Operations Center
COUL	Centre d'Opération d'Urgence Locale	Local Emergency Operations Center
COUN	Centre d'Opération d'Urgence Nationale	National Emergency Operations Center
DDA	Direction Départementale Agricole	Department of Agriculture
DINEPA	Direction Nationale de l'Eau Potable et de l'Assainissement	National Directorate of Drinking Water and Sanitation
DPC	Direction de la Protection Civile	Directorate of Civil Protection
ECHO	Opérations d'Aide Humanitaire Européennes	European Humanitarian Aid Operations
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation	Food and Agricultural Organization
FCS	Food Consumption Score	Food Consumption Score
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GTSAN	Groupe Technique de la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle	Technical Group on Food and Nutritional Security
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Score	Household Dietary Diversity Score
HEA	Analyse Économique des Ménages	Household Economy Approach
IHSI	Institut Haïtien des statistiques et de l'informatique	Haitian Institute of Statistics and Informatics
IMF	Institution de Microfinance	Microfinance Institution
IPC	Integrated Phase Classification	Integrated Phase Classification
MAST	Ministère des Affaires Sociales et du Travail	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor
MDE	Ministère de l'Environnement	Ministry of the Environment
MARNDR	Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Naturelles et du Développement Rural	Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development
OB	Organisation de Base	Local Organization
OBSAN	Organisation de Base – Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutrition	Local Organization - Food Security and Nutrition
OCB	Organisation Communautaire de Base	Local Community Organization
OCHA	Bureau des Nations Unies pour la Coordination des affaires humanitaires	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ONG	Organisation Non Gouvernementale	Non Governmental Organization
PAM	Programme Alimentaire Mondial	World Food Program

RH	Ressources humaines	Human resources
SA	Sécurité Alimentaire	Food Safety
SAN	Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutrition	Food Security and Nutrition
SIMAST	Système d'information du ministère des Affaires sociales et du Travail	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Information System
SMIN	Santé maternelle et infantile et Nutrition	Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition
TS	Table Sectorielle	Sector Group
USAI	Unité des Statistiques Agricoles et Informatique	Agricultural Statistics and Informatics Unit
USAID	United States Agency for International Development	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

In Haiti, national and sub-national coordination of the food security sector is carried out by CNSA, a government entity attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR). CNSA is headed by a Coordinator based in the capital of Port-au-Prince; at departmental level, this structure is represented by technical secretariats. Various international partners such as WFP, FAO, and FEWSNET provide technical support to CNSA operations, particularly in conducting situational analyses.

The CNSA and its partners maintain relations with various ministries and technical departments such as the Haitian Institute of Statistics and Information Technology (IHSI), the Agricultural Information and Statistics Unit (USAI), and the Department of Agriculture).

Strategically and programmatically, CNSA's mission is to liaise with government authorities, particularly with regard to the implementation of food and nutrition security (FNS) policies, the articulation and coordination of FNS actions, and the support of multi-sectoral consultations and links with the food and nutritional security sectors.

The main tasks of CNSA's departmental secretariats are to support preparation of FNS plans, establish guidelines, monitor and evaluate response implementation, and facilitate coordination of and exchanges between partners.

With regard to information sharing, the focus is on early warning, studies, and various analyses of food insecurity.

In 2010 Haiti was devastated by the earthquake; in 2016 the country was once again hit hard, this time by Hurricane Matthew. The storm came at a time when the country was suffering from a drought crisis that had lasted for more than three years. These severe crises were the basis for mobilization of various partners who sought to support actions of the government which could respond to the numerous needs confronting the affected.

The concept of a series of capitalization workshops focused on good practices and lessons learned was raised several times by food security sector partners. In response to this request, the CNSA, in collaboration with FAO and WFP, agreed to take on this initiative which has been funded by WFP, FAO, global food security cluster (gFSC) based in Rome, and by the NGO consortium of ACF, CONCERN and OXFAM with funding by ECHO.

The capitalization exercise focused on the role of the food security sector in preparedness and response, and considered aspects of coordination, partner engagement, and communication in ensuring an effective coordination system.

Participants in the three workshops reflected on good practices and lessons learned with regard to coordination mechanisms in the food security sector in emergencies in Haiti in the 2015-2017 period with a focus on the three-year drought emergency and Hurricane Matthew.

In conclusion, we would like to thank all those who contributed to the realisation of this exercise which has proved useful for the food and nutrition security stakeholders. The high level of debate and the very rich discussions enabled the groups to produce recommendations that will allow the sector to take action and improve coordination.

