

Long-term food security: investing in people and livelihoods

Five-year strategic framework on **food security** for Africa 2008 – 2012

“Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for a healthy and active life”.

World Food Summit 1996

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa is not on track to achieve a single Millennium Development Goal, and is the only region in the world where malnutrition – an outcome of food insecurity – is not declining.

The causes of food insecurity in Africa are multiple and complex and include HIV/AIDS, climate change, environmental degradation, conflict, vast increase in population size, poor governance, decline in public services (health, education), and debt.

Such macro-level factors have profoundly impacted on traditional livelihoods, making them unsustainable and, for many people in constant crisis, restricting their ability to access sufficient food. Their ability to cope with more frequent hazards, particularly drought and floods, has consequently been reduced. Coping strategies used in response to crisis further contribute to the erosion of livelihoods and increased food insecurity through subsequent loss of livelihood assets, environmental degradation and migration. The International Federation has focused its support to food security in Africa in response to such particularly high level needs in this continent.

The International Federation has been responding to food insecurity in Africa since the major famines of the mid-1980s, but first made long term food security a committed strategic priority at the 5th Pan African Conference in Ouagadougou in September 2000.

“Making food security a strategic priority for this decade, recognizing that food insecurity is directly linked to a number of root causes, including poverty, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the worsening debt crisis and armed conflict”

5th Pan African Conference,
Ouagadougou 2000

The 6th Pan African conference in Algiers 2004 reaffirmed this strategy with a renewed commitment to pursue food security with vigour and focus. The key objective of the Algiers Plan of Action was “*to significantly contribute to the reduction of food insecurity of populations made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, using and developing the knowledge available with the Red Cross Red Crescent societies, coping mechanisms of communities and working in partnerships*”.

Since 2000, a large number of African National Societies have been actively engaged in initiatives to reduce food insecurity. By today, half of the Sub-Saharan African National Societies have implemented food security



programmes, which aim to improve *availability*, *access* and *utilization* of food in communities. The International Federation regards all three components as interrelated and essential in order to achieve food security.

- Food **availability** in a country, region or local area means that food is physically present because it has been grown, processed, manufactured, and/or imported.
- Food **access** refers to the way in which different people obtain available food. Normally, food is accessed through a combination of means. This may include: home production, use of left-over stocks, purchase, barter, borrowing, sharing, gifts from relatives, and provisions by welfare systems or food aid.
- Food **utilization** is the way in which people use food. It is dependent upon a number of inter-related factors: the quality of the food and its method of preparation, storage facilities, and the nutritional knowledge and health status of the individual consuming the food.

The International Federation also recognizes that food security is an outcome of livelihoods. Livelihoods describe the capabilities, assets, and activities needed to sustain a means of living, including ways to obtain food. We therefore believe it is essential to support and protect livelihoods, as well as help the vulnerable meet their immediate basic needs for food in order to reduce food insecurity in Africa.

What do we aim to achieve?

In 2003, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies developed a global “Food security and nutrition policy” to define the scope of food security within National Societies. This policy, which provides guidance and direction on further development of food security interventions, states:

“Food security should span the relief to development continuum by reducing risk, mitigating against and where necessary, providing relief and recovery from disasters to the most vulnerable households”

We will continue to address the immediate needs of those in food crisis through our humanitarian work, which is guided by the fundamental principles. And we will also work to reduce the vulnerability of African communities through longer-term support to livelihoods and food security.

Work to strengthen livelihoods in order to improve food security and resilience is also at the heart of the International Federation’s work in disaster risk reduction in Africa. This initiative in food security therefore links in with the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction.

This work will further strengthen and integrate long-term food security plans with International Federation efforts in the areas of community-based health care, and water and sanitation. It will also link in to our existing work in African communities made vulnerable by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

HIV/AIDS profoundly impacts on people’s ability to sustain livelihoods and cope with shocks, and hence their ability to obtain sufficient food. People who are experiencing food insecurity may take risks to survive which increase their likelihood of contracting or passing on the HIV virus. HIV and AIDS also raise particular nutritional needs, and food is essential for adherence to anti-retroviral treatment.

This **five-year strategic framework on long-term food security for Africa** is guided by the Ouagadougou Declaration 2000 and Algiers Plan of Action 2004, and aims to **reduce food insecurity in communities vulnerable to disasters and/or affected by HIV/AIDS**.

The *programmatic objectives* guiding our approach are:

- To improve and scale up community based food security programming in fifteen African National Societies.
- To increase long-term food security technical capacity at the International Federation, in particular at African National Societies.
- To strengthen understanding of long-term food security programming including integration and coordination.

These objectives will be bolstered by a *fourth enabling objective*:

- To strengthen community and National Society organizational and structural capacities.

The programme will reach its aim when 15 African National Societies have the capacity, skills and resources to have a demonstrated impact on chronic food insecurity using an integrated approach.

