PARALLEL SESSION 3

Conflict, insecurity and food crises

FOOD & AGRICULTURE IN TIMES OF CRISIS
BRUSSELS, 2-3 APRIL 2019
HIGH LEVEL EVENT OF THE GLOBAL NETWORK AGAINST FOOD CRISES

It is now broadly accepted and recognized that conflict and hunger reinforce each other and that conflict is a key driver of situations of acute food insecurity. Armed conflict (both directly and indirectly) affects food security and nutrition, and contributes significantly to forced displacement, while also serving to impede humanitarian response, thereby increasing the risk of famine.

Through the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2417 on the Protection of civilians in armed conflict in May 2018, the UN made addressing the link between conflicts and hunger a priority, pointing to the need to invest in safeguarding agriculture-based livelihoods as an essential contribution towards preventing and responding to food crises. Among other things, this requires addressing the use of food as a weapon of war and the impact of population movements resulting from conflict on food security and food systems.

Background

With conflicts on the rise in both number and intensity, providing life-saving and livelihood-supporting assistance to civilians experiencing conflict-related hunger is increasingly challenging. Some parties to conflict deliberately deny humanitarian assistance or target humanitarian workers and assets. In the worst cases, civilians' food access, agriculture and productive assets have been actively targeted. The return of famine and the risk of its occurrence in several countries in recent years is a direct consequence of growing conflict and the frequent disregard for international norms.

Structure

The session consists of two panels.

Chairs of the session and panels:

Hans Hoogeveen, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Rome-based Agencies and Koen Van Acoleyen, Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.

Panel 5: Conflict and hunger: implementing UNSCR 2417 and supporting agri-food systems in conflicts

Some of the root causes of hunger can contribute to and exacerbate conflicts. Consequently, conflict and hunger are interconnected and can fuel each other. Addressing all aspects of this cycle is essential to achieving sustainable peace, Zero Hunger and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals overall. Current legal frameworks are broadly adequate to the task of limiting the adverse impact of conflict on civilians, including access to food and livelihoods, and to ensuring respect of and protection for the right to be free from hunger. However, it is not a lack of rules but the persistent failure to comply with them – and the concomitant lack of accountability – that aggravates situations of food insecurity caused or exacerbated by conflict. Recognizing the gravity of this situation, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2417. The resolution recognizes the interrelationship between armed conflicts and hunger, and considers conflict-induced food insecurity, including famine, as a threat to international peace and security.

Evidence

60% of population are food insecure in conflict affected countries[1]

80% of humanitarian appeals in recent years have been for conflict situations[2]

Number of people forcibly displaced because of conflicts rose from[3] 40 million in 1997 to 68.5 in 2017.

1. WFP, October 2018. Fact sheet Hunger and Conflict (https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000099172/download/?_ga=2.41490148.779089844.1540193751-102179888.1539163696)

2. OCHA Financial Tracking Service (https://fts.unocha.org/)

3. UNHCR, 2017 Global Trends (https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf)

Against this background, the panel will focus on challenges and opportunities afforded by operationalizing the provisions of UNSC Resolution 2417 and will explore the role of agri-food systems in conflict-affected contexts. To this purpose, the panel will revolve around the following issues:

- Policies and laws that would help to pre-empt the use of starvation as a weapon of war.

- Challenges to humanitarian action in ensuring access to food for vulnerable populations in situations of conflict.

- Approaches to best support local agri-food systems, food security and resilience in contexts of high insecurity and conflict.

- Dialogue/synergies with security actors that can be created at global and national levels.

- Local factors that can exacerbate conflict and insecurity, including natural resource scarcity, climate variability, lack of options for youth and population displacement, can be addressed more effectively.

Panel 6: The movement of rural populations in response to food crises, conflict and insecurity and its implications

Conflict and hunger are two of the leading causes of the dramatic rise in forced displacement over the last two decades. As many conflicts are fought in rural areas and target food production systems and community infrastructure, the impacts on agricultural livelihoods are disproportionately hard. The decision to remain or move present significant risks, with evidence suggesting that insecurity is a main reason why people abandon their livelihoods and move in search of safety. Food security, strong social networks and better livelihood opportunities, in contrast, are key reasons why people opt to stay where they are. Addressing conflict and hunger, the interaction between the two will be critical to ease forced migration pressures. Investment in sustainable food systems and resilient rural livelihoods prior to a crisis, both in countries of origin and in neighboring countries hosting refugees, can help reduce food insecurity and the pressure to move and also encourage rural populations to return, when it is safe to do so. At the same time, while acknowledging the increasingly protracted nature of displacement (both internal and cross-border), supporting agriculture-based livelihoods can also turn this challenge into an opportunity for both displaced populations and hosting communities. Essentially, this requires better linking humanitarian, development and peace interventions, specifically in the context of conflict-induced food insecurity.

Against this background, the panel will revolve around the following issues:

- Challenges associated with the movement of rural populations in response to conflict and the implications for food security and livelihoods, and how this impacts on local agri-food systems.

- Innovative approaches to minimize such impacts and the challenges associated with replicating these at scale.

- Specific challenges around protracted displacement, such as long-term support to employment and livelihoods.

- Positive and negative impacts and interactions between displaced, host and returnee populations.

Panel 5: Conflict and hunger: implementing UNSCR 2417 and supporting agri-food systems in conflicts

Presenter:
- **Scott Weber**
President, Interpeace

Panelists:
- **Pauline Chetcuti**
Head of Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy, Action Contre le Faim (ACF)

- **Amitabh Desai**
Foreign Policy Adviser to President Clinton

- **Hilal Elver**
Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

- **Sheila Grudem**
Deputy Director of Emergency Preparedness and Response, World Food Programme

- **Olli Ruohomaki**
Senior Advisor, Ministry Foreign Affairs, Finland

Panel 6: The movement of rural populations in response to food crises, conflict and insecurity and its implications

Presenter:
- **George Okoth-Obbo**
Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Panelists:
- **Laurent Bossard**
Director, Sahel and West Africa Club

- **Abdoul Azize Diallo**
Vice President, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

- **Carlos Alberto Bernal Díaz**
Director de Inclusión Social y Productiva, Departamento Prosperidad Social, Colombia

- **Mauro Garofalo**
Director, Communità Sant'Egidio

- **Rose Nakabugo**
Assistant Commissioner Disaster Preparedness and Management, Uganda