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Background – Capitalisation Project

On October 4, 2016, Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti at a time when agricultural production was very low (compared to the annual average) due to repeated drought crises since 2014. The IPC (Integrated Food Security Classification) for the period February to May 2017 revealed that some 2.35 million people or 22% of the total population experienced severely acute food insecurity; of these 1.7 million people (16%) were classified in the IPC “crisis phase” (CPI 3) with more than 650,000 (6%) classified in the IPC “emergency phase” (CPI 4).

Hurricane Matthew had a profound negative impact on the agricultural sector, which provides much of household income in the affected areas. Affected households, also heavily dependent on markets for their food and income sources, were forced to seek alternative, less sustainable and less remunerative sources of income. The humanitarian community mobilized to support the Government of Haiti which is making efforts to assist affected populations with health, food and nutrition security, and WASH interventions.

For more than five years, national and sub-national coordination of the food security sector has been carried out by CNSA. During the response of Hurricane Matthew, operational coordination of the sector was provided by the CNSA with support from WFP and FAO.

To identify good practices and lessons learned with respect to these food security interventions in Haiti, CNSA, in collaboration with WFP and FAO, organized three workshops that focused on the successes and challenges of efforts to coordinate responses to Hurricane Matthew and the drought that Haiti has experienced over the past year. The workshops have produced a set of recommendations to improve the coordination of these interventions in the future.

Objectives

The three lessons learned workshops focused on the role of the food security sector in preparedness and response - including coordination, engagement of partners and communication to ensure effective coordination. The specific objectives of the workshops were:

- Exchange experiences and identify good practices and lessons learned with regard to emergency preparedness and coordination between partners and actors in planning and implementing food security responses to emergencies and disasters in Haiti
- Provide an overview of the challenges to, and opportunities and prospects for, food security interventions in Haiti
- Based on workshop findings, develop a roadmap that considers preparedness for future emergencies, integration and engagement of local authorities and partners, and capacity building of departmental operational coordination to be better prepared for the next crisis

Methodology

To ensure that workshop outcomes reflected the reality on the ground, the capitalization and learning exercise included two workshops at the department level prior to the final workshop in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. This approach allowed for participation of those directly involved in local responses to the emergencies, and an understanding of how emergency management policies and procedures - and coordination practices in particular – were implemented at the local level.

Following a series of consultations with partners, CNSA, WFP and FAO agreed to carry out the exercise as follows:

- Phase 1: in Cayes, Haiti with participation of local authorities and partners from the South, Grand Anse and Nippes.
- Phase 2: in Gonaives, Haiti, with participation of local authorities and partners from the North, Artibonite, North and Northeast
- Phase 3: in Port au Prince, with participation of national government authorities and partners who intervening in the above-noted regions.

Participation :

38 people were invited to participate in each workshop. Participants represented different organizations from national and local governments, donors, and international and national partners, including:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| ▪ CNSA | ▪ WFP |
| ▪ Government Party | ▪ FAO |
| ▪ Ministry of Planning | ▪ National NGOs |
| ▪ Ministry of Agriculture | ▪ International NGOs |
| ▪ Ministry of Health | ▪ ECHO, USAID, Canada, Switzerland, Spain |
| ▪ Ministry of Social Affairs | ▪ Nutrition Sector |
| ▪ Civil Protection | ▪ Early Recovery Sector |
| ▪ DINEPA | ▪ Cash Working Group |
| ▪ OCHA | |

Principal Findings

1. Coordination Structure and Process

Assignment of responsibility to the CNSA to coordinate emergency preparedness and response activities related to food security is entirely appropriate. However, at present, CNSA has little or no representation at the commune or commune-section levels. Without CNSA representation on the ground, its ability to coordinate activities locally - where response activities are actually carried out - is severely limited. At best, such coordination efforts are undertaken by other local government entities (the mayor's office, Departmental Agricultural Directorate (DDA), CPD, etc.) whose officials have little or no experience or training in food security or in emergency coordination. Thus, coordination between food security actors at the grassroots level is at best sporadic; when it does occur, it seems to result from the goodwill of the other actors and not from a systematic process.

2. Leadership

Conducting a coordination process requires different skills than those that are generally applied in situations where a manager has direct control over organizational resources. Rather than resorting to a command and control style, a coordinator must have the skills of a group process facilitator: enable effective communication, encourage active participation of partners, provide opportunities for information-sharing, and show flexibility while keeping the process on track. These are skills that can be learned but generally require well-targeted training.