Our purpose is to scale-up the International Federation’s efforts in national food security programmes to provide at least 20 per cent of the most vulnerable populations with longer term food security support, to enhance their resilience.

What will we do?

The five-year strategic framework enhances capacities on food security programming within the International Federation. The detailed planning and implementation of programmes will develop as knowledge and capacities at all levels increase.

Examples of food security programme interventions by the Red Cross and Red Crescent are provided in annex 1.

The strategic framework will initially focus on 15 sub-Saharan African National Societies implementing food security programmes.

Key strategies

Purpose of Red Cross Red Crescent five-year strategic framework on food security:

To reduce food insecurity in communities vulnerable to disasters and/or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Key indicators

- 15 African National Societies have the capacity, skills and resources to have a demonstrated impact on chronic food insecurity using an integrated approach.

IMPACT: At least 20 per cent of the most vulnerable populations are provided with longer term food security support by Red Cross Red Crescent, and their resilience is enhanced.

Objective 1: Improve and scale up community-based food security programming in 15 African National Societies

Output:

- Longer-term community based food security programmes
- Appropriate food security programming tools

- By country, number of food security programmes developed and implemented
- Inventory of food security programming tools
- By country, number of food security programmes revised during implementation
- By country, number of final evaluations conducted
- By country, number of appropriate and standardized tools being utilized
- Increased number of quality¹ food security programmes

Objective 2: Increase long-term food security technical capacity at the International Federation, in particular at African National Societies

Output:

- Technical staff and other relevant staff for programmes in place in African National Societies and the International Federation Secretariat
- Appropriately trained African National Societies and International Federation Secretariat staff
- Relevant technical support to the food security programme (including planning, monitoring, evaluation, etc)
- Food security database at National Society and International Federation Secretariat level established and maintained

- Number of appropriate food security technical officers recruited at National Society level
- Number of appropriate food security technical staff employed at International Federation Secretariat
- Proportion of food security staff in posts more than two years
- Number of appropriate food security trainings (with focus on 'on-the-job' training) received at African National Societies and International Federation Secretariat
- Number of food security programmes provided with technical support
- Number of relevant and utilised databases

1. Defined according to the Core Principles for Food Security programming (see page 6)

Key strategies

Objective 3: Strengthen understanding of long-term food security programme including integration and coordination

Output:

- Workshops at African National Societies and zonal level with relevant staff
- Long term food security strategy in each African National Societies reflecting government plans, policies and strategies (where exist)
- Promotion of knowledge sharing (*Documentation and dissemination of food security good practice through regional food security periodic activity reports*)
- Enhanced coordination mechanisms and utilization of external partnerships
- Long term food security programmes integrated with health programmes (including HIV/AIDS)
- Communication strategy on food security thematic issues. Advocacy on behalf of the most vulnerable communities at national, zonal and global level

Key indicators

- Increased level of understanding of the longer term community-based food security programme
- Number of workshops organized
- Number of relevant staff participating in workshops
- Number of National Societies that developed and utilized long-term food security strategy documents reflecting governmental food security plans
- Number of best practices replicated and documented
- Number of relevant exchange visits
- Number of well coordinated and integrated food security programmes
- Number of coordination fora conducted at National Society and International Federation secretariat level
- Timely and balanced response to famine situations
- Long-term and consistent support to high risk communities
- Increased number of partnerships in support of food security programmes

Objective 4: Strengthen community and National Society organizational and structural capacities

Output:

- Improved governance, accountability, and leadership of National Societies to materialize food security commitments
- Improved volunteers and National Societies staff support and management
- Increased capacity of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers and members in the community, on food security programming
- Gender equity component in every programme

- Number of properly trained staff and volunteers actively engaged in the programmes
- Number of community members actively involved as stakeholders in the programmes
- Number and type of activities aiming at encouraging, training and retaining Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers in the food security programmes
- Degree to which gender equity has been reached in the National Society measured in terms of staff and volunteer profiles

How do we work?

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the world's largest voluntary network. Millions of members and volunteers work among our National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, living in communities in every corner of the globe, including Africa. This makes the Red Cross Red Crescent very well placed to have access to, and work in partnership with, the most vulnerable communities, whilst also having access to policy makers.

Food security is a complex issue. Our support needs to be interlinked with other sectors, including health and care, HIV/AIDS work and our response to disasters. Our work to reduce food insecurity will therefore be integrated with other sectors particularly HIV/AIDS and disaster risk reduction in order to maximize its impact.

We will strengthen our community-based food security monitoring system, to better understand and

complement early warning indicators provided by national, regional and global early warning systems. We will develop long term programmes to effectively and sustainably address longer-term needs in livelihoods and food security.

Interventions will be evidence-based and will be driven by good practice developed both internally and externally. Programmes will be developed with the full consultation and participation of vulnerable communities in order to ensure that programmes build on the existing assets, capabilities and priorities of the communities and are owned by them.

