

FAO Statement for the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting 2019

FAO firmly believes that transformational change continues to be required in the way humanitarian crises are approached. Today, 131.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance¹, 93 percent of people living in extreme poverty are in countries that are either fragile or vulnerable to environmental risks. In 2018, more than 113 million people² across 53 countries experienced acute hunger requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above). This is not only a humanitarian crisis; it is also a crisis of development. It cannot be solved by humanitarian action alone, but through a comprehensive and coherent approach that combines the joint efforts of both the development and humanitarian communities, bound by a commitment to build and sustain the conditions for peace, security and respect for human rights, and guided by clear political leadership.

Against this background, The Grand Bargain is a welcome catalyst for change as it fosters corporate effort and allows streamlining action towards one overarching goal: a more efficient aid delivery, freeing up human and financial resources for the direct benefit of affected populations. It facilitates a dialogue, and a sharing of knowledge and experience with all the stakeholders- Including donors, UN and NGOs.

By virtue of its mandate, for decades FAO has worked in, and across, both the **humanitarian and development** spheres in order to save lives, protect and restore livelihoods, as well as food production, to reduce food insecurity, rural poverty and malnutrition, improve resilience, and invest in capacity at the local, national, regional and global levels to reduce poverty and build sustainable food and agricultural systems. Through the Global Network against Food Crisis, FAO, WFP and the EU are jointly promoting consensual, harmonized and country-owned food insecurity, resilience and risk analyses monitoring of countries and regions at risk of food crises to inform timely decision making and advocacy for action. The objective behind the **Global Network Against Food Crises**³ is to adopt a common long-term vision among partners to promote synergies and coordination and address food crises along the humanitarian-development-peace-nexus. A crucial part of this process is the [Global Report on Food Crises](#), which is vital to help decision-makers plan humanitarian interventions, and allocate and prioritize resources along the humanitarian-development peace nexus.

In 2018, FAO achieved significant results across different work streams that contribute to achieving the overall goal of the GB. In 2018, FAO implemented **early actions** ahead of various risks across different regions in order to save lives, safeguard agricultural livelihoods and food security, and protect longer-term development and resilience gains. The results of these actions are pointing to significant cost-effectiveness of early action by saving key livelihood assets and reducing humanitarian response costs. Moreover, FAO measured the return on investment of acting early upon an early warning trigger to prevent and/or mitigate the impact of disasters on vulnerable farmers and herders. For every dollar invested by FAO in early action, farmers and herders obtained added benefits and avoided significant damage and losses. By preventing or mitigating the impact of hazards, early actions in agriculture contribute to shrink humanitarian needs and reduce the cost of humanitarian assistance.

Significant results in **cash-based programming** were achieved in 2018. FAO continued to promote the use of Cash+ combining cash transfers with productive assets, inputs and/or technical training, thereby increasing the effectiveness of assistance and the sustainability of impacts in emergency response.

¹ 2019 Global Humanitarian Overview

² 2019 Global Report on Food Crises

³ The Global Network was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 by two EU Commissioners, alongside the Director-General of FAO and Executive-Director of WFP. It is an alliance working to combat food crises from humanitarian and development perspectives and tackle their root causes.

Furthermore, significant efforts were maintained to analyse and measure the impact of FAO cash and voucher programmes as well as of national social protection systems. The operational knowledge on risk informed -shock responsive social protection systems was strengthened. Thus, an enhanced knowledge and capacity base on cash and social protection programming in fragile contexts was built at country level.

Many efforts were devoted by FAO in 2018 towards the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian and settings. FAO has successfully supported the inclusion of gender equality considerations in many international policy dialogues and voluntary guidelines covering themes such as the right to food, governance of tenure, sustainable small-scale fisheries, and responsible investments in agriculture and food systems. Moreover, FAO continues to support community mobilization, collective action and gender-transformative planning and implementation through gender-responsive activities that increase women's access to resources and services, and reduce GBV risks.

In spite of common challenges we are facing to achieve the commitments, track progress and harmonize efforts at institutional and field level FAO, as all the other GB signatories, is exerting corporate efforts for fulfilling the GB commitments and embracing its spirit.

As the Grand Bargain self-reporting exercise was conducted for the third time in 2018, we believe it is now time to evaluate progress achieved so far. The evidence provided by the annual independent report of the GB should directly inform and substantiate humanitarian decision making. Agencies should foster a greater exchange of information and an alignment of efforts at HQ-level and country-level regarding the goals of the GB. The Grand Bargain should stay agile, evolve with time and be adjusted to the context in which the humanitarian system is working.