3. Communications and Information-Sharing

The workshops highlighted a great need to improve communication between respondents at all levels – both horizontally and vertically. There were many reasons provided for this gap: a lack of resources, a lack of competence and what was even more striking, a lack of trust between national and local actors.

4. Aspects of Preparedness

The need to improve emergency preparedness in Haiti was a recurring theme at all three workshops. Participants were well aware of the need to identify response roles and responsibilities in order to clarify “who will do what and where” and to determine whether they have the capacity to carry out these plans. They understood the need to improve early warning systems, identify areas of vulnerability in advance, determine which stocks of relief goods will be available for an emergency food security response, to share details of organizational tools and techniques related to evaluation and targeting, and develop realistic contingency plans. Participants noted in particular that the system used to inform CNSA partners about the details of contingency plans requires considerable improvement. Indeed, participants emphasized that the “widespread lack of knowledge” among food security partners concerning preparedness details meant that actors on the ground rarely used contingency plans to guide their response efforts.

5. Resource Concerns

CNSA's lack of human, financial or logistical resources, particularly at the commune level, was cited by the participants as one of the most important barriers to effective coordination. Indeed, they noted the lack of competent human resources specializing in coordination in emergencies posed significant challenges for local coordination efforts. Participants noted several instances of organizations that could not participate in food security coordination meetings simply because of a lack of fuel for transport to the venues where coordination meetings were to be organized. The absence of these local partners in coordination meetings strongly hampers the CNSA's ability to identify who is doing what and with what resources.

6. Standards

CNSA is expected to encourage compliance with national standards in emergency response planning, and workshop participants noted that efforts have been made in recent emergency responses to establish various standards. However, it appears that achievement of standardization in the food security sector has been rather limited. Although participants noted that some local organizations were aware of various agreed standards – including those agreed for targeting criteria, food basket composition, food ration standards, and standards for the quality and variety of seed distributed to farmers – these standards were often not respected during distributions. Confusion over eligibility and quantity was generated, as distribution criteria and kits often varied by partner. Participants noted that each organization applied its own methods in data collection and analysis, which hampered harmonization of results. In addition, despite efforts to harmonize targeting criteria, local officials often made their own decisions about such criteria, implementing their own distribution standards without taking into account decisions agreed elsewhere.

7. Data Reliability

Participants from various emergency organizations in attendance at the workshops noted the great difficulty in obtaining reliable information about who was in fact an eligible recipient of an emergency distribution. Efforts to harmonize lists of beneficiaries were often frustrating due to the lack of coordination at the local level. Another major challenge in terms of data reliability was the mere fact that some areas affected by Hurricane Matthew remained inaccessible to relief providers for many weeks. This lack of accessibility meant that complete and reliable data lists were not available for organizations seeking to coordinate their efforts.

8. Participation in Coordination Activities

Workshop participants noted the active participation in the food security sector of several government entities (MARNDP, CNSA and CPD at the national and departmental levels), numerous NGOs (international and local), local authorities and several grassroots organizations. They also noted, however, the lack of involvement of several key ministries (MDE, MAST) and various mayors' offices. The reasons given for this lack of involvement included insufficient contact by CNSA, lack of operational capacity, or simply insufficient understanding of their role in food security (especially city officials). Participants also highlighted the lack of involvement of beneficiaries in the intervention planning process, and the lack of involvement of Communal Agricultural Bureaux (BAC) with regard to monitoring emergency food security responses.

9. Use of Cash

There were a number of challenges confronting humanitarian agencies in their efforts to address food security needs using cash. Perhaps the biggest challenge was the lack of competent microfinance institutions in the affected areas to help with cash distribution. The other main challenge was the effort to target the most vulnerable; it was difficult for the simple fact that virtually everyone wished to benefit from a cash contribution regardless of his or her household status and vulnerability to food insecurity.

10. Links between Humanitarian and Development Efforts in the Food Security Sector

Workshop participants stressed that risk management is not considered a priority by all actors, either for short or long-term activities. Most discussions on emergency response are focused on emergency operations: food baskets, shelter kits, cash transfers, etc. Since many organizations do not apply a livelihoods approach to their analyses, the longer-term needs that continue after the emergency phase are often not adequately addressed by short-term relief actors.