

THE RESILIENCE AGENDA: *HELPING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES EMERGE FROM CYCLES OF CRISIS ONTO A PATHWAY TOWARD DEVELOPMENT*

Last year the Horn of Africa experienced the worst drought in 60 years, putting nearly 14 million people at severe risk. In response, in close collaboration with international partners, we devoted nearly \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance to help meet the needs of 4.6 million people. This year in the Sahel, 18.7 million people were at risk of food insecurity as a result of drought, following food crises in 2008 and 2010.



Chronic poverty and recurrent shocks are driving the same communities into crisis year after year. Over the past decade, U.S. \$90 billion was spent by international donors in just nine countries – accounting for almost 50% of all humanitarian assistance during this period.¹ With this level of humanitarian need projected to continue and even increase in some areas, communities face ongoing cycles of crisis they cannot escape, undermining development gains.

DOING BUSINESS DIFFERENTLY

USAID is doing business differently to help vulnerable communities emerge from cycles of crisis onto a pathway toward development by:

- Taking early action in response to early warning;
- Closely coordinating with our development partners to support inclusive, effective country-led plans;
- Connecting our humanitarian assistance and development programs more effectively across the common goal of building resilience.

We can't stop shocks from happening, but we can enable communities to better withstand them. Ultimately, we seek to save and improve lives. We envision that our efforts to build resilience to recurrent crisis in targeted areas will contribute to reduced humanitarian need over time.

USAID defines resilience to recurrent crisis as the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

CLOSER COORDINATION: INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL, COUNTRY

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR ACTION FOR DROUGHT RESILIENCE AND GROWTH: Together with East Africa's Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the European Union and over 51 other international development partners, USAID is leading an international effort to build resilience in the Horn of Africa. The Global Alliance, launched in April 2012, is supporting the completion of technically rigorous Country Program Frameworks that will enable donors to closely align programs and funding with plans developed and owned by governments of drought-affected areas.

¹ Kellett, J. and Sweeney, H. (2011) Analysis of financing mechanisms and funding streams to enhance emergency preparedness.

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR RESILIENCE IN THE SAHEL (AGIR-SAHEL): At the initiative of the European Commission, the AGIR-Sahel was launched in June 2012 together with USAID, donor and regional governments, UN agencies and other humanitarian and development bodies. The EU will soon release a roadmap to better coordinate humanitarian and development efforts in the Sahel region. USAID and EU teams in the field are partnering to identify and advance resilience-building solutions.

USAID'S POLICY AND PROGRAM GUIDANCE: BUILDING RESILIENCE TO RECURRENT CRISIS

RESILIENCE POLICY AND PROGRAM GUIDANCE: USAID's new **Policy and Program Guidance on Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis** draws on decades of experience providing humanitarian relief and development assistance. It identifies a conceptual framework to inform resilience programming that contributes to a sustainable reduction in vulnerability and more inclusive growth. It outlines key operational changes to better coordinate our humanitarian relief and development teams. While we will maintain the life-saving speed of humanitarian assistance and the long-term focus of development programs, we are also identifying opportunities to layer, integrate, and sequence these efforts to achieve resilience. The guidance emphasizes the importance of country-led plans and close partnerships for sustainable and scalable results, including with partner countries, regional institutions, civil society, other U.S. Government Agencies, international donors, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

In targeted areas, we expect our efforts to result in an increased ability to respond quickly and effectively to new circumstances; improved ability to address and reduce risk; and improved social and economic conditions of vulnerable populations. Over the long-term, we envision that these results will collectively contribute to reduced humanitarian need, as well as a learning agenda to measure our progress.

JOINT PLANNING BETWEEN RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT

JOINT PLANNING CELLS: For the strongest response to these crises, USAID created Joint Planning Cells (JPCs) in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel bringing together relief and development teams to identify ways to layer, sequence and integrate humanitarian assistance and development programs around the shared goal of building resilience. The Horn of Africa JPC has developed plans focused on the region's worst hit areas and aims to benefit directly **10 million people and to reduce the region's emergency caseload by one million people by 2017**. Based on a joint problem analysis undertaken by humanitarian and development experts for the region, the Sahel JPC has drafted a strategy and results framework for proposed resilience-building activities in Niger and Burkina Faso. The Sahel JPC is now developing program designs and will work with other donors and host governments to align activities with country-led plans, needs on the ground, and the comparative resources and operational advantages of donors.

BUILDING RESILIENCE – SAFIETA'S STORY



This past February, after a year of bad rains, a group of four women farmers in Burkina Faso were unable to harvest much of the maize they had planted during the rainy season. Between them, they had 31 children and no husbands. But, thanks to a USAID-Catholic Relief Services program started seven years ago to increase the resilience of villagers dependent upon rain-fed crops, they did have land plots they were able to fill with bright green onion sprouts. Key to their success was obtaining secure access to land, small-scale irrigation investments and training on new crops. While the program ended two years ago, these farmers, including a proud woman named Safieta, are continuing to thrive on the proceeds of their dry season market gardens. "We chose onions," she noted, "because if the water pump fails for a few days, they are strong enough to survive."

"I am resilient now," Safieta laughed, "just like the onions."

For more information about our work, visit: <http://www.usaid.gov/resilience>