Interventions will seek out the most vulnerable and build resilience. And, in line with the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, they must prioritize reaching and empowering the people that are most in need.



Core principles for food security programming

The core principles have evolved from reviews and evaluations of our work and are considered essential for the development of effective food security programmes.

- 1 Assessment and analysis**
 - Conduct a food security needs assessment and causal analysis during the design phase and continue to monitor the situation
 - Include both immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity
- 2 Objectives**
 - Set clear objectives to reduce food insecurity
- 3 Emergency and longer-term programming**
 - Set longer-term objectives at the onset of an emergency operation
 - Include risk reduction/disaster preparedness in programmes
- 4 Community mobilization**
 - Actively involve the community, including volunteers
 - Identify the 'community'
 - Include the most vulnerable (including the marginalized)
- 5 Multi-sectoral approach and integration²**
 - Promote a multi-sectoral and integrated approach
 - Involve all sectors (health, agriculture/livestock, education, water/sanitation, etc)
 - Support and integrate existing service provision with Red Cross Red Crescent programmes
 - Target the same population groups with a range of interventions
- 6 Partnerships and advocacy**
 - Foster communication and cooperation within the Red Cross Red Crescent
 - Coordinate and establish technical partnerships with external actors
 - Advocate for more resources to address chronic food insecurity
- 7 Capacity development in food security**
 - Build and invest in long-term technical capacity in food security
 - Position sufficient technical staff in regional and country offices
 - Ensure consistency of technical support within the Red Cross Red Crescent
- 8 Monitoring and evaluation of impact**
 - Build an evidence-base on the impact of food security interventions
 - Collect baseline and monitoring data in a rigorous manner
 - Employ staff skilled in monitoring and evaluation
 - Conduct evaluations and include external team members
- 9 Funding and sustainability**
 - Ensure long-term funding of at least three years
 - Encourage funding from partner National Societies and other sources
 - Encourage longer financial planning cycles
 - Promote sustainability
 - Engage and work with government structures through joint planning, training, assessments, monitoring and evaluations
- 10 Collection and dissemination of experience**
 - Disseminate experience of longer-term food security programming
 - Consistently document experience using set criteria

2. Integration: various sectors working together sharing the same expected results.

Budget

The budget required for this five-year strategic framework and plan of action on long-term food security for Africa 2008-2012 is initially estimated at 45 million Swiss francs, aiming at increasing capacities by reinforcing implementation of food security programmes in the target countries. More than 80 per cent of this budget will go directly to country level programming. The budget will be further elaborated as the work with in-depth country assessments proceeds, which will form the basis for the detailed programming of each country. Based on these plans, the zonal and global plans and budgets will be developed to back-up delivery at community level by filling in essential gaps such as knowledge sharing, technical support, exchange, resource mobilization etc.

Next steps

As a first step, we will conduct in-depth country-level analysis and planning with all 15 targeted African National Societies. This will include the participation of all Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies supporting food security in Africa. This phase, which will be conducted between November 2007 and May 2008, will be followed by the design of concrete programme proposals, action plans and budgets, to be completed by July 2008. Finally, programme implementation, at community level, will start in October 2008.



ANNEX 1: Examples of food security interventions

A Sustainable farming

- 1 Soil nutrient management
- 2 Soil erosion control technologies (natural resource conservation)
- 3 Tillage practices
- 4 Green manure/alternative farming systems
- 5 Seed banks
- 6 Gardening projects
- 7 Fish ponds
- 8 Orchard production
- 9 Pest control
- 10 Veterinary services
- 11 Appropriate technologies
- 12 Capacity building in production technologies

B Small-scale irrigation scheme

- 1 Food production in wet-lands
- 2 Off-season micro irrigation schemes (dry-season)
- 3 Supplemental irrigation schemes
- 4 Water harvesting projects
- 5 Safe waste water irrigation schemes

C Market focused interventions

- 1 Communication on food safety (to consumers and vendors)
- 2 Re- and de-stocking (market stabilization)

D Income generation schemes

- 1 Animal husbandry (meat, dairy, offspring)
- 2 Bee-keeping
- 3 Vegetable production
- 4 Orchard production

E Training and education in relevant skills

- 1 Vocational training
- 2 Information on construction/production techniques

F Microfinance projects

- 1 Micro credit/loans schemes
- 2 Voucher schemes
- 3 Revolving funds projects

G Animal husbandry

- 1 Livestock for meat and dairy production
- 2 Poultry and rabbit projects
- 3 Veterinary services
- 4 Fodder production

H Nutrition

- 1 Food processing
- 2 Nutrient preservation
- 3 Education and information

I Post-harvest technology

- 1 Storage technologies
- 2 Pest control
- 3 Food processing

J Establishment of community-based food security monitoring systems, to link up with national, regional and global early warning systems

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